Monolithic, Ultra-Thin GaInP/GaAs/GaInAs Tandem Solar Cells

Mark Wanlass, Phil Ahrenkiel, David Albin, Jeff Carapella, Anna Duda, Keith Emery, Daniel Friedman, John Geisz, Kim Jones, Alan Kibbler, James Kiehl, Sarah Kurtz, William McMahon, Tom Moriarty, Jerry Olson, Aaron Ptak, Manuel Romero, and Scott Ward

National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), 1617 Cole Blvd., Golden, CO, USA

Email: mark_wanlass@nrel.gov; Phone: (303) 384-6532; Fax: (303) 384-6430

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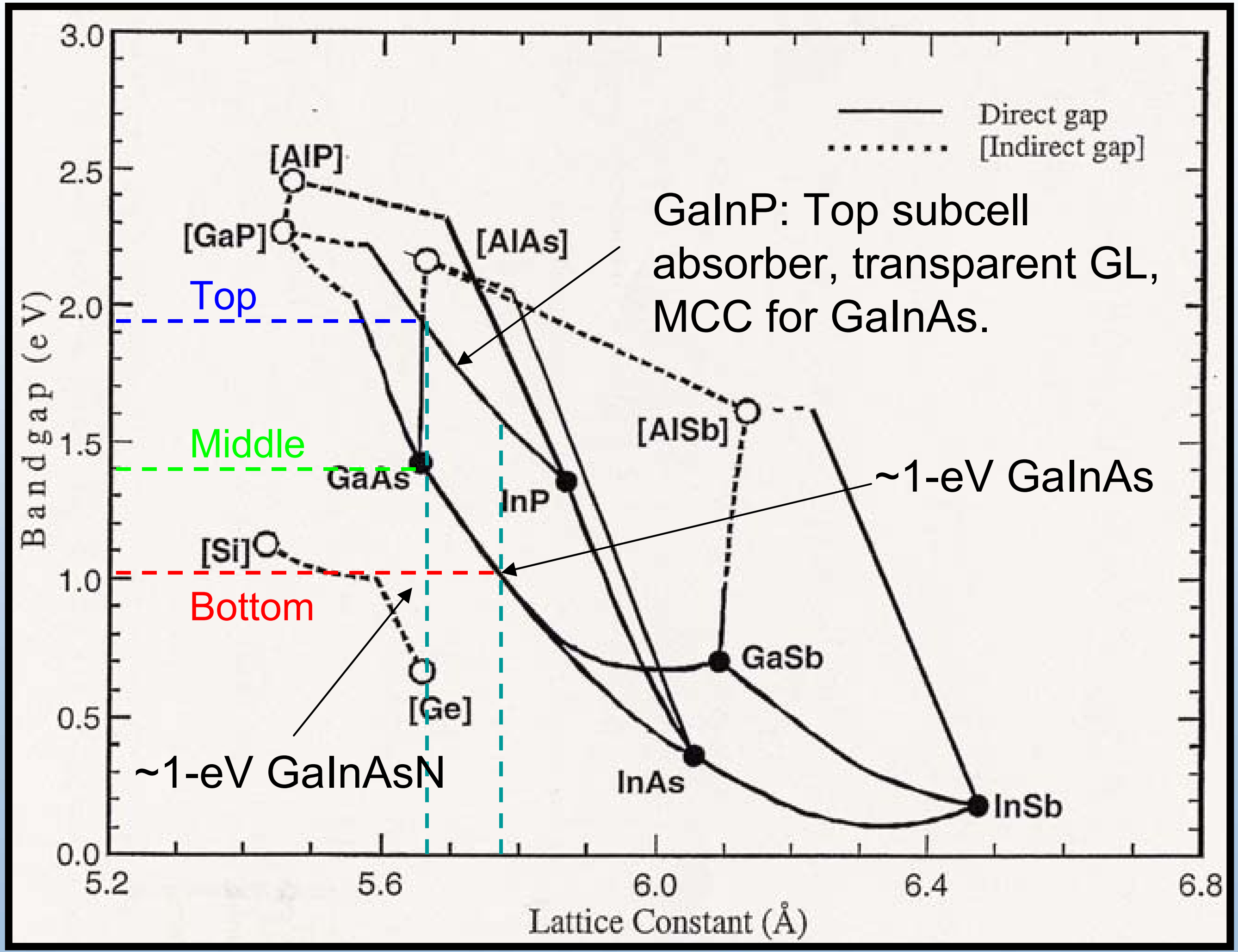
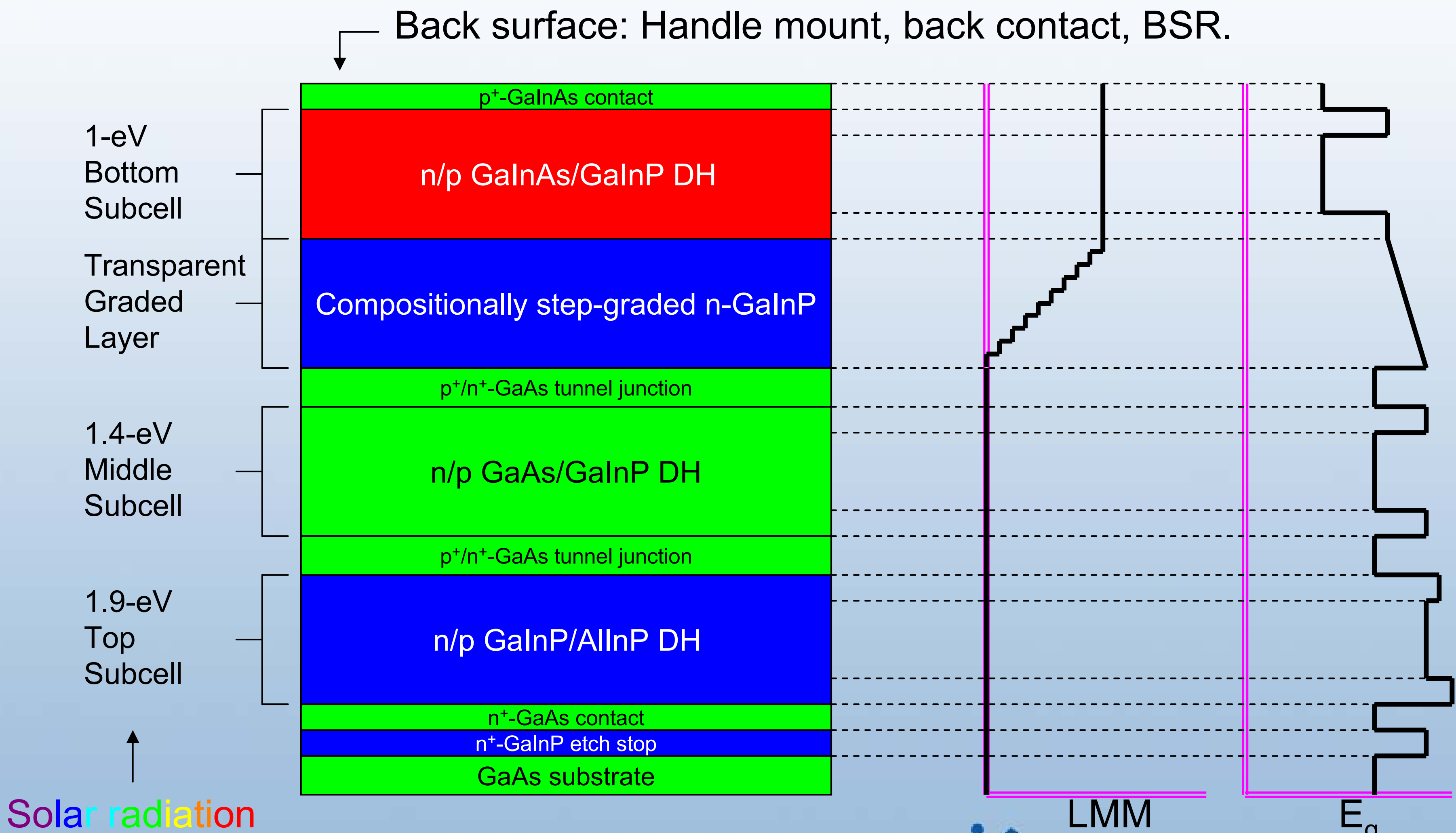
Monolithic, Ultra-Thin GaInP/GaAs/GaInAs Tandem Solar Cells

