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FEDERAL SPENDING BILL FUNDS THIRD FRONTIER NETWORK INITIATIVES

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The fiscal year 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act, approved earlier by Congress and signed into law last week by President Bush, directs \$5.1 million in federal funds to the Ohio Board of Regents to make Ohio the world's leader in using state-of-the-art computer networking to improve education, research and medical care.

The federal funds support new initiatives that will take advantage of Ohio's 1,600-mile Third Frontier Network, the most advanced state-wide computer network in the nation.

"Our Third Frontier Network will link colleges, universities, Federal labs and, eventually, businesses to spur economic growth and job creation throughout Ohio," Ohio Governor Bob Taft said. "The Ohio Board of Regents and our entire Ohio delegation, led by Congressman Regula, Congresswoman Pryce and Senator DeWine, deserve our thanks for supporting this investment in Ohio's knowledge economy and helping to make our state a national leader in using advanced broadband networking to share equipment, provide medical care and improve science education."

"This important funding, combined with investments made by the state and its campuses, allows Ohio to vault to the forefront of educational delivery and application," said Roderick G. W. Chu, chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. "The knowledge economy demands that the state have an increasingly better educated citizenry and be a leader in the commercialization of innovation. The Third Frontier Network will allow us to move forward in these areas with greater efficiency and effectiveness."

The bill provides \$3.4 million in funding for the network through the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as \$1.7 million from the U.S. Department of Education.

"I am pleased to have played a role in advancing a state-of-the-art project that will improve medical care, promote education and improve the lives of thousands of Ohioans," said Rep. Ralph Regula, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

The Health and Human Services funding will, among other things, connect the state's academic medical centers with Ohio's children's hospitals and select community hospitals. The connection will enhance the ability of physicians to communicate over high-quality television and Internet connections, improve access to specialists in underserved areas and enable collaborative educational and research efforts.

FUNDING FOR NETWORK INITIATIVES/2

The Education funding will, as one of its core activities, create a science education network on the Third Frontier Network. Students using this network will be able to see and use the latest scientific instruments and interact with college and university faculty and industrial researchers as they solve leading edge problems. This kind of active learning will encourage student interest in science and technology. As a result, it will also enhance the nation's security by providing for a broader pool of citizens who are able to advance and apply knowledge.

"In this difficult economy one of my focuses has been appropriations projects that will help create jobs and prepare Ohioans for good paying jobs," said U.S. Senator George V. Voinovich of Ohio. "The more we can help Ohioans upgrade their skills and receive valuable training, then the better equipped they will be to succeed in a changing job market."

"I am proud to have led this request through the House of Representatives; to have helped send home appropriate funding that will improve health care and generate medical breakthroughs by harnessing the immense potential of Ohio's medical and scientific research communities located around the state," said Congresswoman Deborah Pryce, whose Ohio House district includes western Franklin County, Madison and Union Counties.

In addition to supporting the medical and science education networks, federal funding will provide equipment and fiber needed to connect additional institutions to the Third Frontier Network and provide institutions access to new resources such as expensive scientific equipment.

"This is an ideal state-federal partnership," observed Thomas W. Noe, chairman of the Ohio Board of Regents. "Ohio is lighting the way to the future with the Third Frontier Network. Congressman Regula's leadership, with Reps. Pryce and Hobson and the entire Ohio Congressional delegation, combined with Gov. Bob Taft's crucial assistance, will accelerate the network's benefits and bring them to the doorstep of every Ohioan."

The network's 1,600-mile backbone was secured in 2003 through the State of Ohio's purchase of unused fiber optic cable from private telecommunications carriers. The network is being built and administered by OARnet, Ohio's Internet service provider, through more than \$12.5 million in state funding.

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.

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