United States Department of State

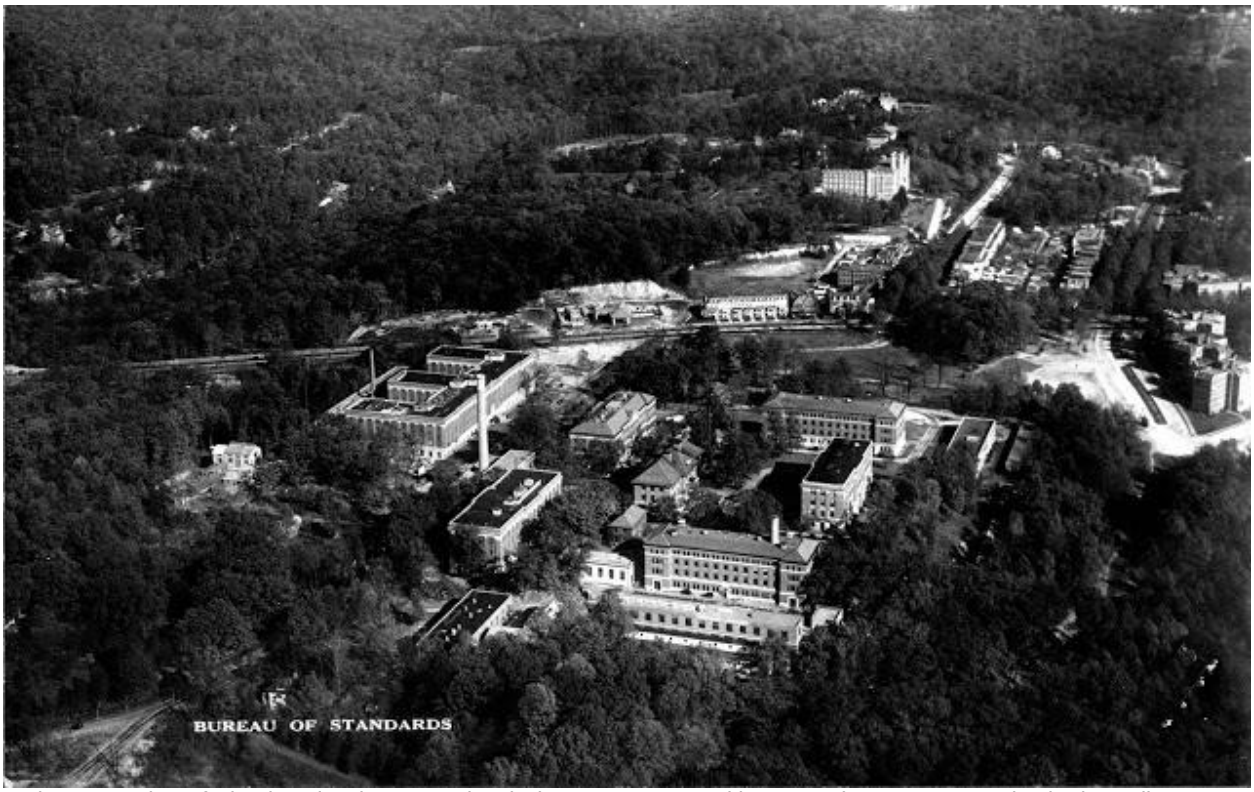
Office of Foreign Missions
Washington, D.C. 20520

August 1, 2017

Special Notice – Members of the International Chancery Center

Invitation to the Unveiling of Plaque Recognizing the Develoment of the First Atomic Clock

The original home of what is now known as the National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Washington, DC was the International Chancery Center (ICC). Through much of the 20th century, NIST's operations at what is now the ICC, contributed significantly to the safety and quality of the manufactured goods we all take for granted today, including everything from airplane engines to kitchen crockery.



Circa 1930 view of what is today the International Chancery Centery with Connecticut Avenue running horizontally across the middle, with north to the left. For modern orientation purposes, the smoke stack shown in the photo is located on the parcel that today comprises the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. (Source: National Institute of Standards and Technology Library)

Among countless research and testing projects, the world's first atomic clock was in invented in 1949 by NIST at what is today the ICC. Atomic clocks keep time better than any other clock. They even keep time better than the rotation of the Earth and the movement of the stars. Without atomic clocks, GPS navigation would be impossible, the Internet would not synchronize, and the position of the planets would not be known with enough accuracy for space probes and landers to be launched and monitored. Atomic clocks are not radioactive because they do not rely on atomic decay. Simply, they have an oscillating mass and spring like an ordinary clock.The first such clock used ammonia molecules as the source of vibrations. By 1952, NIST developed at the same location a second atomic clock, also the first of its kind, using cesium atoms at the vibration source.

In recognition of NIST's pioneering work with the development of the atomic clock a ceremony will be held on August 8, 2017, at 10am. At this ceremony a plaque commemorating this achievement will be unveiled. **Representatives of your Embassy are invited to attend this event and take the opportunity to meet NIST officials and scientists.** Additional information about NIST is available at https://www.nist.gov/.

-Invitation-

Unveiling of Plaque Recognizing the Development of the World's First Atomic Clock

August 8th, 10:30am

Near the intersection of Connecticut Ave. NW and Tilden St. NW

(light refreshments will be served)

Please provide OFM with the anticipated numbers of representatives from your Embassy that plan to attend this event at OFM-RSVP@state.gov. Questions concerning this event may be directed to John Solano at solanoj2@state.gov or (202) 647-3417.