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DCP Today

Volume 3, Issue 16
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Welcome to DCP Today, CENIC's monthly electronic newsletter detailing the latest news about the Digital California Project.

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DCP E-Rate Discount Funding Letters of Agency due November 14th

During the month of October, CENIC is requesting that each California K-12 school district renew its commitment to participate in a consortium that helps CENIC acquire federal E-Rate discount funding for the DCP's K-12 node site installations. Participation in the consortium will not impact a district's ability to apply for and obtain additional E-Rate dollars and will incur no costs to districts. Rather, it will enable CENIC to receive discounts for circuits that are not otherwise claimed by school districts.

Last year, CENIC invested the consortium's discount savings in a "last mile" grant program that allowed many schools and districts to connect to the CalREN/DC network. Because of the substantial reduction in DCP funding for 02-03, CENIC envisions investing much of the savings from the upcoming 2003-04 discounts into continued operation of the CalREN/DC network. However, it is expected that sufficient discounts will be available to enable the CENIC Board to consider investing in another round of "last mile" grants.

Invitation letters have been sent to all school districts and county offices of education, asking for new letters of agency to form a consortium for 2003-2004 discounts. The letters of agency are due Thursday, November 14, to:

CENIC-DCP Processing
 c/o Van Wilkinson
 San Diego COE
 IMS Room 602
 6401 Linda Vista Drive
 San Diego, CA 92111

For additional information on the CENIC E-Rate discount funding consortium, contact Van Wilkinson at vwilkinson@shastalink.k12.ca.us.

"Fast Forward With DCP" a Great Success!

On Tuesday, October 8th, the San Diego County Office of Education hosted "Fast Forward with the DCP". This intensive, one day seminar discussed how county offices of education can use the high-capacity digital infrastructure provided by the CalREN/DC network. Use of this network will provide powerful teaching and learning resources to every classroom in California. Sponsored by

the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee and the Telecommunication/Technology Steering Committee of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), the event drew over 120 education leaders from across the state, including superintendents, curriculum and instructional specialists, technology leaders and CTAP directors. The seminar was broadcast live over the network to the Marin County Office of Education in northern California.

The day's events began with a keynote address by Dr. Larry Smarr. Dr. Smarr is founding director of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology, and a pioneer in prototyping a national information infrastructure to support academic research, governmental functions, and industrial competitiveness. Dr. Smarr shared his views on technology's role in providing educational opportunities in K-12 classrooms, particularly in the area of student discovery science. Seminar attendees participated in a number of breakout sessions demonstrating the CalREN/DC network as a powerful tool, enabling K-20 collaboration, distance learning, video conferencing, professional development programs for teachers, and district/school administration.

A survey of attendees will be compiled and used to determine the most effective strategies for disseminating and facilitating adoptions or adaptations of county office-developed content delivery over the CalREN/DC Network. Results of this survey will be reported in a future edition of DCP Today.

CalREN/DC Network Delivers to Inyo County

The DCP Inyo node is connected to the CalREN/DC network at the Bishop Elementary campus. This rural node, located on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains on Highway 395, will eventually serve 20 schools with 3,200 students spread over 10,203 sq. miles.

The CalREN/DC network connection has already allowed Bishop High to offer advanced placement (AP) online courses not previously available to this rural area. Students can take AP classes that aren't offered as full sections in the Bishop High course catalog. This allows the students in this rural district to benefit from resources that have historically been available only to students in more affluent districts.

The Bishop Elementary LAN connection to the node is providing staff members web access, email, and online tools such as the CTAP online assessment. Round Valley Elementary increased their Internet connectivity from a 56k leased line to 11Mbps wireless, a significant improvement. And, Bishop Unified Elementary School District and Bishop Unified High School, once utilizing leased T1 lines (1.5Mbps) now enjoy a direct 45Mbps feed.

The schools are all giving the service received via CalREN/DC network connections high marks. None of the districts currently connected have experienced any downtime attributable to the network since connecting last November. All other districts in the Owens Valley are scheduled to be connected at 45 Mbps in Round 2 of the Digital California Project.

