THE HUB

The Alabama Supercomputer Authority Newsletter

STATEWIDE EDUCATION NETWORK

As a State leader in high-speed broadband expansion and operation, Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASA) operates a statewide network for education that provides broadband connections to over 650 sites in all 67 counties, many of which are in rural areas. In 2019-2020, ASA provided high speed broadband and Wi-fi access points to over 175 public libraries in the most rural areas; this proved to be instrumental in helping families and students in rural areas during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are always positioned to support new Alabama initiatives to meet the challenges we still face to expand broadband in the state.

Alabama Supercomputer Authority
Alabama Research and Education Network

April 2021

○ K12s
● Libraries
● Universities
● Community Colleges
▬ ASA Statewide Network Backbone (100Gbps)
● Backbone node-Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, Atlanta

All education sites are last mile fiber connections (100Mbps to 5Gbps) to ASA Backbone utilizing over 20 broadband providers throughout the State. ASA's robust Statewide Network Backbone consists of 100Gbps segments (between each backbone node).

FY2021-2022 E-RATE APPLICATIONS FILED

ASA filed an E-rate Consortium application in March 2021 for 591 sites that will potentially save the State of Alabama schools and libraries over $21M. The makeup of the consortium consisted of 410 K12 school sites and 181 public libraries. This is the largest application filed by ASA since the inception of the E-rate program. The cooperation of school personnel along with librarians across the state made this tedious process work well. ASA provides internet access to these sites at speeds ranging from 100Mbps to 5Gbps.

VULNERABILITY SCANNING SERVICES

ASA has newly revised pricing for internal vulnerability scanning services. This reduction was made possible by the addition of our Security Operations Center provided by legislative funding in 2021. ASA's vulnerability scanning detects and classifies possible weaknesses in computers, networks and communications equipment. Vulnerability scans may be performed on laptops, desktops, servers, and network devices as approved by each client.

ASA provides external scans at no cost upon request of the schools. Internal scans may be performed which can reveal vulnerabilities that could possibly be accessed without logging into the client network.

What is required by the client:
· The client will provide ASA with systems specifically documented by DNS records or IP address to be included in the agreement.
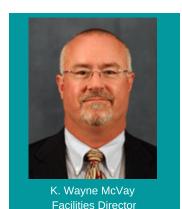
What is required by ASA:
· Provide a pre-engagement briefing to review the process and assist in developing the scope of the engagement.
· Provide both a detailed list of discovered vulnerabilities within the Client's IT infrastructure as well as an easily understood and actionable report for the repair and mitigation of these risks.
· Provide a post-engagement briefing which will include suggestions for addressing the discovered vulnerabilities.

If you are interested in receiving a quote for vulnerability scanning, internet access, WAN or other services, please email your requests to Tyler Carr at tcarr@asc.edu.

STATEWIDE EDUCATION NETWORK

ASA has evolved its advanced network since the 1990s and has a history of making use of the fiber providers in the state to operate a cost effective broadband statewide network. While ASA, as a state agency, does not physically build out and own fiber on public right of way or private property, ASA is interested in and benefits from private industry investment and business expansion in areas of the state that still lacks this infrastructure. We presently use more than 20 telecommunications, fiber, and cable industry providers to deliver broadband connections to our clients. As the demand for broadband grows in the future, ASA is in place to expand its services to fill those needs.

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT
K. WAYNE MCVAY

K. Wayne McVay
Facilities Director

The Alabama Supercomputer Center in Huntsville, is home to ASA's data center along with the staff administering the services that ASA provides to its clients. The Center houses network operations, security operations, high performance computing and application development staff. K. Wayne McVay, Facilities Director, has managed these operations for over 27 years. Wayne joined the ASA staff in 1994 and has been instrumental in keeping the Alabama Supercomputer Center as a state-of-the-art facility.

Under Wayne's direction, a number of changes have been made to the physical facilities at the Alabama Supercomputer Center. Additional power capacity has been added by the replacement and expansion of UPS systems. Longer term disaster mode operations have been assured through the addition of a diesel generator and natural gas generator. The air conditioning systems have been replaced and expanded in order to accommodate more equipment on the computer room floor. These improvements have made it possible for the Alabama Supercomputer Center to provide more services than ever before. Tours of ASA's facilities are available upon request.

A l a b a m a   S u p e r c o m p u t e r   C e n t e r

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Debra Wallace, CEO

Since moving into my new role as CEO on January 1, 2021, I have been privileged to lead a team with synergy that contributes daily to the successes of ASA. Effective communication, collaboration and cohesiveness would best describe the staff of ASA. Simon Senek said it best, "A team is not a group of people that work together, a team is a group of people that trust each other."

From operating the Supercomputer Center in Huntsville to filing E-rate applications for almost 600 sites, ASA team members work together to accomplish these tasks. The ASA staff is a talented and dedicated team who trust me and each other to fulfil the role to serve education in Alabama.

ASA has successfully supported education for over thirty years, and it is my intent to lead this agency, engage stakeholders and legislators to continue this work. The tradition and reputation of ASA is highly regarded and the spirit of continuous improvement and the commitment to operational excellence is always in the forefront of our daily tasks.

Best regards,

Debra Wallace

Tell us some GOOD NEWS

We are eager to share with everyone what is going on at ASA, but would love to hear all the GREAT things that are happening in our Alabama Schools and Libraries.

If you have some good news that you would like to see published in our newsletter, please send it to *newsletter@asc.edu.*

We look forward to hearing from you.