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Fiber network may become movie star

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With the state bent on luring all of the movie-making business it can, the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative could be Louisiana's star behind the big screen.

Louisiana might make its ultrahigh-speed computer network available to production companies to promote growth in the movie industry. The move could speed up the movie-making process.

Digital footage, like dailies or extremely large digital animation files, could be transferred from Louisiana to Los Angeles in a matter of seconds or minutes, rather than hours or overnight.

"The state of Louisiana has the most robust and complex fiber-optics network in the country right now," said Les Guice, Louisiana Tech University's vice president for research and development. He said it could transmit data thousands of times faster than a typical high-speed Internet connection.

LONI connects Louisiana research universities to other universities in many U.S. states.

Guice said the state's network will be online by mid-January. UL will connect its supercomputer Zeke to LONI at a ceremony at the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Center today.

LONI's primary function is providing computer power and connectivity for scientific research, but officials have set aside a portion of LONI's use for economic development.

Emphasizing no commitments have been made to the film industry, Guice suggested LONI offers intriguing possibilities.

"We think that it would be the type of thing that would make Louisiana more attractive to the film industry," He said. He later added, "There is a very sincere interest to make this of value to the economy of the state."
