



Press Release

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IBM, UNIVERSITIES EXPAND GRID COMPUTING PARTNERSHIP

WASHINGTON, DC and ARMONK, NY – IBM and the Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA), announced today a major expansion of a partnership focused on developing SURAggrid, a high performance grid computing infrastructure for the southeastern US research and education community.

IBM p575 series systems, made available under last summer's original SURA-IBM agreement, located at Louisiana State University, Georgia State University and Texas A&M University, comprise a significant portion of the existing SURAggrid capacity. Now, additional universities will be able to participate in SURAggrid using IBM Cluster 1350 systems running Linux.

While SURAggrid is used for multi-disciplinary research, one special focus is the study of coastal storm surges via the SURA Coastal Ocean Observing and Prediction program (SCOOP), funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the US Office of Naval Research. According to the National Hurricane Center: "Storm surge is water that is pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds swirling around the storm. This advancing surge combines with the normal tides to create the hurricane storm tide, which can increase the mean water level 15 feet or more. In addition, wind driven waves are superimposed on the storm tide. This rise in water level can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, particularly when the storm tide coincides with the normal high tides. Because much of the United States' densely populated Atlantic and Gulf Coast coastlines lie less than 10 feet above mean sea level, the danger from storm tides is tremendous."

SCOOP utilizes complex computational models of the coastal ocean to accurately predict these storm surges in advance of threatening storms. Today's announcement by IBM and SURA expands the set of IBM high performance systems being made available to SURAggrid participating institutions. These systems will be made available to SURAggrid's rapidly growing community of participants (currently 29 institutions in fifteen states) and will support a diverse set of computationally intense research and education applications, including SCOOP.

SURAggrid harnesses the power of heterogeneous computing systems located at multiple colleges and universities with the goal of creating a single, virtualized system that enables researchers from participating institutions to run advanced scientific applications that require massive computational capabilities. The SURAggrid community relies on grid middleware from Globus.org that allows disparate systems to work together, and is supported by local, regional and national high-speed network services that have been deployed throughout the region over the past several years. Further, SURAggrid is unique among current grid initiatives in its persistent emphasis on the diversity of available resources and in its support of a diverse user community.

"SURA is very happy to add these newest IBM systems to SURAggrid's growing capabilities. This expanded relationship with IBM provides a significant new value to our members and participants and will dramatically bolster the ability of SURAggrid to support cutting edge, computationally intense

scientific research and enhance our ability to allow scientists to collaborate across multiple universities and regions,” said Jerry P. Draayer, President & CEO of SURA.

“SURA is doing important work to provide a technology infrastructure for ongoing environmental research,” said Dave Turek, VP of Deep Computing for IBM. “The computational might provided by IBM supercomputers will play an increasing role in modeling weather events and understanding how their interaction will impact coastal communities and maritime operations.”

SURAGrid is a consortium of organizations collaborating and combining resources to help bring grid technology to the level of seamless, shared infrastructure. It evolved from the NSF NMI Testbed Grid, which was initiated as a sub-project of the NSF Middleware Initiative (NMI) Integration Testbed Program in September 2003. SURA developed and managed the NMI Integration Testbed Program for the first three years of the NMI, in partnership with Internet2 and EDUCAUSE (ANI-0123937). For more information on SURAGrid see: www.sura.org/suragrid.

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The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit www.sura.org.