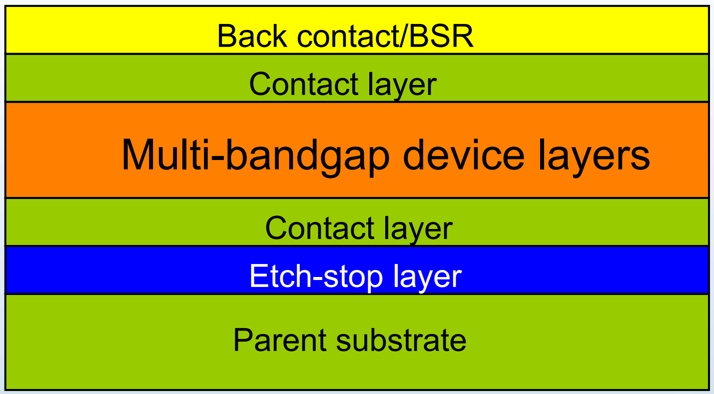
- NREL IR # 05-05, patent pending.
- Near-optimum subcell bandgaps.
- ~300 mV voltage output boost compared to conventional Ge-based triple-junction tandems.
- Bottom subcell E_g is variable.
- Basic approach is expandable to 4-6 subcells.



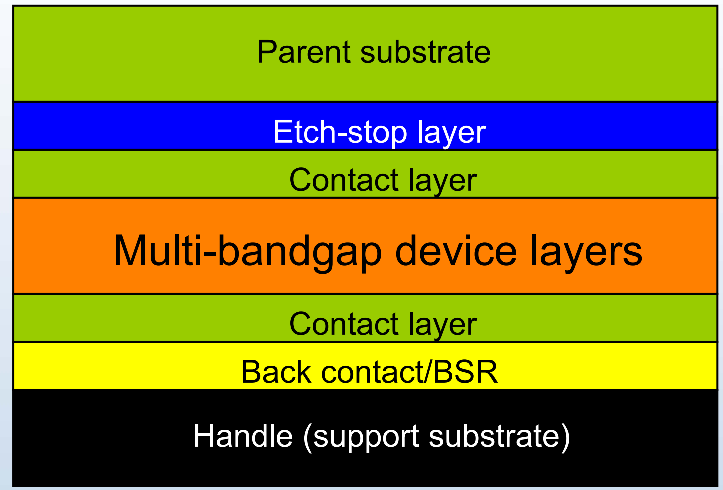
Inverted GaInP/GaAs/GaInAs Tandem Structure



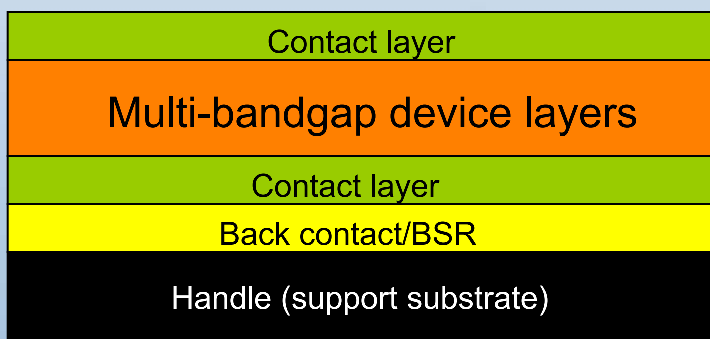
Ultra-thin Tandem Cell Processing Sequence



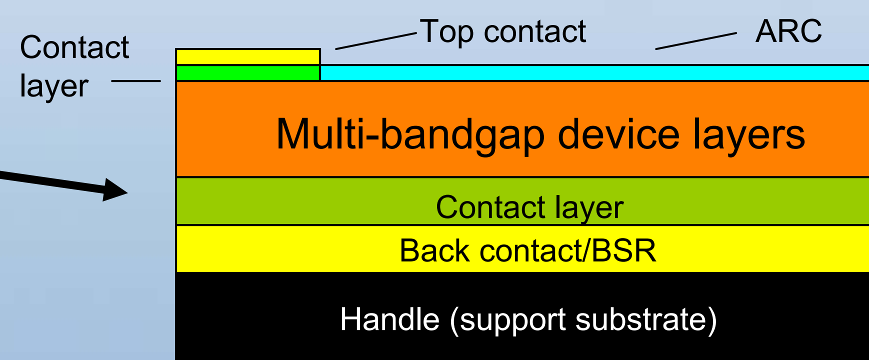
1) Inverted tandem structure is grown on the parent substrate, and the back contact/BSR is formed.



2) Epistructure is mounted upside down on a handle material (secondary support substrate).



3) Parent substrate is removed.



4) Front-surface processing is completed.

Advantages of Ultra-Thin, Handle-Mounted Tandem Solar Cells

- Handle material can be engineered to have a wide range of advantageous characteristics.
- Thermal management can be optimized.
- Highest specific power (W/kg) for space applications.
- Reuse and/or reclamation of the parent substrate also possible, reducing cost.
- Parent substrate can be impure to reduce cost.
- Benefits of BSR: thin GaInAs subcell, lower J_0, improved radiation hardness, reduced operating temperature.

Semi-Realistic Performance Modeling GaInP/GaAs/GaInAs

Low-AOD Direct Spectrum, 250 suns, 25°C
QE = 0.95, realistic $J_0(E_g)$, no parasitic losses

Subcell parameters

Subcell Absorber	E_g (eV)	V_{oc} (V)	J_{sc} (A/cm^2)	FF (%)
GaInP	1.87	1.53	3.40	91.57
GaAs	1.42	1.12	3.40	89.23
GaInAs	1.01	0.74	3.63	85.21

Series-connected tandem parameters

V_{oc} (V)	Jsc (A/cm^2)	FF (%)	V_{max} (V)	J_{max} (A/cm^2)	P_{max} (W/cm^2)
3.38	3.40	90.32	3.11	3.34	10.38

Tandem efficiency: 41.5%

Semi-Realistic Performance Modeling

Conditions

AM0, one sun, 25°C

QE = 0.95, Realistic $J_0(E_g)$

Tandem efficiency

~33% (one sun)

~36% (10 suns)

