

Release date: November 4, 1996

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DOE

DOE DONATES EXCESS HANFORD COMPUTERS TO SCHOOLS

Northwest public and private schools now have an opportunity to obtain free surplus computers from the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. The surplus computers are being donated as part of President Clinton's program to help schools get on the "information superhighway" or the Internet by the year 2000.

"We are delighted to provide excess Hanford computers to schools to enhance educational and research opportunities for students. This is a major step in the right direction in terms of preparing our children for the high-tech world of the future," said Hanford Manager John Wagoner.

Under this program, interested schools may call to obtain an application and then be placed on a waiting list. The school officials are responsible for picking up the computer equipment at the Hanford Central Store in the 1100 Area when it becomes available.

This program originally was authorized by the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Act of 1980. Executive Order 12821 was signed by President Bush on November 16, 1992. This Executive Order authorized government computers to be transferred to schools as long as they were used to enhance science and math curriculum in schools from Kindergarten to 12th grade.

On April 17, 1996, President Clinton amended the previous Executive Order by signing Executive Order 12999. It expands the computer donation program beyond the math and science curriculum and provides preference to Head Start, teen tutoring centers, student drug prevention programs, and children's hospital educational programs.

Since Fiscal Year 1995, 2,899 computers and printers valued at \$5,269,532 have been donated to 128 schools in Washington. School districts in Oregon and Idaho have received 135 computers and printers worth \$278,455.

Additionally, the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory has transferred 131 computers and 27 pieces of technical equipment valued at \$749,500. The laboratory's equipment loan/transfer program is offered to schools involved in the Laboratory's science education and university programs.

Most of the computers are IBM compatible 386s with at least four megabytes of RAM and at least 40 megabytes on the hard drive. They are particularly useful because they have the capability to be linked to the Internet. Students will be able to "surf" for information to write research papers and broaden their knowledge on a multitude of subjects. Students are using the computers to learn and practice subjects such as Spanish, math, and spelling.

"This is an example of the federal government collaborating with state and local governments to achieve a common goal. An investment in our children is an investment in America's future," said Wagoner.

School officials wishing to apply for the computers may contact Kim McDowell on (509) 376-1263.

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