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Public Universities Connected to High-Speed Network

PIERRE, S.D. – All six public universities are now connected to a high-speed telecommunications network that links South Dakota researchers to their colleagues across the globe, allowing them to effortlessly share vast amounts of data and information and dramatically reduce elapsed time between producing models and other experiments.

The state's Research, Education, and Economic Development Network, also known as the REED Network, recently connected to Black Hills State University and South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, bringing all six public university campuses online with high-speed infrastructure and connections to Internet2. Network connections also have been completed to University Center in Sioux Falls and the Sanford Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory at Homestake.

"High-speed access to resources enables our university researchers to compete for grants independently, or in collaboration with other researchers all over the world," said Robert T. Tad Perry, executive director for the South Dakota Board of Regents. "We are actively participating in regional consortia that work with researchers in using advanced technologies such as REED to speed their research activities."

University-based researchers were quick to take advantage of the new network's capabilities. At South Dakota State University, the Geographic Information Science Center of Excellence conducts research using satellite images from the EROS Data Center near Sioux Falls. The SDSU center routinely handles remotely sensed data sets from EROS, NASA, USDA, and other research partners, and it must be able to access large volumes of data on demand. "The REED Network's on-demand high bandwidth ensures we can produce results that are often time critical," said Matthew Hansen, SDSU's senior scientist and center co-director.

The Image Processing Lab at SDSU has enjoyed high levels of connectivity with its EROS and NASA research partners over the past several months, thanks to the REED Network's high-speed Internet link. "Researchers in the IP lab routinely work on EROS servers as though they were sitting in the same room as the machines themselves," said Dennis Helder, head of the SDSU electrical engineering and computer science department. Complex graphics-based software running at EROS interfaces seamlessly with work under way at SDSU, and as a result, productivity has increased significantly.

The public university system has partnered with the state Bureau of Information and Telecommunications to implement the REED technology. The network also is funded in part through a start-up grant from the Great Plains Foundation and state appropriations.

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