Source: Joe Griego, Bishop Union Elementary School District

Imperial County Uses CalREN/DC Network for IP Video Conferencing

The Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE), in partnership with a consortium of schools and public agencies, has positioned Imperial County to take full advantage of the Digital California Project (DCP).

A countywide gigabit Ethernet network is being constructed to connect schools and public agencies to a new breed of network applications. Schools connected to the ICOE DCP node via this high-speed fiber optic network are positioned to begin utilization of the DCP to its fullest potential.

One specific application implemented with great success in Imperial County is IP video conferencing. "We have a vision and have stayed true to it. IP video conferencing is beginning to change the way we do business," states Todd Finnell, Director of ICOE Learning Technologies. "Our next interest is in making IP videoconferencing a reality between DCP node sites. The opportunities for regional collaboration and professional development in particular are very exciting."

ICOE has used IP video conferencing for the past three years and has assisted several schools and other agencies in developing implementation plans for this application. There are approximately 200 end points (active videoconferencing devices) currently on their network, all utilizing H.323 IP video conferencing.

Learn about their implementation of IP video conferencing at: <http://www.icen.org> or contact Todd Finnell at tfinnell@icoe.k12.ca.us for additional information.

DCP Plans Round II Network Enhancements

With the implementation of the Round I node sites nearing completion, enhancements to the network with Round II funding is well underway. With all major design issues largely resolved and most of the equipment purchased and delivered to node sites, initial funding has been issued to the counties to proceed as planned.

In addition to substantial enhancements to local county infrastructure throughout the state, CENIC staff anticipates Round II will connect an additional eight node sites to the CalREN/DC network. A detailed timeline for inspection, build-out and certification of these additional Round II node sites is not yet available. However, such a timeline will be available on the CENIC website (<http://www.cenic.org>) as soon as dates are determined.

DCP Connected in 53 California Counties

The Digital California Project has made great progress over the past year, and is close to achieving its goal of connecting all 58 California counties to the CalREN/DC network. As of late October, 53 of the 58 counties are connected, providing connectivity to almost 70% of the state's K-12 students. A summary follows for each of the five remaining counties still awaiting connectivity.

Trinity County: This site is expected to be operational in November.

Mono County: Due to pending local infrastructure issues outside the control of CENIC, a definitive installation date has not yet been determined, but connectivity is expected to take place by the end of this calendar year.

Alpine County: CENIC is awaiting circuit availability for Alpine County. A date of installation is not yet determined and options that would expedite the process are being considered.

Humboldt and Del Norte Counties: Both Humboldt and Del Norte Counties are delayed due to ongoing litigation between Pacific Bell and CalTrans regarding right-of-way issues.

CENIC Opens New Sacramento Office

This past summer, a number of changes were made within CENIC to continue and support the many cutting edge networking efforts underway in California and across the nation. Among those changes was the opening of a CENIC office in Sacramento.

Recognizing the close working relationship DCP enjoys with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), and the need for continued and growing collaboration between the two organizations, CENIC has collocated its Sacramento office with CCSESA across the street from the state capitol. Over the past two years, CCSESA has been extremely helpful to CENIC's DCP efforts, with most DCP node sites residing in County Offices of Education. The co-location of CCSESA staff and the CENIC DCP staff will further assist the two organizations in collaboration on key projects. The Sacramento CENIC office address is as follows:

CENIC
1121 L Street, Suite 510
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 447-8947

About CENIC

CENIC is a not-for-profit corporation formed by the California Institute of Technology, the California State University, Stanford University, the University of California, and the University of Southern California to facilitate and coordinate the deployment, development, and operation of a set of seamless and robust advanced network services. The CENIC Associates program offers qualified companies the opportunity to collaborate with CENIC in pursuit of the goal of providing the most advanced network services for research and education. Cisco Systems, SBC, and the University and Community College System of Nevada are CENIC's Partner Associates.

More information about CENIC is available at: <http://www.cenic.org>.

About DCP

The Digital California Project is a project of CENIC. A multi-million dollar effort funded by the State of California, the DCP was designed to build the necessary network infrastructure needed to prepare California's schools to take advantage of tomorrow's advances in network technology. In essence, CENIC is developing an advanced-services network to serve the entire California K-20 education and research community.

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