Subcell parameters

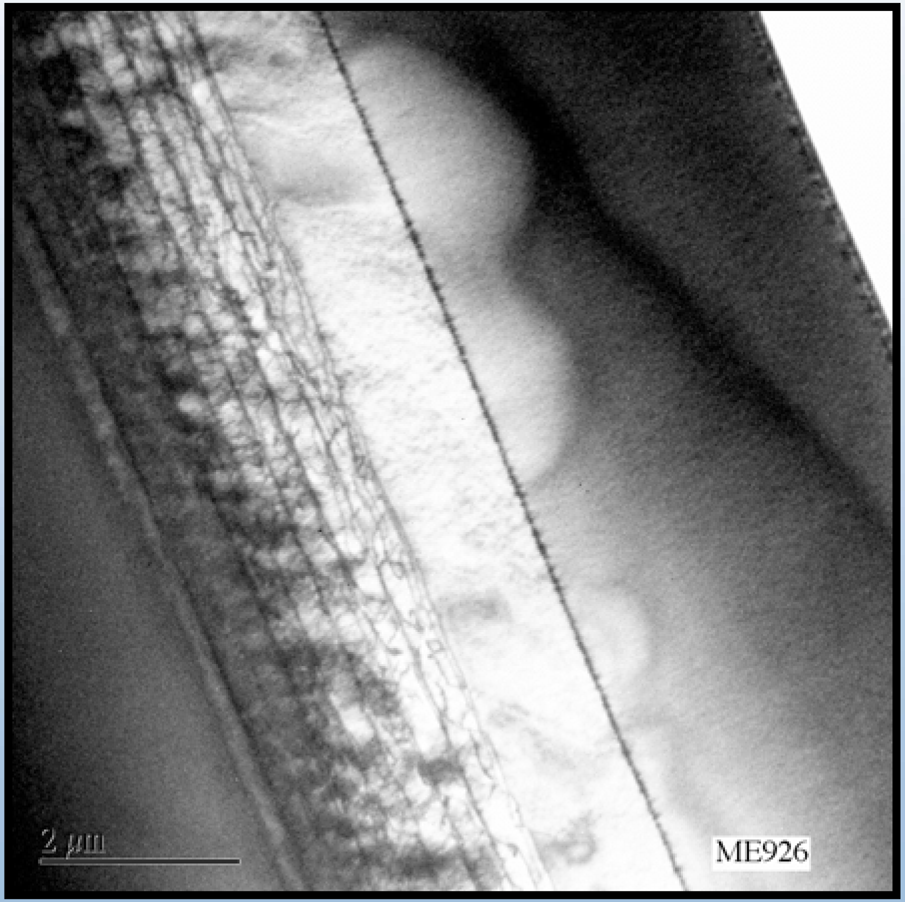
Subcell Absorber	E_g (eV)	V_{oc} (V)	J_{sc} (mA/cm^2)	FF (%)
GaInP	1.87	1.393	17.00	90.94
GaAs	1.42	0.981	17.00	88.09
GaInAs	1.02	0.608	18.13	83.01

Series-connected tandem parameters

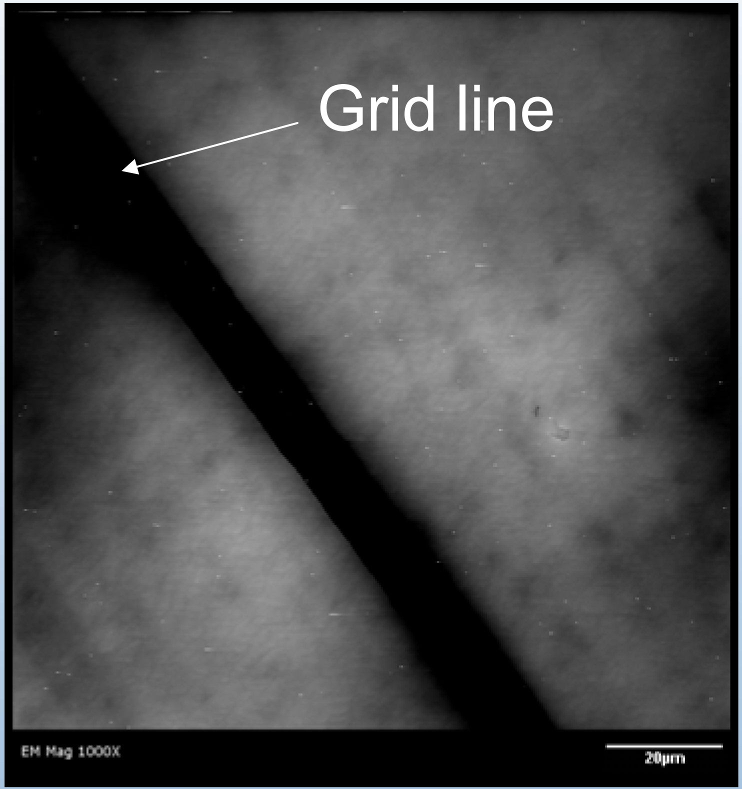
V_{oc} (V)	Jsc (mA/cm^2)	FF (%)	V_{max} (V)	J_{max} (mA/cm^2)	P_{max} (mW/cm^2)
2.98	17.00	89.27	2.72	16.65	45.26

