Until 2009, a statewide broadband network in Pennsylvania to connect hospitals, colleges and universities, libraries, community colleges, K-12 schools, healthcare organizations, public media, and government agencies was little more than a dream. Then, a forward-looking team of representatives from organizations all over Pennsylvania took a chance at a rare opportunity for federal funding to build just such a network. In 2010, KINBER was awarded $99.67 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Armed with that funding and $29 million more in in-kind and private support, KINBER began to build the 1,800 mile PennREN network to fuel cooperative projects, provide high-speed network access to organizations in the most remote areas of the Commonwealth, and allow citizens in underserved areas to benefit from the very latest technologies.

Today, KINBER’s cyberinfrastructure traverses more than 51 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties, many of which are unserved or underserved in terms of broadband network access. The organizations KINBER serves today include K-12 schools, public and private colleges and universities, hospitals, healthcare organizations, community colleges, libraries, and many more.

KINBER is much more than a long string of fiber-optic cable. It includes a full complement of services KINBER provides to organizations across Pennsylvania. More importantly, it is the collaborations and partnerships that have formed and continue to form as KINBER facilitates communication among its members. For example, KINBER is the reason Geisinger Health System and University of Pittsburgh researchers exchanged huge data sets without interruption or corruption. KINBER is the reason Drexel University will be able to establish a remote disaster recovery center, moving data back and forth in real time across hundreds of miles.

KINBER helped to facilitate a wide array of services offered through Internet2 is available to organizations large and small.

KINBER is a Pennsylvania not-for-profit corporation working with its member organizations to foster collaborative research, promote the innovative use of digital technologies, and improve the quality of life in communities throughout the Commonwealth. Our mission is to provide the highest quality broadband connectivity and outstanding services to current and future members.
KINBER is guided by a Board of Directors appointed by the nine charter and five associate member organizations below. Up to six additional directors may be elected at-large.

**Charter Members**

- Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP)
- Bucknell University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Drexel University
- Lehigh University
- Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges
- Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
- The Pennsylvania State University
- The University of Pittsburgh

**Associate Members**

- Geisinger Health System
- PAUnet
- Pennsylvania Department of Education Division of Library Improvement
- Temple University
- The University of Scranton
Strategic Framework

Mission Statement

KINBER is a not-for-profit organization that provides a strategic advantage to Pennsylvania-based organizations by providing broadband connectivity, fostering collaboration, and promoting the innovative use of digital technologies.

Vision Statement

KINBER envisions the day when every individual, community, and organization has fair, ubiquitous, and comprehensive access to educational, research, employment, healthcare, and cultural opportunities that improve the quality of life and contribute to the vibrancy, sustainability, and economic stability of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
Core Values

The Keystone Initiative for Network Based Education and Research adopts six core values to guide our Board, Staff, and Members as we work together to build the best research, education, and community network possible to serve the nonprofit organizations who serve the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

• **Integrity.** Our word must be honest and forthright in every way, from our representations of the services we offer to the way in which we handle our business operations and manage our finances. Our word must be trustworthy in that we do whatever it is we say we will do and do it to the best of our ability. Our integrity is more important than the physical network or services we offer.

• **Excellence.** Everything we do must be the best it can possibly be in order to offer our members the highest level of service, the best available technologies, and as cost effective as possible. Excellence includes not only the highest levels of network availability, but also the resolve and commitment of each member of our team – board, staff, and members – to do the best we can in everything we do.

• **Vision.** The most important services we offer are the ones our members are seeking—even if they do not yet know what they are seeking. Vision is a combination of innovation in developing services we create and insight into finding the timeliest value-added services that will benefit our members. Vision is knowing what our members need before they know they need it.

• **Service.** Our goal is not only to provide services to benefit our members, but also to find ways in which our members can help one another achieve success in their endeavors related to broadband network services and cyberinfrastructure. Our commitment to service involves making sure that our members know that KINBER is more than a commodity service. Rather, it is focused on every aspect of making our members successful in their use of the PennREN network.

• **Community.** Members help other members flourish in offering services to the Commonwealth, nation, and world. KINBER helps build community by helping members find other interested members to form teams to offer value-added services more easily than any one member could add on its own. Fostering collaboration and teamwork among members makes KINBER more than just a service provider.

• **People.** KINBER is committed to developing our staff and giving them the tools and encouragement to do their very best. We are committed to professional development, mentoring, encouragement, diversity, and making the best use of the most important resource we have: our staff. KINBER owns a network, but our people provide the services.
From 2010 to 2013, KINBER’s strategic focus was to build an 1,800 mile 48-strand fiber optic network across Pennsylvania and KINBER accomplished that task on time and within budget.

From 2014 to 2016, KINBER concentrated on moving from the construction phase to operations. Wendy Huntoon, who has extensive experience running a regional network and with Internet2, was hired as Executive Director in 2014. Based on her accomplishments in building up the base of members who use our services, her title was changed to President and CEO in 2015. This recognition was based on Wendy’s considerable efforts to improve KINBER on three fronts: financial stabilization, member services, and community engagement.

In order to advance our mission to provide the highest quality and most innovative services to our members, the KINBER Board has established the following strategic goals. These goals will provide direction and leadership as KINBER continues the transition into maturity of operations and services.

Over the next three years, KINBER will focus on the following five major goals:

1. Increase Value to Members
2. Ensure Sustainability and Diversify Revenue Sources
3. Expand Reach into Underserved/Unserved Areas
4. Build Strategic Partnerships with Service Providers
5. Enhance Communication and Recognition of KINBER Brand
1. Increase Value to Members
KINBER owns and operates an 1,800-mile fiber optic network (PennREN) across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but KINBER is more than a just a typical commodity network service provider. KINBER is developing a wide portfolio of services that add value to the network services currently available. KINBER will increase the development of this portfolio and provide access to other state, regional, and national research and education networks (and the organizations using them) so that Pennsylvania nonprofits, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, K-12 schools, libraries, and government agencies will look first to KINBER before any other network or provider.

