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Gov. Rounds Announces Public- Private Partnership for High Speed Data Network

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Mike Rounds announced today plans for the High Speed Research, Education and Economic Development Network (High Speed REED). In a public-private partnership, SDN Communications of Sioux Falls will build the network connecting all six state universities plus the EROS Data Center and the Sanford Laboratory at Homestake.

The High Speed REED Network will give the universities and research centers the ability to share massive amounts of research data quickly with scientists worldwide by utilizing the highest network speeds available.

“This is a giant leap forward in our effort to achieve goal three of the 2010 Initiative and Become a recognized leader in research and technology development.” Gov. Rounds said. “This will be as important to South Dakota commerce as the interstate highway system was four decades ago.”

The dim-fiber optic solution chosen by the governor will not only benefit the university system, but also state government and private business. Dim fiber means SDN will build the fiber optic network and allow the universities and research centers to utilize the broadband capacity they need. Then they can grow into larger usage as more research projects begin. In the meantime, state government and even the private sector will be able to access a portion of the network capacity while still keeping all the customers’ information private and protected.

The agreement, which needs legislative approval, represents a \$30 million deal over 20 years. An \$8 million grant from the Great Plains Education Foundation will get the project off the ground. Plus SDN is providing \$10 million in incentives to the state as its broadband needs increase with more research traveling the network.

“SDN’s owner companies – the independent telephone companies of South Dakota - already have 14,000 miles of fiber in the ground touching more than 300 South Dakota communities,” Rounds said. “With SDN leading the project, we can get this network up and running much faster.”

SDN Communications Chief Executive Officer Mark Shlanta says the company worked hard to meet the state’s needs. “We wanted to be a part of this project because SDN and its owner companies across the state are stakeholders in South Dakota’s economic future. We’re here for the long haul because we’ve invested millions of dollars into providing high-tech solutions for residents and businesses. This is just the next phase in that investment.”

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Editor's note: Attached is the handout provided to reporters in attendance at the briefing in Pierre. It contains information about the High Speed REED Network as well as notes highlighting the Governor's proposed budget for FY 2009. – [Click Here](#)