Defects in LMM, ~1-eV GaInAs

XTEM



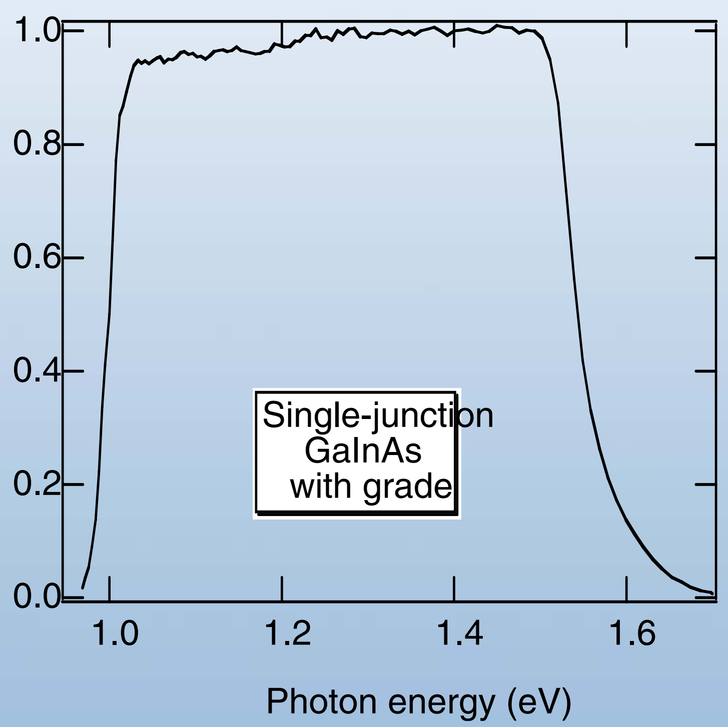
Plan-view CL



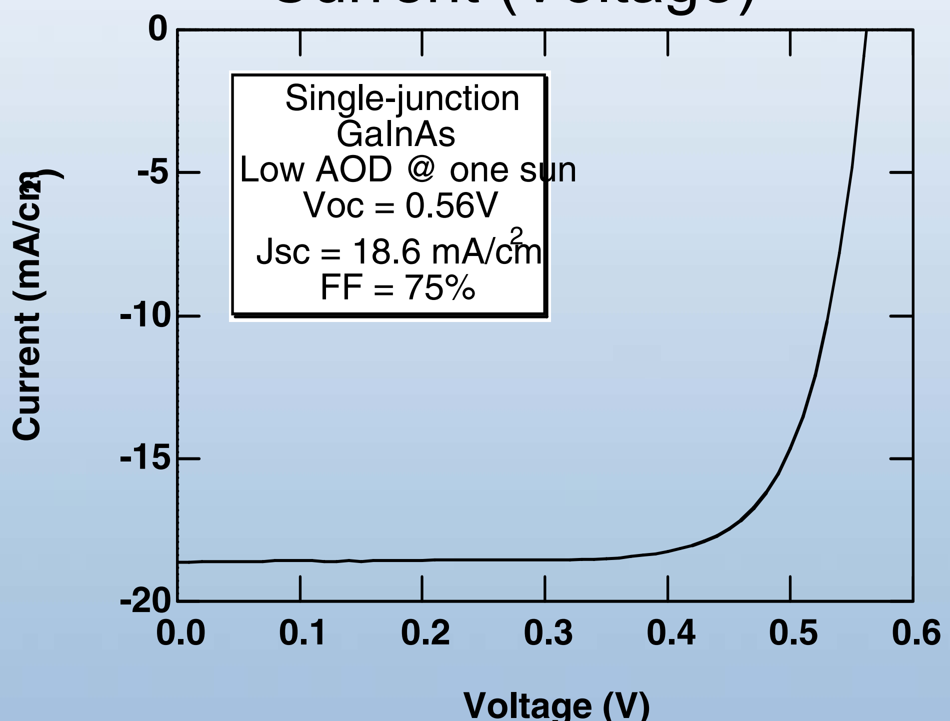
TD density ~ 2E6 cm^{-2}

~1-eV, LMM (2.2%) GaInAs/GaInP DH Cell Performance

Internal Quantum Efficiency

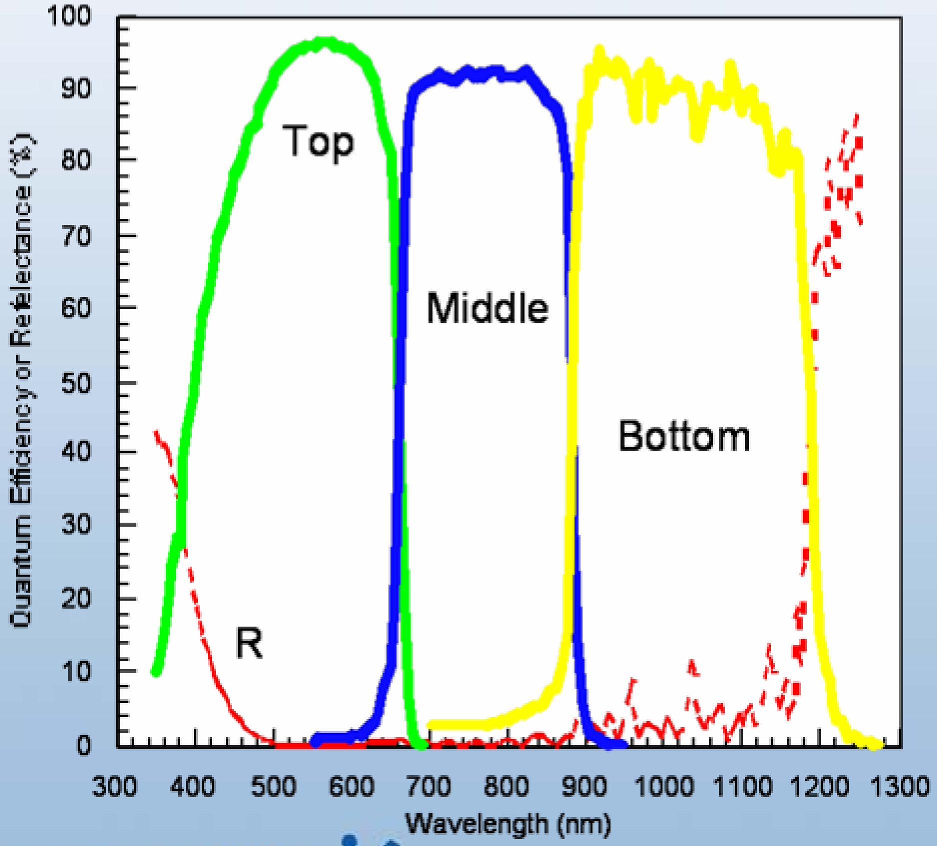


Current (Voltage)



