

Contact: Jane Jankowski

Phone: 317/232-1622

Email:

jjankowski@gov.in.gov

For Immediate Release:

Nov 1, 2005

I-Light2 gets go-ahead

For immediate release

I-Light2 gets go-ahead

INDIANAPOLIS (November 1, 2005) – Governor Mitch Daniels announced today that the I-Light2 optical fiber network project will be extended to the state's colleges and universities to support their research and education programs.

The governor, through the Department of Information Technology, reviewed the I-Light2 project for its fiscal implications for the state. Funding authorized by the Indiana General Assembly for I-Light2 supports extension of the optical fiber network beyond Purdue University and Indiana University, the two original I-Light participants.

"I have agreed to 'light' or turn on the fiber connections linking colleges and universities in Indiana because I believe that creating this super high-speed network will lead to greater advancements for our institutions of higher learning," said Governor Daniels. "I-Light2 will be preserved for the exclusive use of higher education. State government will not become a competitor to private sector companies which provide broadband Internet connections to Hoosiers."

I-Light2 is a series of leases (irredeemable rights of usage or IRUs) acquired by the state from private fiber optic network providers. These leases, which are managed by the Office of Management and Budget, along with the funds necessary to complete the network, will be provided to Indiana and Purdue, which will manage the network on behalf of the other colleges and universities in the state. It is expected that IU and Purdue will work with the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System (IHETS) to implement the network.

The state will create a memorandum of understanding between the universities and the state to ensure appropriate network access to all members and limit use to the stated purposes of research and education within the member institutions.

"This super-fast network will enable IU to maintain its position as a national leader in high-speed networking and will greatly assist us in seeking additional federal grant and contract support for our research efforts," said IU Vice President for Research and Information Technology Michael McRobbie. "The issue of broadband access in Indiana more generally is on such a scale that it can only realistically be addressed by the private sector."

Purdue University's vice president for information technology and CIO James R. Bottum, says all institutions of higher education in the state of Indiana should benefit from the implementation of ILight2. "The administration is showing vision for the future and should be commended on its decision to move this project forward," Bottum says. "With the lighting of the I-Light2 fiber, the distances between campuses in Indiana drops to almost nothing with regard to sharing educational resources and scientific data. I-Light2

will clearly benefit students at Indiana colleges and universities because it will provide the foundation to share educational resources. It will also make our scientific and engineering research more collaborative and efficient.”

The original I-Light initiative, completed in 2001, cost about \$6 million and was the first university-owned optical fiber network of its kind in the country. It connected supercomputers at IU-Bloomington, IUPUI in Indianapolis and Purdue.

In 2004, the legislature, led by Senator David Ford of Hartford City, authorized the state to spend \$10 million to expand the I-Light network to other universities.

“We think it makes more sense to give the fiber network leases to IU and Purdue to manage on behalf of the other colleges and universities, rather than having the state involved directly,” said Karl Browning, the state’s chief information officer. “I-Light2 is really an enabler for advanced and sophisticated research and applications in higher education, so it is appropriate for them to manage the network and assume responsibility for its future costs.”