



NIFS, JAPAN

Japan's fusion machine, the Large Helical Device, has produced impressive results.

the experiment. Smith declined to comment further on the reasons for the delay, except to say that the cost underestimation was being taken "very seriously".

The review of the NCSX comes at a crucial time for the US fusion programme, according to Stephen Dean, the head of Fusion Power Associates, a non-profit group in Washington, Seattle, that advocates the development of fusion. The fusion-research community has long feared that US participation in ITER would starve other programmes of funds. As all planned fusion budget increases are to go towards the American contribution to ITER, that leaves no contingency for cost overruns in other programmes such as the NCSX, says Dean. "I think there's a fair possibility that the Department of Energy

will cancel the programme," he says.

"In my opinion, that would be a sin," says Klinger, who heads Wendelstein 7-X, a €300-million (\$416 million) German stellarator project under construction in Greifswald. Unlike the German reactor, the NCSX was to use a unique hybrid of stellarator and tokamak technology. If it worked, Klinger says, it could lead to tokamaks that could operate continuously, which would be far more commercially attractive than the ITER design. "It is a very important experiment," he says.

The fate of the programme will probably be determined after the current review is completed. The committee is expected to deliver its report at the end of October. ■

**Geoff Brumfiel**

Gruss adds. "We thought a unit in the vicinity of Scripps would create an entity that would be more than the sum of its parts."

Scripps Florida has encountered some roadblocks since the agreement with the state to set up an institute in Palm Beach County was signed in 2003. Tussles over siting of the institute delayed its opening (see *Nature* 431,

5; 2004), and some Florida lawmakers objected to the terms of the deal between Scripps and Florida. But construction is now under way, while about 260 employees work in temporary space. Lerner says the new campus should be operational in 2009.

Gruss has big plans. "Our business is running high-class, cutting-edge research institutes, and we

want to spread our wings," he says. The institute has two 'partnerships' with universities in Buenos Aires and Shanghai, but these are not full-fledged institutes. Should the Florida venture be successful, Gruss says the society will look to open more institutes elsewhere: "I am optimistic that this is not going to be the last." ■  
Erika Check

**ON THE RECORD**

**"I think [Lisa] Nowak should be admired for travelling across the country at night and not getting out of her car to put in gas or go to the restroom."**

Former moonwalker Buzz Aldrin tries to take the positives from astronaut Lisa Nowak's arrest for attempted kidnapping.

**3 GOOD REASONS...**

Yet more NASA fun as *Wired's* bloggers have been asking readers to suggest a new slogan for the world's best-loved space agency. Our favourites are:

- 1** NASA: In 100 years, you'll wish you'd given us more funding.
- 2** NASA: Actually, this is rocket science.
- 3** NASA: The budget is the limit.

**SCORECARD**

**▲ Electric motorbikes**  
The search for high-performance non-petroleum bikes took a lurch forward in Los Angeles last week, as inventor Bill Dube unveiled his 'KillaCycle', which, he says, can go from zero to 100 kilometres per hour in less than a second.



**▼ Electric motorbikes**  
Unfortunately for Dube, the KillaCycle almost lived up to its name during the demonstration, as he accidentally hurtled straight into a van.

Sources: Associated Press, *Wired*, *TGdaily.com*, *Grist*

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SIDELINES