Ultra-Thin, Handle-Mounted GaInP/GaAs/GaInAsTandem AEQE & R Data

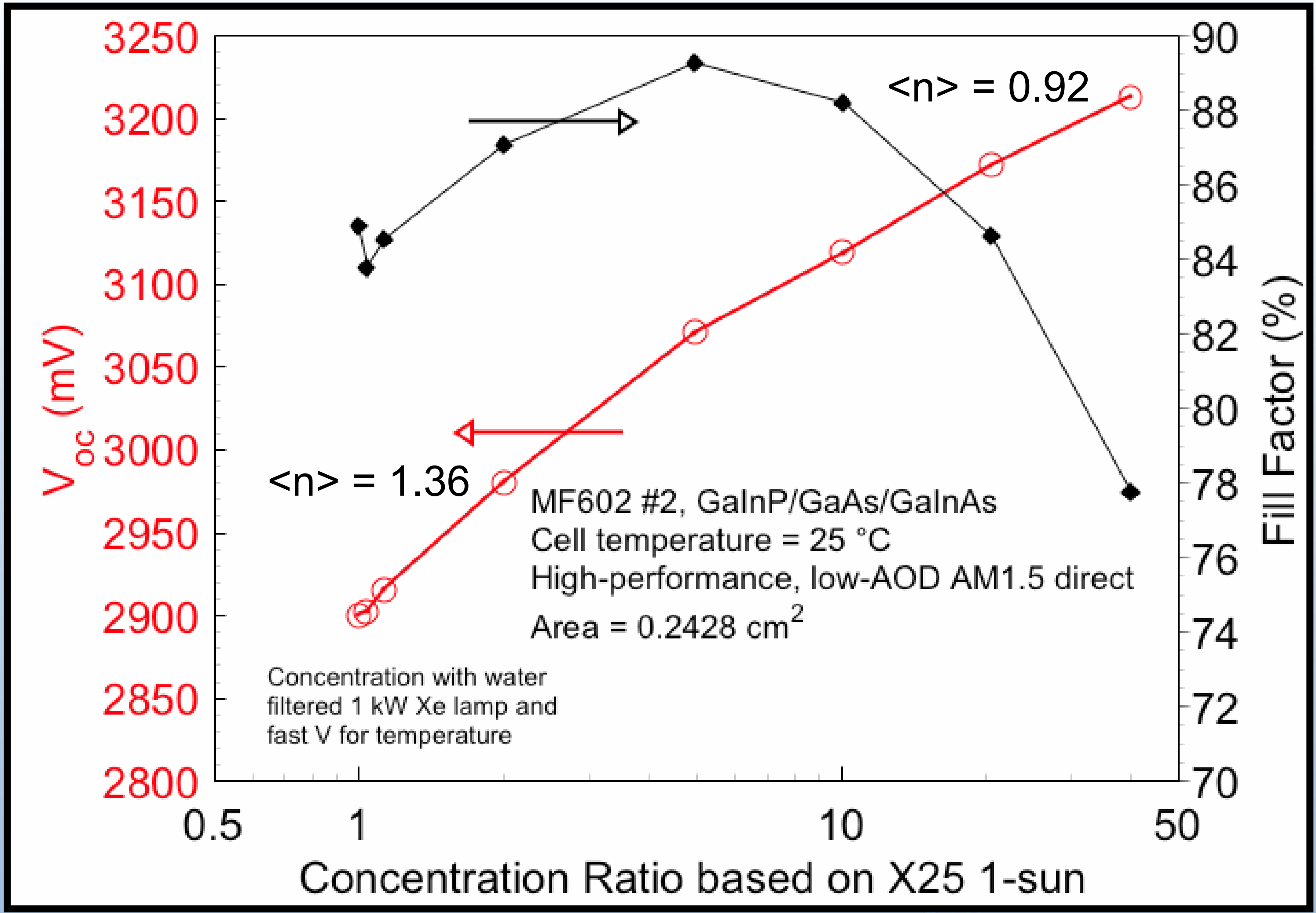
- QE is excellent for all subcells, but some improvement is still possible (reduce parasitic absorption and reflection).
- ZnS/MgF_2 ARC is not optimal.
- Interference evident in thin bottom subcell.



