

# NEWS RELEASE

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## NC State's Averitt Honored by *Computerworld* for IT Leadership

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Samuel F. Averitt, North Carolina State University's vice provost for information technology, chair of the North Carolina Networking Initiative (NCNI) and alumnus of NC State's College of Engineering, has been selected as one of *Computerworld* magazine's Premier 100 IT Leaders for 2004. The award was announced in a special Jan. 5 edition of *Computerworld*.



Samuel F. Averitt

The annual award honors 100 top IT and business executives for their exceptional technology leadership. This year's winners will be honored at the Premier 100 IT Leaders Conference in Palm Desert, Calif., in March.

Averitt was selected by *Computerworld* editors from among hundreds of nominees. Award winners in past years have included IT executives from national and international organizations such as Allstate Insurance, Drexel University, Microsoft and Royal Caribbean Cruises. Suzanne Gordon, vice president of IT at SAS Institute Inc. and a member of the NC State Board of Trustees, received the award in 2003.

According to Maryfran Johnson, editor in chief of *Computerworld*, "Our Premier 100 IT Leaders represent an elite class of technology thought-leaders who truly practice what they preach about using IT to creatively solve business problems and enable new services."

"I'm honored to be selected," Averitt said, "but you can't succeed without a great team. The award speaks volumes about NC State's institutional leadership, campus colleagues and IT division staff."

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Averitt has worked his entire career at NC State, spearheading the university's leading status in networking since the early 1980s. Now with a fiber optic multi-gigabit backbone, the university's data network is one of the most powerful and robust in higher education. The university is a founding member of Internet 2. Averitt's expertise also contributed to the NCNI's launch of the nation's first operational GigaPoP in 1997. Under Averitt's leadership in 2003, the NCNI joined the National LambdaRail (NLR), a new consortium of leading U.S. research universities and technology companies building a next-generation national network using optical technology.

Averitt's leadership and collaborative skills were called upon in May 2003, when it was announced that the North Carolina Supercomputing Center (NCSC) would terminate its existing services on June 30. The decision had the most impact on the three North Carolina research universities that make up the NCNI. NC State, with its emphasis on science and technology, was the highest user of NCSC compute cycles. Millions of dollars of funded research and the projects of numerous researchers and graduate students were at stake.

Working with researchers, staff, vendors, and administrators of the affected institutions, Averitt helped devise solutions that would meet the immediate needs of most researchers, expand high performance computing capabilities on campus, and upgrade the NCNI networking infrastructure.

Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, NC State now has a new level of high performance computing (HPC) and grid computing resources in production. The new services are supported by the Information Technology Division headed by Averitt. The services are being heavily used by researchers and graduate students at NC State and other research universities in North Carolina. (For more information see <http://hpc.ncsu.edu>.)

The new HPC resources at NC State include an IBM p690 Power4 computer formerly operated by the NCSC. It was brought into production on the NC State campus on July 15, just two weeks after the closing of NCSC. Since then, an IBM Blade Center Linux Cluster (128 processors, 716.8 GFlops peak capacity) was obtained and brought online, and high performance computing experts have joined the ITD staff.

A native of North Carolina, Averitt was an early advocate of rural high-speed Internet access. He has frequently worked with state leaders on network connectivity issues. In 1998-2000, he was also the technical lead for the collaborative project that standardized and upgraded the data networks of all 16 UNC universities.