

NCRI Receives Federal Funding for Coral Reef Research



From left: Dr. Rich Appeldorn, executive director of the Climate Change Research Initiative; George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU executive vice president and chief operating officer; Richard Dodge, Ph.D., chairperson of the 11th ICRS Local Organizing Committee, executive director of the National Coral Reef Institute and dean of the NSU Oceanographic Center; U.S. Representative Ron Klein (D-FL, Dist. 22).

On July 7, U.S. Congressman Ron Klein (D-FL) presented NSU Oceanographic Center Dean Richard Dodge, Ph.D., and NSU Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer George Hanbury, Ph.D., with a check representing 2008 federal funding for the National Coral Reef Institute, located at NSU's Oceanographic Center.

Congressman Klein spoke at the opening ceremonies of the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS) held at the Broward County Convention Center this week. The symposium is sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Interior and the State of Florida. It is held every four years, and with over 3,000 attendees, it is the largest gathering of coral reef scientists and resource managers in the world.

Dodge is the chairman of the U.S. host committee and organized the symposium. Dr. Hanbury also addressed the convention, highlighting the importance of ocean conservation and NSU's role as a leader in science education in South Florida.

Following his remarks, Congressman Klein held a press conference to present a check representing 2008 funding from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration for the National Coral Reef Institute at NSU's Oceanographic Center. He also discussed the importance of coral reefs to South Florida's ocean ecosystems, beaches and economy, noting that Florida is home to 84 percent of the coral reef habitat in U.S. waters and that Florida reefs support \$5.7 billion in direct annual economic activity and 74,000 jobs in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties.

Congressman Klein worked together with U.S. Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz and U.S. representatives from Puerto Rico to secure the NOAA funding, which will support coral reef research and management efforts at the National Coral Reef Institute and the Caribbean Coral Reef Institute at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez. Dr. Richard Appeldorn, executive director of the Caribbean Coral Reef Institute, was present to accept funding on behalf of the University of Puerto Rico and to stress the importance of collaborative efforts to address alarming rates of recent coral die offs in the Caribbean and Florida. The check in the amount of \$1,110,000 represents NOAA's 2008 funding for NCRI of \$760,000 and \$350,000 for the Caribbean Coral Reef Institute. The two institutes collaborate on research examining the stress on coral reef ecosystems and improving mitigation and management activities.