Press Release

Friday, October 31, 2008
For Immediate Release
www.sura.org

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UNIVERSITY CONSORTIA GROWS HARDWARE PARTNERSHIP WITH IBM

WASHINGTON, DC – The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) announced today a significant milestone in their partnership with IBM to help grow the high performance grid computing infrastructure for the southeastern U.S. research and education community; the addition of 86 IBM p575+ HPC nodes to augment existing systems purchased by four SURA member institutions: Louisiana State University, Georgia State University, Texas A&M University the University of Miami.

"SURA is very pleased that we could broker the purchase of these IBM systems for our membership at such an aggressively low cost, particularly in these difficult times of constricting budgets. These systems provide a way for our members to augment their existing IBM systems in an extremely cost effective way," said Jerry P. Draayer, President and CEO of SURA.

This latest advance in the SURA-IBM Partnership Program augments existing IBM HPC capability and adds nearly 11 teraflops (TF) of capacity to our members existing systems – nearly double their existing capacity – and significantly increase the size of the SURAgrid resource pool.

SURAgrid 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 SURAgrid community relies on grid middleware from Globus.org that allows disparate systems to work together. Further, it is supported by local, regional and national high-speed network services that have been deployed throughout the region over the past several years. SURAgrid 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.

"Close collaboration with SURA institutions helps us implement best practices for high performance computing," said Art Vandenberg, Director of Advanced IT Services for Georgia State University. "This current opportunity to acquire additional IBM System p5 compute cycles helps us expand our cyberinfrastructure to meet continued demand from our research faculty." He added, "Georgia State certainly appreciates this direct and obvious benefit of SURA institutions working together."

"IBM is delighted to support the SURAgrid initiative," said Ian Green, IBM's WW HPC sales leader. "Our continued relationship with the consortium has resulted in an HPC network that can meet the critical needs of the industries of the future."

IBM p575 series systems, made available under the original SURA-IBM agreement announced in August 2006. That original agreement was enhanced in May of last year with additional universities being able to participate in SURAgrid using IBM Cluster 1350 systems running Linux. This third agreement is a significant step in expanding the capacity of the SURAgrid.

"We are thrilled that our long-standing partnership with SURA has strengthened our relationship with a key industry collaborator like IBM," said Dr. Nick Tsinoremas, Director of the University of Miami Center for Computational Science. "This acquisition is a critical piece of South Florida's research infrastructure and will dramatically shorten the time between ideas and results – from creating new and powerful hurricane prediction models to identifying genes and biomarkers that predict disease and response to therapies."

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.

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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.