



BCNET Hosts BC's Minister of Advanced Education and BC's University Presidents for *BCNET 2010: Celebrating BC's Connections to the World*

SURREY, BC (February 07, 2006) – B.C. Minister of Advanced Education Murray Coell led a celebration today to mark the first major extension of BCNET, a "super" broadband research network that runs at 10,000 times the speed of the commercial internet.

The expansion – part of a \$3.15-million provincially funded project called **BCNET 2010**—extended the benefits of B.C.'s optical-regional advanced network (ORAN) to educational and research institutions in Kelowna, Kamloops and to the Surrey campus of SFU, where today's celebration was held.

"In British Columbia, we understand the synergy between advanced communication networks and advanced education," said Minister Coell. "The BCNET 2010 project will help achieve three important government goals: to increase the accessibility of higher education; to improve collaboration between B.C.'s outstanding research and education institutions; and to expand regional capacity for research that is relevant to local communities."

Using lightpaths – high-speed dedicated wavelength connections – and building two new information "transit exchanges" in Kamloops and Kelowna, BCNET has linked institutions including Thompson Rivers University, UBC Okanagan, SFU Surrey, BCIT Aerospace Facility, Okanagan College and Kelowna General Hospital. (Institutions in the Lower Mainland, Victoria and Prince George were already on line.)

"This world-class networking capacity is essential in helping us extend the opportunities of top-flight education and research to more British Columbians," said Dr. Martha Piper, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of B.C. "The new UBC Okanagan now has the same super high-speed network connection as UBC Vancouver. In a very real way, BCNET delivers to Kelowna instant access to the world's most up-to-date innovations."

The high-speed, high-bandwidth world-wide connections will greatly expand local higher education communities' capacity for research. At Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in Kamloops, for example, "Our population health researchers will now have much more effective access to the databases they use and our collaborators in drinking water quality research will now have 'real time' access to monitoring data that are linked to several ongoing experiments," said Dr. Roger Barnsley, TRU President and Vice-Chancellor.

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"Finally, our ability to carry out online conferencing will link our most recently appointed Canada Research Chair, Dr. Ashok Mathur, to network collaborators studying cultural diversity."

"Our teaching and training capacity will also be expanded by our access to BCNET," continued Barnsley. "Recently we have joined a network of other institutions that will share their resources and experiment with using remote nodes to manipulate laboratory equipment in labs around the continent." This kind of progress could allow students in distant areas to gain "virtual" experience using specialized equipment that is not readily accessible in their community.

In Surrey, where SFU is offering programs in interactive arts, science, business and technology, "ORAN will be of critical importance in facilitating advanced research that will stimulate increased economic activity and provide significant social benefits to the fastest developing urban region in the country," said Dr. H. Michael Stevenson, President and Vice-Chancellor, Simon Fraser University. "The Optical Regional Advanced Network (ORAN) was a major component of our infrastructure for the SFU Surrey campus, enabling faculty research into the development and design of new technologies in a variety of application areas including bioinformatics and multimedia, and facilitating administrative and e-learning connectivity between the Surrey campus, Burnaby Mountain and our Vancouver campus."

From a broader perspective, Stevenson continued by saying, "Research and education across the province will benefit enormously from the opportunities for collaboration and investigation that expanded high-speed connectivity will provide across the wider university system."

National and international connections are made possible through CANet4, Canada's national network, run by CANARIE. CANARIE has offered invaluable support to the BCNET 2010 project by provisioning intercity lightpath links, contributing funding and assisting the implementation of the equipment.

"CANARIE's investment of \$2.5 million in these 4th and 5th wavelengths for CANet 4 is an essential component of our strategy to ensure that Canada's research and education network continues to extend to R&E communities," said Andrew Bjerring, President & CEO of CANARIE. "Kamloops and Kelowna can now connect to BCNET over CANet 4 infrastructure, and from there to peer networks in Canada and around the world."

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About BCNET

BCNET is a not-for-profit society formed to provide high-speed optical network capabilities – often called advanced networking – to British Columbia's higher education and research institutions. Dedicated to providing high-capacity, "super" broadband, research networks to BC's research and higher education communities, BCNET operates a critical piece of the infrastructure that keeps British Columbia at the forefront in technological advancement and innovation. Up to 10,000 times faster than the commercial Internet, these specialized advanced networks provide the backbone for innovation in research, education and science in British Columbia. For more information please visit our website www.bc.net .

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