Strategic Initiatives
1.1 Strategically increase the portfolio of services available to members over PennREN.

1.2 Increase participation from 100 to 500 organizations as a result of value-added services for members.

1.3 Develop on-net node strategy that optimizes the use of existing and creates opportunities for new on-net nodes and facilities so that every organization hosting a KINBER service or access node is utilizing KINBER services.

1.4 Develop last-mile solutions that allow off-net prospective members to economically and efficiently connect to KINBER network nodes.

1.5 Investigate and seek funding to extend the PennREN network further into all 67 Pennsylvania counties in order to reach unserved/underserved areas, close loops, and ensure diverse fiber paths to all existing access nodes and network termination points.

1.6 Increase the role of cyberinfrastructure (the wide range of resources that are networked together) in the mission, vision, and strategic plans of community anchor institutions across Pennsylvania.

1.7 Strengthen Pennsylvania’s cities and communities by fostering Smart and Connected Cities and Communities statewide by marshaling connectivity and cyberinfrastructure to support these initiatives including workforce and economic development; educational and lifelong learning opportunities; and collaboration among academic institutions and community organizations.

2. Ensure Sustainability and Diversify Revenue Sources
The citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and our member institutions are best served when KINBER’s members consider PennREN to be not only an indispensable part of the services they acquire, but that KINBER is also their primary and strategic services partner. Over the next three years, KINBER will provide added value through network-based services, both within and outside Pennsylvania, at the most reasonable cost possible, that members will look first to KINBER and then to other service providers. KINBER will not just be a network services provider, but a national leader in offering a range of network-accessible services to help our members meet their priorities and achieve their goals.
Strategic Goals, continued

Strategic Initiatives

2.1 KINBER will become fully self-sustaining with a balanced budget each year.

2.2 Offer an increasing number of services in order to provide a diverse and flexible revenue base.

2.3 Seek to offer innovative services that members cannot easily obtain elsewhere, in order to make KINBER connectivity the first choice for members, attractive and affordable.

2.4 Assist members in applying for and receiving funding for initiatives that are especially suited to utilizing the PennREN network and KINBER services.

2.5 Develop sustainable plans for ongoing investment in capital cyberinfrastructure and equipment.

2.6 Diversify the base of PennREN customers and members.

3. **Expand Reach into Underserved/Unserved Areas**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is anchored by Philadelphia in the east, Pittsburgh in the west, and Harrisburg roughly in the middle. Many of Pennsylvania’s counties cover vast rural areas of the state with low populations and more limited access to services. Over the next three years, KINBER will identify solutions to provide access to unserved and underserved areas across Pennsylvania at the lowest possible cost and highest value for schools, healthcare, government agencies, libraries, and nonprofit organizations.

3.1 Develop a strategy and business model for complementing the existing middle-mile network with additional on-net nodes and last-mile connectivity.

3.2 Seek innovative partnerships and new technology solutions to provide “last mile” connectivity for organizations off the network.

3.3 Seek funding to extend PennREN into more unserved and underserved areas of the Commonwealth, by connecting endpoints without diverse fiber paths and extending fiber to more locations.

3.4 Continue to enhance the value of KINBER services in order to encourage organizations to redirect funding to support making connections to KINBER access points.

3.5 Provide unserved and underserved areas not just with network services and connectivity, but with expertise, collaborative opportunities, applications, and services to which they may not currently have access or that they may not even know about on their own.

4. **Build Strategic Partnerships with Service Providers**

KINBER will serve its members by partnering with regional, national, and international network partners and technologies in order to enhance the value of KINBER’s own services and make the services of other networks (such as Internet2 Net+ services) available to our members.

4.1 Continue to partner with Internet2 to extend its membership and engagement to organizations within Pennsylvania.
Strategic Goals, continued

4.2 Develop partnerships with research and education networks across the country and the globe as appropriate to maximize collaboration, telemedicine, education, and other human service opportunities for KINBER’s member organizations.

4.3 Pursue strategic partnerships with commercial service providers and others that can enhance opportunities and meet needs of KINBER members.

5. Enhance Communication and Recognition of KINBER Brand

The best services in the world are of no use if no one has heard of them. In addition to focusing on member services, KINBER must communicate effectively with current and potential members. Effective communication is a two-way process in which members communicate their needs with KINBER and then KINBER and its partners work to meet those needs. KINBER needs to encourage members to contribute and actively gather information. KINBER also needs to develop the best processes for communicating new services and available support to the right contacts in order to deliver the most effective message.

5.1 Promote the KINBER brand through consistent, effective, and targeted communication to stakeholder groups within Pennsylvania, nationally, and worldwide to ensure that KINBER is recognized as the trusted technology partner that provides a strategic and competitive advantage to Pennsylvania-based organizations in the use of digital technologies and services.

5.2 Continue to expand opportunities at the annual conference and other engagement opportunities to attract and engage new audiences and increase sector participation while informing members and projecting KINBER’s services and benefits of membership.

5.3 Optimize available information through the KINBER website and social media channels to make KINBER communications compelling “must-reads” for anyone actively or passively seeking information about KINBER and its services.

5.4 Convene statewide and regional face-to-face and virtual workshops and networking opportunities for members and virtual meetings for members and users to foster interest in exploring the potential for network-based solutions within their respective disciplines.

5.5 Intentionally engage members and constituent organizations in community efforts that utilize KINBER services and PennREN to build bridges among institutions, researchers, teachers, librarians, healthcare providers, and other parties in new and creative ways that foster collaboration to the benefit of everyone across the Commonwealth.