

# Ohio gets wired for 21st century; Third Frontier Network unveiled

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It's all about connections.

Ohio's \$19 million Third Frontier Network was unveiled Tuesday in a lighting ceremony that took place at Ohio State University in Columbus and via a real-time video broadcast at six universities across the state, including the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine in Rootstown.

The newly installed, high-speed broadband Internet connection is the nation's most advanced statewide education and economic development network, said Pat Crowley, NEOUCOM's public information officer.

The new connection will be accessible to researchers at universities, hospitals and K-12 public schools throughout Ohio, and will allow them to share larger data sets at a faster speed.

"We've wired Ohio to be the knowledge leader," Gov. Bob Taft said. "It's the best broadband connection in the nation - it's bigger, faster and less costly."

Researchers now will be able to send large data sets or large files such as CAT-SCAN, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) or video in real time.

"Researchers with large files and graphics normally would have to put the information on a disk or DVD and send it in the mail," Crowley said. "Now they can send it from their desktop."

The Ohio Board of Regents, the coordinating body for higher education in Ohio, helped spearhead the new network. The network's 1,600 mile of fiber-optic cable was purchased at a "low rate" from a private company in the telecommunications industry after the industry fell in 2001, Crowley said.

Other states such as California and Indiana are pursuing similar networks. However, Ohio is the first state to complete such a project.

Today, 11 colleges and universities are connected to the network, including OSU, Wright State University near Dayton, Ohio University in Athens and Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

Two other universities - Kent State University and NEOUCOM - are to be connected to the network by the first quarter of next year.

Youngstown State University is to have a shared connection which should be active next year, state officials said.

Additional campuses, their industry research partners, federal research facilities and other institutions are to be connected next summer as finances and logistics permit, state officials said.

“It’s collaboration and connectivity,” said Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Roderick Chu.