

FEATURE ARTICLE

BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME ...

The Alabama Research and Education Network (AREN) continues to grow at a steady pace. The ASA Board recently approved an increase in Internet access for Higher Education and Postsecondary Education from 10 Mbps to 20 Mbps. These upgrades are scheduled to be complete this summer.

Governor Riley's ACCESS program continues to be successful. In addition to the 10 Mbps connections installed in 2007 from each school system to the AREN network, the ACCESS program was expanded in 2008 to include 10 Mbps access to all 400+ high schools in the state.

To keep pace with the increased bandwidth provided to K-12 and Postsecondary, ASA has upgraded its Internet bandwidth to over 1400 Mbps, which is served out of four different AREN nodes. To make the network more resilient, ASA has created a southern backbone ring, which connects Mobile, Montgomery and Birmingham with a 155 Mbps ring (OC3). This complements the northern OC3 ring, which connects Birmingham, Montgomery and Huntsville. Due to the large volume of Internet bandwidth being served out of the three northern ring nodes, ASA is planning to upgrade the northern ring from 155 Mbps to 1000 Mbps this summer. Visit http://www.asc.edu/network/core_infrastructure.shtml for more details about AREN's network infrastructure.

ASA is currently working with the University of Alabama System and the Alabama Regional Optical Network (ALRON) to provide expanded Internet, backbone and Internet 2 bandwidth.