Alberta
INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

News Release

For Immediate Release
October 26, 1999

"iCORE puts Alberta in the major leagues of information and communications technology research. This initial $30 million commitment will attract some of the world's top technology researchers to our universities, accelerating new knowledge and innovation in Alberta, and providing important cornerstones for both knowledge-based economic growth, and a healthy and prosperous quality of life."

Dr. Lorne Taylor
Minister, Innovation and Science

$30 million investment established to attract top technology researchers to Alberta universities

CALGARY - Alberta universities and the government are working together to attract some of the world's brightest and best researchers to enhance the province's rapidly growing information and communications technology (ICT) sector.

Dr. Lorne Taylor, Minister of Innovation and Science announced October 26 the creation of the Informatics Circle of Research Excellence (iCORE), a three-year, $30 million commitment aimed at attracting top researchers to conduct world-class ICT research at Alberta universities.

"In establishing this initiative, the Government of Alberta is showing its commitment to building on our intellectual capital by creating a globally competitive ICT research and development environment," said Taylor. "The return on this investment for Albertans will be dramatic, because new technology is often transferred to new products close to where the initial research is done, and therefore can result in long-term economic benefits for all Albertans."

The iCORE program was developed to implement a recommendation to establish stable, long-term, funding of fundamental research and development in ICT, outlined in the *Information and Communications Technology: A Strategy for Alberta* document, put forth by the Alberta Science and Research Authority in October 1998.

The $10 million a year in funding is being allocated from the province's existing science and research budget administered by Innovation and Science, which was increased by $15 million in the 1999-2000 budget.

…/2

The funding is designed to serve as initial seed money to recruit and attract leading researchers to the province, and to help spur additional investments from provincial, federal and industrial sources.

Minister of Learning Dr. Lyle Oberg said iCORE will help shape and support strong research teams in the province by building on the excellence and strengths that currently exist at Alberta universities.

"Over the next three years, iCORE-funded researchers will make significant contributions to our universities and our province," Oberg said. "With the iCORE program, it will now be possible to attract researchers who otherwise may not have considered carrying out their work in Alberta."

iCORE is a not-for-profit organization overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Dr. Roger Smith, Vice-President of Research and External Affairs from the U of A. Dr. Brian Unger, a recognized world leader in ICT research and Professor of Computer Science from the University of Calgary, will serve as the president and chief executive officer of iCORE.

A list of individuals appointed to serve on the iCORE board is included with this news release. Additional information on iCORE can be found on the web at www.gov.ab.ca/is or at www.icore.ca

-30-

For more information, contact:

Val Mellesmoen - Director
Communications,
Alberta Innovation and Science
(780) 415-4761

Backgrounder

iCORE Board of Directors

The following is the list of individuals appointed to serve on the Informatics Circle of Research Excellence (iCORE) Board:

Dr. Roger S. Smith - Chair
Vice President (Research and External Affairs), University of Alberta

Dr. Len Bruton
Vice President (Research), University of Calgary

Dr. Elizabeth Cannon
Professor, Department of Geomatics Engineering, University of Calgary

H.S. (Scobey) Hartley
Businessperson (Calgary)

Denis Herard
MLA for Calgary Egmont, and Chair of the Government's Information and Communications Technology Committee

Dr. David Jefferson
Senior Member of the Technical Staff, Compaq Systems Research Centre (Palo Alto, California)

Dr. Roger Palmer
Deputy Minister of Innovation and Science

Dr. John C. Samson
Chair, Department of Physics, University of Alberta

Dr. Jonathan Schaeffer
Professor, Computing Science, University of Alberta

George D. Squires
Vice-President, Research and Technology, TRLabs (Edmonton)

Dr. Brian W. Unger
President and CEO, iCORE Inc.

Questions and Answers

What is iCORE?
Informatics Circle of Research Excellence (iCORE) is a new Alberta program aimed at fostering university-based long-term fundamental research that supports the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector of the economy. The mandate of the program is to attract and grow a critical mass of outstanding researchers in the fields of computing science, computer engineering, physics, mathematics and other ICT related disciplines.

iCORE is set-up as a board-managed not-for-profit organization, and reports to the Minister of Innovation and Science through the Alberta Science and Research Authority (ASRA). The Alberta Government is committing $10 million a year for the next three years to serve as seed funding to attract researchers to Alberta's universities, and to attract additional funding from other governments, organizations and industry to help leverage other investment dollars.

How does iCORE relate to the province's overall strategy to build the information and communications technology sector?
The Government of Alberta is committed to creating a globally competitive ICT research and development environment. In the Alberta Science and Research Authority's 1998 report, Information and Communications Technology: A Strategy for Alberta, action was recommended in four key areas:

1. Invest in education
2. Develop an ICT infrastructure in the province
3. Grow investment in research and development
4. Grow ICT business in the province

The iCORE program is a call to action on growing investment in research and development, and is aimed specifically at securing stable, long-term funding for fundamental research in ICT.

How is iCORE funded?
Initially, iCORE will be supported by $10 million annual investment for the next three years by the province through the Ministry of Innovation and Science. It is anticipated that funding will increase significantly in the future through additional provincial, federal and industrial sources.

A major part of iCORE's efforts are aimed at acquiring and leveraging additional funding from Alberta universities, national research funding organizations, the federal government and industry. If initial objectives are met and significant funding from other sources is realized, the impact of iCORE's budget over the next six years of operation could exceed $120 million.

How will the iCORE program work?
The initial iCORE program is focused on funding research positions at Alberta universities, and creating and supporting research teams working in ICT areas. Emphasis is on supporting long-term research with both short-term and long-term benefits to Alberta industry.

How are the iCORE awards made?
Awards will be made by an iCORE Review Committee (iRC) consisting of strong, active ICT researchers from university faculties, industry and iCORE Board members.

Who will be a candidate for an iCORE award?
World-class researchers with outstanding potential for making fundamental contributions to ICT will be eligible for Alberta Research Chairs and Professorships. High-quality young researchers and graduate students will be eligible for Research Fellows, Post-Doctoral Fellows and Graduate Student Fellows.

Researchers will be both recruited, and selected based on applications to the fund for specific research projects. The aim is to shape and support strong research teams, and build on the excellence and strengths that currently exist at Alberta's universities.

iCORE researchers may be tenured at the universities, and are likely to be located on a university campus. However, it is also possible that other space may be acquired for iCORE research teams at other locations, including, for example, the Alberta Research Council.

What is iCORE's implementation schedule?
Following the initial announcement regarding the creation of iCORE in October 1999, the first awards to researchers and scientists are expected to be announced by July 2000.

How will iCORE benefit Albertans?
By increasing the quality and quantity of long-term, fundamental ICT research at Alberta universities, iCORE is aimed at accelerating the generation of new knowledge and innovation as important cornerstones for knowledge-based economic growth and societal gains in Alberta.

Creating an open and supportive environment for world-class research also keeps high-quality thinkers in Alberta. They in turn act as a magnet for additional ICT-related activities and ventures. The cumulative effect results in opportunities for new and creative jobs, innovative approaches to education, health care and commercial enterprise - in short, a quality of life second to none - all made in Alberta.

Additional information on iCORE and the specific funding requirements can be found on the web at www.icore.ca.

For more information, contact:

Val Mellesmoen - Director
Communications,
Alberta Innovation and Science
(780) 415-4761