Reported Performance

PVSC	1/3-7/05	Global, 25°C	31.1%
SPW	4/18-21/05	AM0, 1 sun, 25°C	29.7%
ISCC	5/1-5/05	Direct, 10.1 suns, 25°C	37.9%
SPRAT	9/20-22/05	AM0, 1 sun, 25°C Kapton handle	26.5%
SPRAT	9/20-22/05	AM0, 8.9 suns, 25°C	31.4%

V_{oc}, FF (Concentration Ratio)



I-V Data at Peak Efficiency

- η = 37.9% (10.1 suns).
- On 4/25/05, a new record for solar PV conversion.
- With continued development, η > 40% possible at higher concentration ratios.

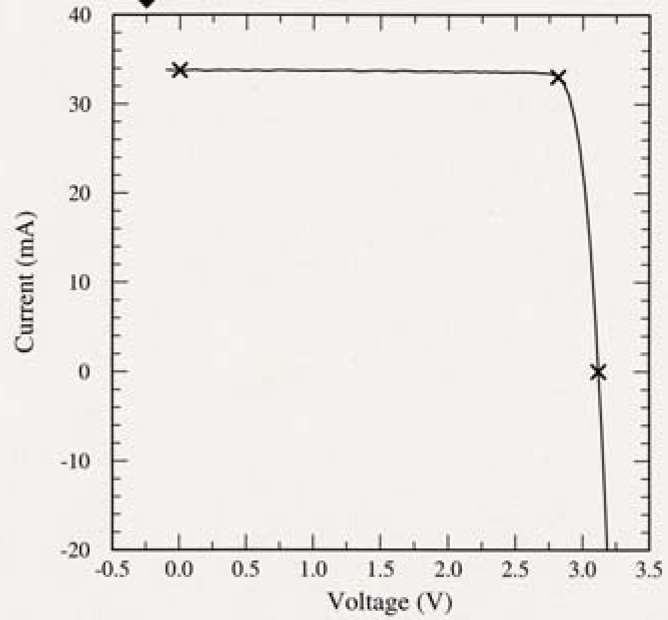
NREL

GaInP/GaAs/GaInAs Cell

Device ID: MF602 #2
Apr 25, 2005 2:26 PM
Reporting Spectrum: AM1.5 Direct

Device Temperature: 25.0 ± 1.0 °C
Device Area: 0.2428 cm^2
Irradiance: 10109.1 W/m^2

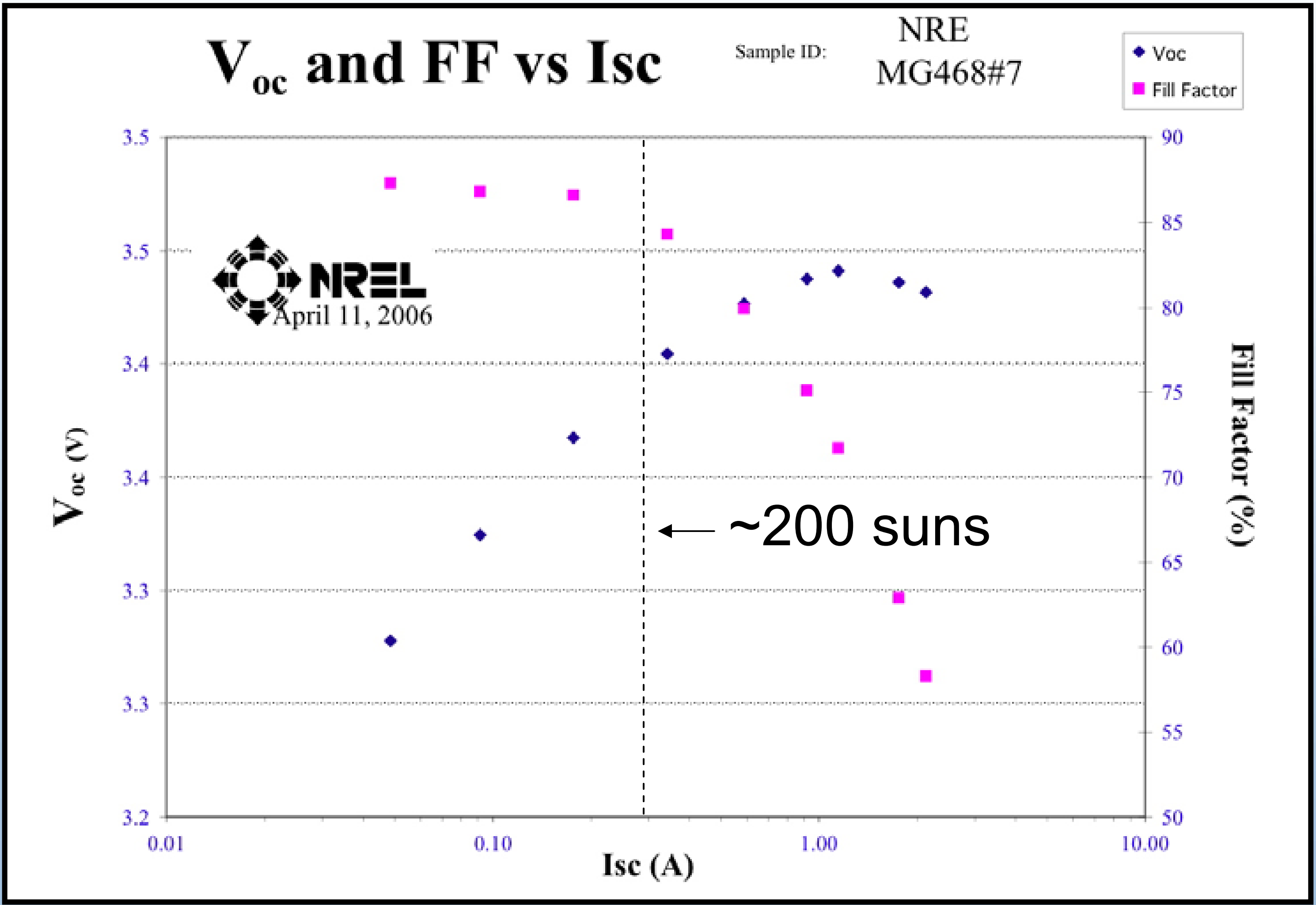
NREL Concentrator IV System
PV Performance Characterization Team



