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May 9, 2012

Ohio's new ultra-fast broadband network will soon reach the state's robust agribusiness as the city of Wooster, home to The Ohio State University Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) and Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI), becomes one of the latest additions to a state-led initiative that will leverage network speeds of 100 Gigabits per second (Gbps).

This is a critical and much needed boost to the technology side of Ohio's agricultural industry, which contributes $107 billion a year to the state's economic growth. It employs one-in-seven Ohioans in areas such as wholesaling and retailing, farm production, marketing and processing, and agribusiness.

"Some of the biggest advancements in farming today aren't taking place in the field, but are taking place in labs, where the processing of 'Big Data' like DNA sequencing and other complex biological computations are helping farmers create greater crop yields, bring more food to the table and boost Ohio's agriculture output," said Dr. Bobby Moser, The Ohio State University Vice President for Agriculture Administration and Dean. "Processing and transferring this data requires massive bandwidth, so connecting to the 100 Gbps network will help keep Ohio at the forefront of agriculture science and further open the door to public/private partnerships."

Earlier this year, Ohio Governor John Kasich announced that the state would provide a ten-fold increase to the broadband network backbone of the Ohio Academic Resources Network (OARnet). The boost is designed to help advance research and job growth across Ohio's medical research, higher education, manufacturing, engineering and technology networking corridors.

The Ohio Controlling Board approved a $3.1 million state investment in this latest broadband enhancement, adding Wooster and Portsmouth to the other Phase II hubs of Akron, Athens and Youngstown. Phase II is planned for completion by the end of 2012. Phase I of the development will connect Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton and Toledo by September 2012.

"This is an exciting development for Ohio agribusinesses," said Ohio Department of Agriculture Director David T. Daniels. "Leveraging these new network speeds will help the industry flourish and remain competitive by allowing researchers and businesses to share information and innovation quickly."

The technology expansion "opens the faucet" for innovation and discovery by dramatically increasing the speed of OARnet's fiber-optic network. The 100 Gbps network will connect OARnet to Internet2 through connection points at the northern and southern ends of the state. Internet2, a nationwide advanced networking consortium, spans U.S. and international

institutions that are leaders in the worlds of research, academia, industry and government.