



FOR RELEASE AFTER 2 P.M. NOV. 30, 2004

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OHIO 'LIGHTS' NATION'S LEADING SUPERSCALE NETWORK

COLUMBUS, Ohio –Ohio boldly staked its claim today (Nov. 30) as a national leader in networking and computing technologies with the official launch of the Third Frontier Network, the most advanced statewide, fiber-optic network for education, research and economic development.

Federal and state officials, industry leaders and university researchers gathered at The Ohio State University and several participating universities across the state to learn about the impact that dedicated high-speed broadband networking will have on Ohio's education, research and manufacturing communities.

"When other states work to develop a statewide network to help share information and create jobs, Ohio will light the way," Governor Bob Taft said. "The TFN will transform teaching and learning and will accelerate the commercialization of new knowledge throughout Ohio."

Albert A. Frink Jr., assistant secretary for manufacturing and services at the U.S. Department of Commerce delivered featured remarks and assisted Gov. Bob Taft in officially "lighting the network." As the assistant secretary, Frink advocates, coordinates and implements policies that will help U.S. manufacturers compete globally.

The TFN will connect Ohio's universities and colleges with each other, their business partners, Ohio's federal labs, hospitals and K-12 schools as well as Internet 2, a national high-performance backbone network for advanced networking application development.

A new unprecedented era of scientific research will be fostered via the TFN and will place Ohio at the forefront of developing new networking technologies. By promoting critical scientific and industrial research, the TFN will help increase technology-sector jobs by fostering research collaboration between Ohio's university and business communities, contributing to the growth of the state's economy.

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The new network's massive increase in capacity will provide revolutionary new ways for conducting research in such areas as fuel-cell technology with partners Case Western Reserve University and Stark State College, cancer treatment at the Cleveland Clinic, drug design at The Ohio State University, genetic research at the Cincinnati Genome Research Institute, homeland security at Owens Community College and a host of other applications.

Almost all of Ohio's colleges and universities are using the TFN fiber-optic backbone, with 11 higher education institutions having direct access via last-mile connections. Additional campuses, their industry research partners, Ohio's federal facilities and primary and secondary schools will start connecting during the summer of 2005 as finances and logistics permit.

"Today, we are embarking on a new era of communication and collaboration," said Rod Chu, chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. "Over the Third Frontier Network, we will pool Ohio's best minds and share its best resources with the aim of reclaiming the state's heritage of leading the nation in innovation and production."

The Ohio Board of Regents has committed \$19 million for the construction of the TFN and will support its ongoing operation through \$3 million in annual funding for OARnet, the networking arm of the Ohio Supercomputer Center. Earlier this year, Congress granted Ohio \$5.1 million to support the use of the TFN to improve medical and science education programs and to increase the online sharing of state-of-the-art research instruments. Also, the National Science Foundation made a \$500,000 grant to OARnet to support additional academic connections to the network.

TFN's backbone operates at the highest capacity (OC-48) of any statewide education and research network in the country. Starting next year, officials plan to create a research link that will quadruple the research bandwidth (OC-192) to participating scientific and research communities.

"The TFN will generate many new opportunities, not only for advances in education and research, but also for advances in the economy as we stimulate the creation of new companies working with higher education to generate high-quality jobs," said Stan Ahalt, executive director of the Ohio Supercomputer Center.

With the TFN, Ohio can explore new experimental networking technologies, and can customize networks to meet specific and unique research requirements. School children can take virtual field trips and interact with university researchers in their classrooms. Doctors will be able to consult with patients across the state without leaving their offices. And, students and researchers will have access to OSC's supercomputers in the blink of an eye.

The technical highlight of "lighting" the network was a statewide, online medical consultation on a virtual model of the mouse genome to seek clues to the cause of human genetic birth defects. A live videoconference demonstrated the ease with which medical experts throughout the state will now be able to collaborate on advanced research in drug design, personalized medicine and genetics research. The demonstration showed the level of interactivity, access to large data sets and the flow of discussion that can be achieved with the TFN.

The consultation involved researchers at: the Wright State University School of Medicine, the Medical College of Ohio, the Cleveland Clinic connecting from Cleveland State University; the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine connecting from the University of Akron; the Genome Research Institute at the University of Cincinnati; and the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

To set the stage for the videoconference demonstration, Dr. David Millhorn of the University of Cincinnati's Genome Research Institute explained the vital importance of this field of study and the impact of new broadband technologies on that research. Using a beta (pre-release) version of high-quality, videoconference software and hardware, Millhorn spoke to audiences in Columbus and around the state at 60-frames-per-second, twice the speed of the current videoconference rate of 30-frames-per-second.

The Ohio Board of Regents is the coordinating body for higher education in the State of Ohio. Created in 1963 by the General Assembly, the 11-member public board has a direct, non-governing relationship with all of Ohio's colleges and universities. OARnet is a division of the Ohio Supercomputer Center, a technology initiative of the Ohio Board of Regents.

QUOTES ON THE THIRD FRONTIER NETWORK

Dr. Paul Unger, Provost, Owens Community College

"The Third Frontier Network and the application of this technology to homeland security training will put Ohio on the cutting edge."

Dr. Joseph H. Gardner, Director of Chemistry and Intellectual Property Management, Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals

"The Third Frontier Network is an important component for getting the partnerships to be able to collaborate, to share data sets, and to be able to communicate with each other across the state of Ohio."

Paul Rosevear, Associate Professor, Dept. of Molecular Genetics, Biochemistry and Microbiology, University of Cincinnati

"One of the things the Third Frontier Network will enable us to do is to identify gifted students or students that are interested in science in small communities and put them in touch with a researcher at an institute and enable them to carry out undergraduate research from a distance."

Dr. Joel Saltz, M.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Biomedical Informatics, The Ohio State University

"Biomedical instrumentation is becoming increasingly expensive. The prospect of making these imaging devices available on a remote basis is a very enticing one."

Rodger McKain, President, SOFCo-EFS Holdings

"My sense is that this will greatly enhance the interaction that goes on between particularly small companies and universities. My hat's off to all of the effort that made this a reality."