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State demonstrates super-fast Internet network that will increase bandwidth tenfold

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By

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Gov. John Kasich and medical officials across the state met at Ohio State University Medical Center on Monday to demonstrate Ohio's new investment in a super-fast Internet connection.

The state this year will spend $10 million to expand the network bandwidth tenfold between its colleges and universities from 10 to 100 gigabytes per second. It will mean Ohio will have one of the faster network bandwidths in the country.

The expense is relatively low because Ohio already has 1,850 miles of fiber buried underground, state officials said. The state now must simply buy the equipment needed to activate more of the system's capabilities.

Associated Press file

Gov. John Kasich met with medical officials in Cleveland, Akron and Cincinnati on Monday via electronic link from the Ohio State University Medical Center to demonstrate the state's new investment in a super fast Internet connection. It will increase bandwidth by tenfold, from 10 to 100 gigabytes per second.

"This is really going to improve our infrastructure in broadband space, connecting all of our higher education sectors, involving the private sector to help work with researchers to develop new products," said John Conley, chief of education technology for the Ohio Board of Regents.

The move won't mean much to most people because the change does not affect personal or most workplace email usage. Instead, it impacts the Ohio Academic Resources Network, or OARnet which is used by colleges and universities, public school systems, local governments and a few large corporations.

The governor briefly mentioned the development during his State of the State speech on Feb. 7. On Monday, the governor sought to demonstrate how effective the system could eventually become for academic researchers and medical professionals.

The governor held a press conference with medical officials from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Summa Western Reserve Hospital in Cuyahoga Falls and from centers in Columbus and Cincinnati.

"Our state has tremendous advanced resources in medical research that are the envy of the nation and this is just the beginning," Kasich said.

The accelerated bandwidth, for example, will make it possible for medical professionals to send larger files electronically over the internet across the world as opposed to the current option of saving the information to a disc and shipping it.

Ohio schoolchildren will be able to more quickly and simultaneously download books for class. Researchers will be in better position to compete for coveted medical grants.

"This capability will facilitate research collaborations across the state and nationally thus facilitating efficient, smooth and rapid exchange and storage of large data files between researchers," said Dr. Ali Rezai, professor of Neurosurgery and Neuroscience at Ohio State.

The first phase of the plan will connect Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton and Toledo by June and the second phase will tie-in Akron, Athens and Youngstown by October.