V_{oc} = 3.1199 V
I_{sc} = 33.78 mA
J_{sc} = 0.1392 A/cm^2
Fill Factor = 88.22 %

I_{max} = 33.04 mA
V_{max} = 2.8146 V
P_{max} = 92.99 mW
Efficiency = 37.9±2.3 %

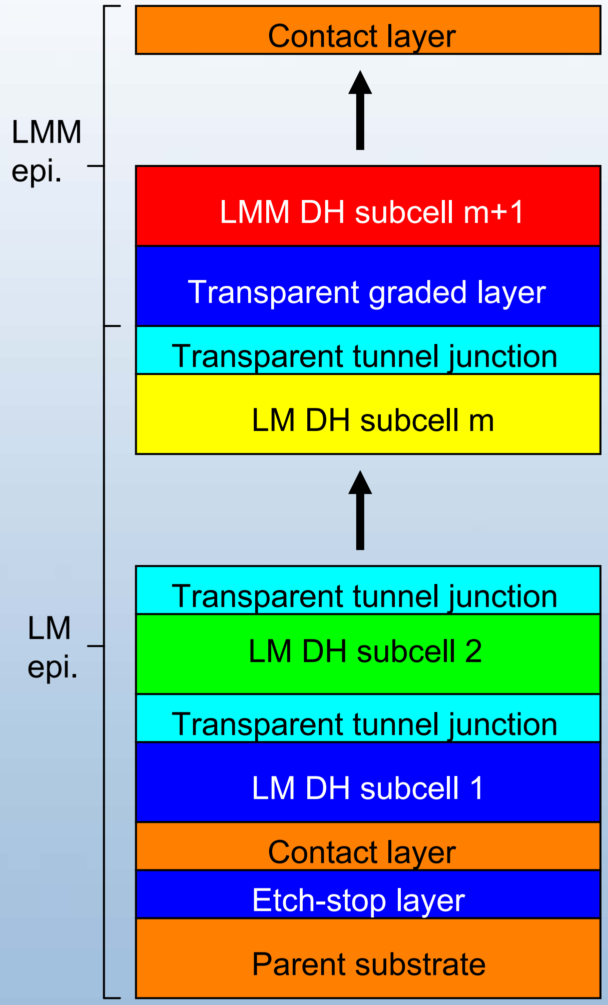
Recent progress



Research Issues

- High-yield processing of handle-mounted, ultra-thin devices.
- Develop process enabling reuse of parent substrate.
- Tandem cell efficiency testing more difficult w/ 1-eV subcell - even more difficult as we consider more than three subcells.
- Inverted tunnel junctions.
- Radiation effects.
- Push efficiency limits by including more subcells - can we achieve 40-50% (terr. conc.), 35-40% (AM0)?

Advanced Design Options



- Concept applies to two, or more, subcells.
- A wide range of substrates, subcell materials, tunnel junction materials, and transparent compositional grades are possible.
- Substrates: GaAs, Ge, Si, SiGe.
- Subcells, etc.: AlGaInPAsSb.

Legend:
LM = lattice matched.
LMM = lattice mismatched.
DH = double heterostructure.