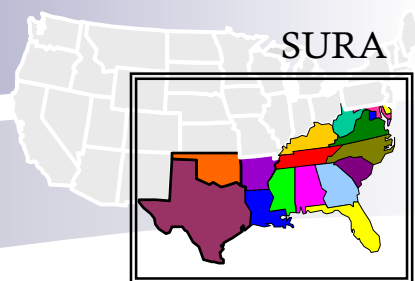


The SURA Crossroads

Interconnection to Enable Transformation

www.SURA.org



Southeastern Universities
Research Association

"We must begin to envision a South whose strength is science – a South where science education is uniformly strong, entrepreneurship flourishes and where technology reduces the divide between people, and businesses and government work together."

Paul Patton, Governor of Kentucky & Chairman of the Southern Governors' Association, April 25, 2001.

The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA, Inc.) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit university consortium that brings together 53 universities in the Southern United States to collaborate on the advancement of science and engineering. The SURA region encompasses sixteen Southern states and the District of Columbia. SURA member institutions share a mission not only to focus on higher education and research but to extend the benefits of higher education and research into the broader community and within each of their home states.

As the number of network-based applications and regional network services that are supported by SURA and its members grows, the need to find more economic methods to interconnect member institutions and their collaborators is also growing. This need is magnified by the desire to provide advanced network services to the broader education community within the region and to extend the capability for collaboration to other communities as well. To meet this need, SURA and its members are working towards the development of a new model of networking for the South, embodied within the SURA Crossroads Initiative.

[Through the SURA Crossroads Initiative we anticipate being able to forge creative partnerships between corporate, government and academic organizations. Through these partnerships we intend to dramatically reduce the cost of and increase the access to advanced network connectivity throughout the SURA region.](#)

The SURA Crossroads Initiative provides the Southern U.S. with an opportunity to lead the development and deployment of new networking technologies and to influence the shape of emerging advanced national networks. SURA is committed to helping the region become and remain competitive both nationally and internationally in what is rapidly becoming a technology-based economy.

Work locally, think regionally, impact nationally

Recognizing that SURA members' collaborations are not locally or regionally bound, SURA consistently integrates national and international perspectives into its programs to deliver regionally valuable outcomes with global significance.



Stakeholder Commitment

[committed, connected leaders]



Strategic Initiatives

[defined/articulated program]



High Impact Programs

[local/regional/national impact]

The following principals are guiding the development of the SURA Crossroads:

- To seek improvements in networking options for all areas: metropolitan, suburban and rural
- To avoid limitations imposed by restrictive use policies that favor one community over another or neglect the benefits of economic development
- To focus on lowering the cost of both production and research networking services
- To disrupt the existing market-based pricing models for network services by creating an optical network infrastructure priced at or near actual cost

The SURA Crossroads Initiative is aligned with organizations and individuals who direct and influence the political and economic climate of the South and realize that the value of the proposed regional network infrastructure extends far beyond immediate advancement of SURA's scientific and engineering mission.

"Individual commitment to a group effort--that is what makes a team work."

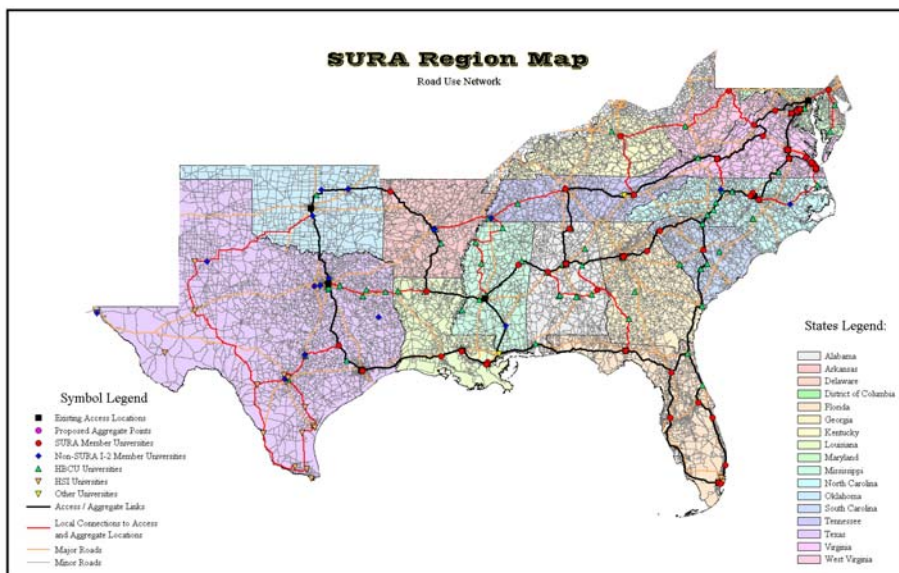
-Vince Lombardi

"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself."

