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FRANK O'BANNON
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For immediate release Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2001

O'Bannon sparks I-Light, a high-tech link for Indiana's universities

Governor Frank O'Bannon today activated I -Light, a high-performance, optical-fiber network that links the campuses of Indiana University, Purdue University and Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis – *and* links all three to the future.

A ceremony at IUPUI marked the completion of the two - year, $5.3 million project to build the fiber-optic infrastructure needed to make the connections.

Indiana, which enjoys a geographical advantage when it comes to tapping into existing fiber pathways, may be the first state to deploy such a high-performance data network. I -Light is capable of moving the entire written contents of the universities' libraries from one campus to another in seconds.

It will be used to connect the universities to the Internet2, the high-speed research incarnation of the Internet that has greater capacity than the universities have had before.

O'Bannon told a crowd of several hundred that Indiana earned its nickname of "Crossroads of America" because it became a transportation hub during the country's Industrial Revolution.

"In addition to being the Crossroads of America, Indiana now is the 'Crossroads of Information,'" he said. "Indiana is an important link in the infrastructure of the Internet2. And so it is important that we take advantage of our place in this new world and be a leader in the Digital Revolution just as we were in the Industrial Revolution."

Joining the governor at the ceremony were IU President Myles Brand and Purdue University President Martin C. Jischke.

"Today we are not only lighting a fiber -optic cable, we are illuminating the future of Indiana," Brand said. "Working hand – in - hand with its partners around the state, Indiana University is helping to create the information technology that will be so important to our state's economic future."

Jischke said the Indiana data highway could not have come at a better time. "I -Light will provide Purdue and IU with the necessary connectivity and capability to qualify for more federal research funding," he said. "While direct economic benefits will not be immediate, in terms of new jobs, I-Light contributes to making the state more attractive to high-tech companies looking to relocate or expand."

I-Light will be a critical component for many projects, including:

- Telemedicine. IU and Purdue already collaborate extensively on medical sciences, particularly radiology, and spinal cord and cancer research. I -Light will provide real-time, three-dimensional sharing of information between scientists at the universities, who can confer to diagnose and treat diseases.
- The Indiana Genomics Initiative, which will provide scientists with high - speed access to huge DNA and protein databases, helping them analyze genetic and protein sequences and find novel therapies.
- The ATLAS experiment for the Large Hadron Collider, a cooperative effort originating in Switzerland to explore the fundamental nature of matter and the basic forces that shape the universe. Purdue and Indiana are among 29 U.S. universities participating, and the ATLAS Tier 2 Center, located at IUPUI, will process data from the experiment.

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