MITN

Challenge
Shift from industrial to knowledge-based economy
Increasing dependence on intellectual capital
Examples:
Doubling-time of knowledge base if 5 years
In many professions such as engineering, formal
education has become a lifetime commitment
Impact
Companies cannot maintain staff at cutting-edge
without access for formal continuing education
Cannot recruit or retain best people
See this particularly in regions like western Michigan
which is one of the most attractive regions for
such economic development...but which does not
have access to the necessary knowledge
infrastructure
Senator Gast approached us with concerns about
this in Benton Harbor

State Resources
Michigan has invested heavily to build world-class
resources in these areas at its four research
universities
These institutions have long experience in delivering
high quality continuing education to regional
constituents through traditional classroom, television,
and computer based methods
Each has included in past budget requests proposals
for expansions of these regional efforts
But need is state-wide!

Technology to the rescue
In recent years it has become possible to utilize modern
telecommunications and computer networks to do this.
Using satellite-based interactive video links, supplemented
with high-speed computer data interchange, we believe
that we can build a highly-cost effective network that
can deliver the extraordinary resources of this state’s
research universities to industry and communities
throughout the state.
In response to Senator Gast’s request, UM, MSU, MTU, and WSU
have developed a proposal to develop such a network.
We believe that such a network could be developed through
state support of modest startup costs of $12.6 M over
the first 4 years of operation, along with subscriber
fees which would eventually cover the operational costs.

Importance of the Michigan Information Technology Network
We view this as a critical component of the knowledge infrastructure necessary for Michigan's long term economic prosperity. It would provide every company, community, and eventually every citizen in the state with direct access to the resources of Michigan's research universities. But beyond that, it provides an extraordinary opportunity to take an important step toward coordinating Michigan's system of higher education.

As the Governor's Commission on the Future of Higher Education pointed out, the lack of coordination among our institutions of higher education frequently leads to proliferation and duplication of resources. MITN represents an effort by the state's four research universities to work together to respond to the needs of Michigan industry. It will serve itself as a vehicle to couple these institutions together in a highly cost effective manner -- just as it couples them to communities throughout the state.

Indeed, MITN is not only an extraordinary way to deliver badly needed services to Michigan industry that will be critical to Michigan's future prosperity...

But it represents an important step toward better coordination of and cooperation among Michigan's research universities.