

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 29, 2007**

**Contacts:**

UMS – John Diamond 973-3224 or 949-4904; Peggy Markson 973-3245

UMaine – Joe Carr 581-3571 or 949-4149

USM – Bob Caswell 780-4200 or 939-2377

JAX – Joyce Peterson 288-6058

Mid-Maine Communications – Tim King, Ethos Marketing 856-2610



**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, JACKSON LAB, AND MID-MAINE COMMUNICATIONS  
ANNOUNCE 'DRAMATIC EXPANSION' OF MAINE'S RESEARCH CAPABILITY**

**New Agreements Will Greatly Enhance Maine's Research Capacity and Foster Economic Growth**

**New R&E Data Network Dedicated Exclusively To Research and Education**

ORONO—A new set of agreements, announced today in Orono, will result in dramatic expansion of Maine's capacity to conduct research and development within Maine and throughout the world.

The agreements involve the University of Maine System, The Jackson Laboratory, and Mid-Maine Communications. One of the agreements, between the University System and Mid-Maine Communications, establishes the first phase of an advanced, high-speed network that will service Maine's research and education, or "R&E," institutions.

This first phase of the R&E data network will run between Orono and Portland and will provide high-speed fiber-optic network capabilities between the University of Maine in Orono and the University of Southern Maine and their research and development partners throughout Maine.

Phase Two will extend the network beyond Portland to Boston, where it will connect to Internet2, the highly advanced nationwide network consortium dedicated exclusively to scientific research and education. Phase Two is slated to be established by the end of next year.

The agreement between the two entities was made possible through a \$3 million state appropriation, made earlier this year. The state investment is designed to boost economic growth in Maine through research and development, one of the state's fastest growing economic sectors.

The second agreement, between the University System and The Jackson Laboratory, extends the R&E network between Orono and Bar Harbor, and will benefit other nonprofit research facilities such as Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory. The Jackson Laboratory will provide \$1.9 million towards establishing the R&E network.

"These agreements will improve enormously the capability of faculty and students to collaborate with researchers in Maine and around the world," explained Dr. Richard L. Pattenaude, University of Maine System chancellor. "By itself, the use of the expanded R&E network will greatly enhance Maine's economy and potential. But even more important, it also will greatly increase Maine's appeal and potential as a high-tech center of research, development, and commercialization of products, technologies, and ideas."

Since 1999, Mid-Maine Communications has made significant infrastructure investments by installing hundreds of miles of fiber-optic cable throughout Maine. Fiber-optic cable is different from traditional communication wires, which are made of metal, because information is transmitted at the speed of light

- MORE -

through a fiber made of silica glass. Because of its virtually limitless capacity, fiber-optic cable can easily transmit huge amounts of voice, data and video communications, sometimes all on the same optical fiber, at the same time.

“We are thrilled to see our long term strategy of providing state of the art networking technologies to Maine beginning to pay off. Mid-Maine has been setting the standard for business networking solutions for years,” said Nick Winchester, president of Mid-Maine Communications. “By providing the same critical bandwidth needed to fuel research and development, the University of Maine System is now better equipped to both contribute and compete in the global marketplace.”

Just how powerful will the new network be?

“To put this in perspective, the entire National Archives of Britain—a massive compilation of information which holds 900 years of written material—could be transferred to or from Maine in just 26 minutes,” Pattenaude explained. “With the current capability, we couldn’t accomplish a fraction of that without overloading our network.

“In research, speed and volume of material are critical ingredients,” he continued. “Collaboration with others is extremely difficult without those essential ingredients.”

Jackson Laboratory Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Charles Hewett, Ph.D., said, “Access to greater and more competitive bandwidth is absolutely essential to Maine’s future research success. Until now, some Jackson scientists were literally driving their files to Orono in order to share their data with colleagues around the world. Now the Laboratory can collaborate seamlessly with other scientists from our ideal research setting here in Maine.”

Leaders of the organizations expressed thanks to Governor Baldacci, legislative leaders, and members of the legislature’s Appropriations, Education, and Business, Research, and Economic Development committees for providing the necessary funding to establish the R&E network.

“Maine is fortunate to have policy leaders who understand the value and potential of research and education to Maine’s economic future and quality of life,” Pattenaude stated. “They took a bipartisan, collaborative approach to helping us create this network. We are extremely grateful to them.”

### **About the University of Maine System**

Established in 1968, the 44,000-student University of Maine System is the state’s largest educational enterprise. It features seven universities – some with multiple campuses – located across the state, as well as 10 University College outreach centers, a law school, and an additional 75 interactive distance learning sites. For more information, visit [www.maine.edu](http://www.maine.edu).

### **Jackson Laboratory**

The Jackson Laboratory ([www.jax.org](http://www.jax.org)), founded in 1929, is one of the world’s leading genetics research institutions. Its research staff of more than 500 investigates the genetic basis of cancers, heart disease, osteoporosis, Alzheimer’s disease, glaucoma, diabetes and many other human diseases and disorders. The Laboratory is also the world’s source for more than 3,300 strains of genetically defined mice, home of the Mouse Genome Database and many other publicly available information resources, and an international hub for scientific courses, conferences, training, and education.

### **Mid Maine Communications**

Mid-Maine Communications is a true facilities-based Maine telecommunications provider. In over 10 years of operation, Mid-Maine Communications has become a local telecommunications company that both residential and business customers count on for reliable Internet and Telephony services and superior customer support. For more information, visit [www.midmaine.com](http://www.midmaine.com) or call 877-MIDMAINE.