-Andy Warhol

The need for a new networking model is clear:

- The demand for robust networking exceeds the availability of the existing infrastructure, particularly in rural areas
- Even if services are available, they are cost prohibitive for many
- The increasing necessity of "becoming connected" frequently means that those who cannot afford to pay high connection costs pay the much higher price of remaining unconnected



The SURA Crossroads will meet these challenges through combined innovative leadership and the leveraging of collective assets to:

- Access, control and potentially own optical fiber that forms the basis for today's most advanced networks
- Leverage SURA and SURA members' assets to develop group purchasing power
- Work with state and regional government initiatives to build extensible electronic superhighways

Together, we can make cost-effective advanced network services available as a tool for research, education and economic development across the entire South, including rural and under-served communities.

The Timing Is Right for Major Change In Network Economics

Factors Contributing to a New View of Telecommunications Service and Pricing:

- The demand for access is outstripping the ability to pay.
- Shrinking capital markets are forcing a return to sound revenue models and clearly defined markets.
- Network economic models are changing as a result of aggressive fiber deployments combined with the introduction of new technologies (DWDM and IP in the WAN).
- Fiber optic cable deployments in second and third tier metropolitan areas combined with the convergence of high speed transport technologies brings end user ownership and control of regional fiber networks within the realm of possibility.
- State and local governments are becoming aware of the role networks play in education and economic development and of the value represented by their control of the physical ROW.
- There is a resurgence of the SURA community's desire to get involved in a region-wide IT initiative.

The Spirit & Necessity of Collaboration

The overarching vision of the SURA Crossroads is to organize and leverage the collective monetary, physical, and intellectual assets of SURA and its member institutions to develop a new model for extending network connections throughout the Southern United States. The SURA Crossroads is proceeding with the support of the SURA membership and the critical guidance of highly qualified staff from SURA member institutions as well as invited partners. SURA Crossroads working groups are comprised of individuals from many notable institutions and organizations:

Boston University
CANARIE
Catholic American University
CENIC
Clark Atlanta University
Florida Atlantic University
Florida State University
Geo-Matrix Consulting
Georgia Institute of Technology
Internet2
Jefferson Lab

Mid-Atlantic Crossroads
Mississippi State University
NASA
North Carolina R&E Network
Oak Ridge National Lab
OneNet
SURA
Texas A&M University
Tulane University
University of Alabama
University of Alabama at Huntsville

University of Arkansas
University of Delaware
University of Florida
University of Kentucky
University of Miami
University of NC/Chapel Hill
University of Oklahoma
University of South Carolina
University of Tennessee
Virginia Tech
West Virginia University

Leveraging Existing Network Assets

The SURA region contains the largest collection of advanced academic networking aggregations working together on a regional basis. This collaboration and leadership is an invaluable asset moving forward.

Florida International University - Aggregating connectivity for FIU, Florida Atlantic University, and the University of Miami

Gulf Central GigaPoP - <http://www.gcgpop.net>

Louisiana State Network (LA Net) - <http://www.state.la.us/otm/lanet>

MAX (Mid-Atlantic Crossroads) - <http://maxgigapop.net>

Mississippi GigaPoP - In Jackson, MS; coordinated by Mississippi State University

Network Virginia - <http://www.networkvirginia.net>

North Carolina Research & Education Network/NCNI -
<http://www.ncren.net>, <http://www.ncni.net>

OneNet (Oklahoma) - <http://www.onenet.net>

SoX (Southern Crossroads) - <http://www.sox.net>

Texas GigaPoP - <http://www.gigapop.gen.tx.us/index2.html>

University of South Florida - Aggregating connectivity for USF and the University of Central Florida

The SURA Crossroads will work with state and local governments and corporate partners to gain access to dark fiber facilities that will complement and extend the capabilities of these existing network aggregations. The infrastructure will be engineered for immediate use by SURA members, with use envisioned to extend quickly to the larger research and education community within the SURA region.

For more information about SURA and the SURA Crossroads Initiative contact:

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