

**Remarks of
Richard L. Pattenaude, Chancellor
University of Maine System
regarding the establishment of the
Research & Education Data Network
Monday, October 29, 2007**

The purpose of today's news conference is to announce two new agreements which will dramatically expand Maine's capacity to conduct research and development within Maine and throughout the world.

The agreements involve the University of Maine System, Jackson Lab, and Mid-Maine Communication.

These agreements will establish the first phase of a highly advanced, high speed type of internet network that will exclusively serve Maine's research and educational institutions – that is, universities and colleges and the nonprofit scientific laboratories in the state.

We are referring to this network as the Research and Education Network, or "R&E Network," for short.

It's not a TV network, nor is it something that flows over the internet that you and I use at home or at work. It's a separate, special network that will shuttle an amazing amount of data back and forth between researchers within Maine, and very soon, across the world.

This first phase will run between Bar Harbor, Orono, and Portland. The second phase will be up and running by the end of next year, and will connect us to Boston, which is a hub of what's called Internet 2, the international research and education network.

One of the agreements is between the University of Maine System and Mid-Maine Communications. It's a \$3 million investment in this critical connectivity, and was made possible through a special State appropriation earlier this year. I want to thank Governor Baldacci and the State Legislature for recognizing the value and need for this fundamental tool for research, education, and economic development.

The other agreement is between the University of Maine System and Jackson Lab. This one connects Bar Harbor and Orono. It will greatly enhance the research collaboration between Jackson Lab, UMaine, and other research entities around the world. Jackson Lab is providing \$1.9 million to establish this part of the network. We appreciate their partnership.

Just how powerful will the new network be?

To put it in perspective, let's look at the National Archives of Britain, the United Kingdom's version of our Library of Congress. The Archives maintains 900 years of information – books, maps, papers, and printed and electronic data. If we were to

digitize every bit of information the Archives holds, and send it here to Orono on this new R&E network, we could receive the entire holdings in less than 26 minutes.

Think of it -- nine hundred years of data and knowledge, received in less than a half hour! Under the current technology available in Maine, trying to receive just a tiny fraction of it would quickly overload our system.

This new R&E network will enormously expand the capability of faculty and students to collaborate with researchers in Maine and around the world. Maine will be the first state in northern New England to acquire this capacity; New Hampshire and Vermont don't have it yet.

By itself, the use of the expanded R&E network will greatly enhance Maine's economy and potential. But even more important, it will greatly increase Maine's appeal and potential as a high-tech center of research, development, and commercialization of products, technologies, and ideas.

Jeff Letourneau, the University of Maine System's project manager for the R&E network initiative, recently heard someone describe the purpose of the project this way: "We are trying to provide researchers the infrastructure they need, so that their only limitation is their own imagination." Well said!

In closing, I want to note another connection of sorts -- the connection between this new element of our research infrastructure and two key bond proposals on the November ballot.

Question 2 on next week's ballot seeks \$55 million in competitive-based research funding to help Maine's universities and nonprofit research facilities leverage more federal grants and contracts.

Question 3 will provide \$43.5 million to improve the quality of our classrooms and laboratories.

Without question, this new R&E network will greatly enhance Maine's ability to bring in additional public and private sector investment to Maine, and that means jobs and economic growth. Passage of Questions 2 and 3 will get that investment moving even faster.

Thank you.