Boise State, Idaho Power to use supercomputer to predict weather

By: Sharon Fisher December 3, 2019 0

A new supercomputer will help Idaho Power forecast the weather and plan its operations accordingly. File photo

Editor's note: An earlier version of this article conflated two supercomputers. The weather-prediction software will run on hardware provided by Boise State and Idaho Power and is not related to INL's supercomputer.

Boise State University, Idaho Power and the Idaho National Laboratory have announced a collaboration to advance high-performance computing, weather modeling and workforce development in Idaho.

The project calls for the collection and analysis of weather data by a supercomputer at INL's Collaborative Computing Center (C3), which opened in October. The data, which will be made available to researchers and the public, will be used to improve weather-forecasting capabilities at Idaho Power.

Boise State and Idaho Power will provide the computer equipment, which will be housed in four racks at C3 and is expected to be installed in January, the university said in a statement.

Once the equipment is in place, university students and faculty will access the publicly available data remotely, via the Idaho Research Optical Network, to help improve weather-forecasting capabilities of Idaho Power. This will help the utility more efficiently manage its operations, from power generation to trading energy on the wholesale market.

Idaho Power also collaborates with the Idaho Water Resource Board and water users in various basins in a cooperative cloud-seeding program to improve water supply conditions throughout the Snake River basin.

C3 will enable Idaho Power and other cloud-seeding program participants to model and forecast weather. The publicly available data will also be used by Boise State researchers.

The supercomputer for this project is different from INL's own new supercomputer, Sawtooth, which is in the process of being installed in C3.