

FEATURE

Science and Technology in Focus: Pittcon 2026 Concludes Historic Edition in Texas with a Focus on AI and Sustainability

Pittcon 2026, one of the world's largest conferences dedicated to laboratory science and analytical instrumentation, was held from March 7 to 11 at the Henry B. González Convention Center in Texas, bringing together thousands of researchers, academics, and industrial leaders. The central themes of discussions and product launches revolved around workflow automation, laboratory sustainability, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence into chemistry.



Pittcon is renowned for its exhibition hall. Photo: Pittcon 2026

With 45 short courses, 375 speakers, 1,200 presentations, and 500 exhibitors, Pittcon 2026 undoubtedly offered something for every scientist and researcher.

Pittcon 2026 opened with the Wallace H. Coulter Keynote Lecture, which traditionally features a speaker whose work has had a transformative impact on laboratory science. Nobel Prize laureate Professor Frances H. Arnold delivered the Coulter Lecture entitled "Innovation by Evolution: Bringing a New Chemistry to Life".

Another highly impactful moment was the lecture by Omar Yaghi, who introduced "AIMATRY," a new field that merges Artificial Intelligence with the design of complex molecular structures. Parallel symposia also addressed the future of biomedicine, with an emphasis on wearable sensors and devices designed for clinical analyses outside the traditional laboratory environment.

In addition to a strong technical program, Pittcon offered a wide range of short courses. These intensive, hands-on courses provide specialized training in dozens of subjects, ranging from fundamental concepts in chromatography and mass spectrometry to emerging areas such as data analysis and advanced materials characterization.

Among the event's honors, the prestigious Pittcon Heritage Award was presented to Alexandra Knauer, CEO of Knauer. The German executive was recognized for her leadership in the global expansion of high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) purification systems, essential for mRNA vaccine production, as well as for her pioneering corporate policies promoting pay equity.

Scientific advances in forensic medicine were also recognized with the Pittsburgh Spectroscopy Award, granted to Dr. Igor Lednev for his groundbreaking application of Raman spectroscopy in rapid medical diagnostics.

The Pittcon exhibition hall is the largest single showcase of instrumentation, services, and technology for laboratory sciences in North America. It serves as a dynamic hub for innovation and technology transfer, where abstract concepts discussed during technical sessions are transformed into tangible products and tools.

The exhibition's major commercial highlight was the announcement of the Pittcon Excellence Awards winners. In the large-company category, Xylem Lab Solutions earned the gold medal with the launch of the N-REALYZER, a high-speed nitrogen and protein analyzer based on the Dumas combustion method. Hofer, Inc. received the silver medal for an automated laser engraving machine for biobank tubes, while Rigaku Americas Corporation took bronze for the XSPA-200 ER two-dimensional detector designed for X-ray diffraction.

As tradition dictates, the closing of the event also marked the announcement of plans for the following year. The organization confirmed that Pittcon 2027 will return to its geographical roots in Pittsburgh between April 24 and 28, 2027. The official calendar for scientific abstract submissions for the next edition will begin on June 1, 2026.

Text: Lilian Freitas – BrJAC Publisher

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