



For Immediate Distribution
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ORION Award celebrates Ontario's extraordinary accomplishments in research and education - Recognition for innovative use of advanced networks and collaborative technologies

TORONTO - All across Ontario, amazing endeavors are taking place that are changing the way we conduct research, the way we teach and how we learn. From a mine shaft two kilometres underground that is unleashing the secrets of our universe, to a virtual classroom connecting students from across Canada and beyond, to one of this country's most powerful supercomputing resources, the ORION Award recognizes Ontario's leaders for their outstanding achievements in learning and discovery.

ORION, the Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network, will be presenting the second-annual ORION Award at the MaRS Discovery District Atrium in Toronto today at 6:30 p.m. The ORION Award recognizes achievements in three categories: discovery, learning and leadership.

Tony Wong, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation, will help present the Awards.

"Innovative thinkers in all areas of education and discovery are now taking advantage of ORION's enormous potential," says ORION President and CEO Phil Baker. "The extraordinary research and scientific achievements unfolding on ORION put Ontario on the map of global innovation and we are proud to celebrate them today with the ORION Award," adds Baker.

"ORION has provided a globally-leading enabling infrastructure that allows Ontario to retain a competitive edge in research innovation and learning," says Dr. Stan Shapson, VP Research and Innovation, York University and chair of the ORANO Board of Directors. "These awards recognize the stellar achievements of the ORION research-user community, and the impact these projects make on a global level," adds Shapson.

The ORION Award is designed to encourage innovative use of advanced research and education networks, intelligent infrastructure and collaborative technologies among researchers, learners and educators. "On behalf of the Ontario government, I want to commend the ORION Award winners for connecting our best researchers with teachers and students," says Premier and Minister of Research and Innovation Dalton McGuinty. "We are on the side of Ontario families who are working hard to provide opportunities for their children's future. By building a province that capitalizes on its people's talent we can create new wealth and a higher quality of life for us all."

ORION Award winners for 2006 include:

The ORION Discovery Award recognizes research and scientific initiatives that successfully apply and leverage the unique capabilities of advanced networks and collaborative technologies to achieve significant outcomes in research and discovery.

Winner - Sudbury Neutrino Observatory (SNO) team: Otherwise known as "Canada's Eye on the Universe," SNO is a \$100 million international particle astrophysics project, located two kilometres underground in INCO's Creighton Mine near Sudbury. Led by Director Prof. Art McDonald, SNO provides Canada with a permanent, world-class facility for underground scientific research that is connected by ORION to research partners across Ontario and around



the world. One example includes the Supernova Watch - where SNO members monitor cataclysmic events in a supernova (a star collapsing through gravity).

Award of Merit - Professor Robert S. Orr and the ATLAS Canada Group: As part of an international project to search for the origin of mass in the universe, a group at the University of Toronto, led by physicist Prof. Robert S. Orr, NSERC Principal Investigator for ATLAS Canada, is making use of interconnected high-performance computers and high-speed networking using the ORION network to collaborate with researchers across Canada and around the world. Together they are contributing to the world's largest scientific experiment.

The ORION Learning Award recognizes the achievements of faculty, students and/or staff in promoting successful examples of collaborative teaching, learning and training.

Winner - Advanced Broadband Enabled Learning (ABEL) Program: ABEL uses interactive videoconference technologies through ORION to bring high-impact, real-world learning experiences to students. Through its unique partnerships, ABEL offers teachers access to such resources as The Curriculum Resource Bank, E-Workshops at TV Ontario, instruction on developing online resources such as the CTC and eTL courses at Seneca College, Video Streaming and Web Hosting assistance from York University, among others.

Award of Merit - Co-operative Learning Object Exchange (CLOE): Using ORION, CLOE established an internationally recognized collaboration between Ontario universities and colleges and other partners by making use of new technologies to develop and share multimedia-rich learning resources. CLOE has had a significant impact on the development of high-quality learning resources, enriching the educational experience of thousands of Ontario students.

The ORION Leadership Award recognizes the achievements of an individual for his or her contribution to advanced networking, or individuals or teams for their vision and successful implementation of initiatives that have impacted in the work of researchers, educators and learners.

Winner - Shared Hierarchical Academic Research Computing Network (SHARCNET): SHARCNET is a consortium of academic and research organizations in Ontario, that is providing the province with one of world's most powerful supercomputing resources. Using ORION, SHARCNET delivers the massive computational resources researchers need to advance their work in multiple disciplines, from modelling the movement of pollution, to creating more efficient electronics, to achieving greater understanding of the spread of diseases like SARS.

Award of Merit - ABEL Program Office Learning Leads Team: One of the country's most celebrated applications of next-generation teaching and learning technologies, this team uses ORION to help place Ontario at the cutting-edge of education and learning. This team has raised and established new standards for best practices in learning and professional development in schools.

ABOUT ORION (www.orion.on.ca)

The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION), operated by a not-for-profit organization, is Ontario's leading-edge research and education telecommunications network. ORION connects Ontario's universities, colleges, medical and other public research facilities, and a number of school boards to one another and to the global grid of research and education networks.



ABOUT THE ORION AWARD

The ORION Award recognizes individuals and groups within Ontario's research and education (R&E) community that have successfully championed and demonstrated the use of advanced networks and collaborative technologies in scientific research, teaching and learning.

Learn more about the ORION Awards at <http://www.orion.on.ca/orionaward/orionaward.html>

Download high-resolution image of the ORION Award graphic at this location:
<http://www.orion.on.ca/orionaward/orionawardlogos.html>

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