

Good afternoon, everyone. It is my honor to be here at the official start of the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, to speak on behalf of all of the many users who have waited for this day.

The Facility for Rare Isotope Beams has been many years in the making. The nuclear physics community has long recognized the need for a facility to help us reach toward the extremes of the nuclear chart. Already in 2002, a new Rare Isotope Accelerator was identified in the community's Long Range Plan as the highest priority for the future of nuclear physics in the United States. A new facility was needed to dovetail into the existing nuclear physics portfolio, to grow and expand US leadership in the field. This new, world-leading facility would incorporate everything we had learned thus far to provide a myriad of new and exotic isotopes for study, touching on nuclear structure, decay, reactions, astrophysics, nuclear chemistry, isotope harvesting, accelerator design, and a broad range of societal applications.

I still remember my first RIA summer school, and the excitement I felt about the new techniques I was learning. More importantly, I remember the sense of community I discovered.

For decades, that community has come together, through the annual Low Energy Community Meeting, various workshops, working groups, summer schools, and Town Halls, and via the FRIB Users Organization, to help inform the development of the FRIB project, reaffirm our support for the broad FRIB science program, and work toward making the Facility a world-leading laboratory for nuclear physics. Today represents the culmination of that effort.

Today is of course a day for celebration, but not because it represents the end of a long road; it represents the beginning of an exciting era of new discoveries in nuclear physics. The community is already looking forward, planning for upgrades and improvements that will increase the scientific reach of FRIB even further. Together with the existing nuclear physics facilities and research groups across the US and the globe, FRIB will position us to gain incredible new insights into the nature of the universe around us.

We look forward to the start of FRIB operations, and congratulate the user community past, present, and future, on their efforts in making today a reality.