

NEWS RELEASE

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Media Contact: April Goode

Regional Collaboration Improves Internet Access for the South Central Region

Four regional research and education networks have joined together to create the Midsouth U.S. Internet Exchange (MUS-IX) to increase internet connectivity and bandwidth and on-board additional content providers all with the expectation of lower costs to the states they serve. LEARN in Texas, OneNet in Oklahoma, ARE-ON in Arkansas and LONI in Louisiana are participating in the collaboration. These regional networks provide internet access and technology services to education, research, health care and government partners in their respective states.

The goal of MUS-IX is to maximize the mutual efforts of the regional partners to create a centralized collaboration hub. The partners chose Dallas because every major internet and content provider has a presence in the city, making it the nucleus for internet services for the south-central states.

LEARN's board of directors view regional collaboration as one of its strategic priorities. "Since this idea was first floated in mid-2018, all four states have looked for innovative ways to collaborate with a unified vision to provide better services to their end-users," said Pankaj Shah, President and CEO of LEARN. "The connection is another exemplary example of the importance of regional collaboration, further cementing the relationship between Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Dallas offers numerous benefits, from increased connectivity to geographic diversity for all our network resources to improved robustness of our infrastructure throughout the region."

The regional partners are provisioning multiple high-speed 100Gbps fiber connections and wave services into the Dallas metropolitan network that intersect at shared facilities, including Equinix/Infomart and CenturyLink/DataBank. Each partner has multiple 100Gbps capabilities with Layer 2 and Layer 3 support.

In addition, regional partners will share resources and connect to many cloud and transit peers in the provider-rich Dallas area. These shared connections make content, such as Netflix, Apple and Google, more accessible and economical for the participating states.

“MUS-IX opens access to improved internet services and content providers for our network’s end-users across Oklahoma,” said OneNet Executive Director Vonley Royal.

“Oklahoma is a primarily rural state. Regional collaborations such as this enable OneNet to better serve our state’s rural citizens with broadband services.”

The regional networks will also leverage buying power to achieve lower costs for internet and peering services. Through economies of scale, the networks will reduce some of their internet costs by an average of 50%. These savings mean more affordable internet for end-users, such as higher education institutions, schools, libraries, hospitals and government agencies.

“For several years LONI has been investigating a strategy of how a predominately rural state like Louisiana would ever participate in a highly connected Internet, Transit, Content, and Exchange community as the major urban cities across the U.S. MUS-IX allows LONI to realize this strategy at the same time leveraging the buying power and economies of scale necessary to offer a sustainable business model for years to come,” said LONI Executive Director Lonnie Leger.

National leadership for the research and education network community has encouraged

more local, state-to-state partnerships. MUS-IX is a natural evolution of the efforts of each of the four state networks to increase services and lower internet costs.

“Regional collaborations such as MUS-IX enable states like Arkansas to provide new opportunities to their member institutions that would otherwise be unaffordable or unavailable within the state,” said ARE-ON Executive Director Robert Nordmark. “By leveraging our collective resources and purchasing power, we enable better or lower cost access to transit and cloud providers, offer improved network and services resiliency, and lower the barrier to more bandwidth needed by our members to meet their institutional missions and goals.”

For more information about the MUS-IX, contact OneNet at info@onenet.net.