



- ▶ Calendar of Events
- ▶ FYI Miami
- ▶ Filming in Miami
- ▶ Classified Ads

- ▶ Front Page
- ▶ About Miami Today
- ▶ Put Your Message in Miami Today
- ▶ Contact Miami Today
- ▶ Job Opportunities
- ▶ Research Our Files
- ▶ The Online Archive
- ▶ Order Reprints

Florida universities to use fiber-optics system for network

By Samantha Joseph

Nine Florida universities will use an idle underground fiber-optics system that runs from Pensacola to Miami to create a \$22 million research network.

The University of Miami is one of three private schools to team with six public institutions in creating the Florida LambdaRail, a network similar to the Internet but with significantly fewer users.

"We're talking about having the capability of transferring billions of characters at the speed of light," said Veronica Sarjeant, chief operations officer and director of special projects at Florida State University, which is participating in the project.

The schools say the network will allow them to communicate quickly with researchers and universities across the country - and, eventually, the world - much like the commercial Internet, spurring ideas that they say drive economic development.

The schools have pooled about \$3 million to help lay equipment along the 1,500-mile system they hope to use by June.

The project is a miniature version of the National LambdaRail, an \$80 million project that is to loop through San Diego, Seattle, Denver, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Washington, Raleigh, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Baton Rouge and Houston.

The Florida network is to connect to the national network and eventually join similar programs across the globe.

Gregg Wood, a spokesman for the National LambdaRail, said the Florida project gives local researchers a chance to connect on equal footing with their colleagues across the country.

"It's a significant step forward for research and education in Florida," he said. "It allows them to control the type of technology they can access and use."

Also involved are Florida International University, the University of Florida, the University of Central Florida, the University of West Florida, Nova Southeastern University, Florida Atlantic University and Florida Institute of Technology.

They have leased the fiber optics from Level 3 Communications, a Colorado company with offices in downtown Miami.

The 20-year deal will activate the extensive subterranean network that has lain dormant for years while saving the universities millions because they won't have to lay their own network.

"It was remarkable because it took literally four days for the group in Florida to come up with this," Ms. Sarjeant said. "The only way that we were going to have the capability, without monumental costs, would be to acquire the fiber in this way. It didn't take very much to convince upper management that this is something that the universities needed to be involved in."

The deal would give the institutions a degree of freedom that they have never had. "It means that the control of the network would be in the hands of the universities and the researchers," Ms. Sarjeant said, "instead of having to be... at the mercy of the telecom companies."

articles online:

- ▶ Business group airport authori
- ▶ Condo-hotel pl Resort
- ▶ Former aviatio county needs i
- ▶ Florida univers optics system 1
- ▶ Officials consid Virginia Key
- ▶ Landmark Gab Boston firm
- ▶ Easton land pu speculators tal