

Reprinted from **Applied Optics**, Vol. 21, page 3060, September 1, 1982  
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### **Real-time measurement of the absorption coefficient of aerosol particles**

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Received 16 June 1982.

Sponsored by R. W. Terhune, Ford Motor Company  
0003-6935/82/173060-03\$01.00/0.

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Recent studies have shown that large concentrations of graphitic carbon particles are found in the atmosphere in both urban and remote locations.<sup>1</sup> These particles are produced in combustion and have a large optical absorption cross section, of the order of  $10 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ . Their presence affects radiation transfer through the atmosphere, causing visibility degradation<sup>2</sup> and possible changes in the regional or global radiation balance.<sup>3</sup> The size of these effects depends critically on both the particle concentration and their single-scattering albedo,<sup>4</sup> which is determined by the relative magnitude of the scattering and absorption coefficients. The scattering coefficient is easily measured by nephelometry.<sup>5,6</sup> In this Communica-