

Broadband expanding to lure jobs to state

Faster network would boost tech sectors, but access cost is unknown.

By [Dave Larsen](#), Staff Writer

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Ohio will invest more than \$10 million to boost its current broadband network speed tenfold to boost research and job growth statewide, Gov. John Kasich announced Tuesday in his State of the State speech in Steubenville.

The 100 gigabits-per-second network will link Ohio's major metro areas to northern and southern connection points of Internet2, a nationwide advanced network led by international research and education organizations.

At the higher speed, every one of Ohio's 1.8 million K-12 students could download an ebook simultaneously in just over two minutes, officials said.

A primary goal is to entice and retain businesses in Ohio, officials said. Fields that will directly benefit include medical research, higher education, manufacturing, engineering and technology networking.

Dayton will connect to this high-speed network by June as part of the project's first phase. Area cities including Springfield, Hamilton and Middletown will benefit from their proximity to the Dayton access point, said Kim Norris, a state Board of Regents spokeswoman.

"If you are in Springfield and you are operating at 10 Gbps, you send your data, and as soon as it hits Dayton it goes 100 Gbps," she said.

John Leland, director of the University of Dayton Research Institute, called the move "a big improvement in terms of our state's competitiveness and ability to do business at a lower cost."

However, the cost to access the 100 Gbps network remains to be seen and could be an issue for small-volume users such as UDRI, Leland said.

The current cost to participate in the Ohio Academy Resources Network Internet2 connection is more than \$100,000 annually, he said.

"If the cost of access is too high, we need to make the business decision to resort to other means to move our data around," Leland said.

Officials said \$8.1 million in Ohio Third Frontier money will fund hardware development to connect Dayton, Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati by June, and Akron, Athens and Youngstown by October.

Ohio public and private partners also will invest \$2.3 million in a center that will test 100 Gbps technologies and promote the development of new applications. The center will be located at Ohio

State University in Columbus.

The fiber-optic network spans more than 1,850 miles and connects Ohio's colleges and universities, K-12 schools, public broadcasting stations, academic medical centers, and state, federal and partner research organizations.

The network was launched in November 2004 and designed so that it can be upgraded from its current 10 Gbps to the proposed 100 Gbps.

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