

NASBE Bestows 2003 Friend of Education Award to Robert S. Marshall

National Association of State Boards of Education honors executive for his lasting impact on public education

Baltimore, MD – October 18, 2003 —The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) has bestowed the 2003 *Friend of Education Award* to Robert S. Marshall, President/CEO of AWS Convergence Technologies, Inc. AWS is known nationally for its award-winning educational program, called WeatherNet Classroom and for the WeatherBug, an online application desktop that is now one of the top web sites in the world. The Maryland State Board of Education submitted Marshall for consideration for his contributions as Chairman of the state's Committee on Technology and Education (COTE).

The *Friend of Education Award* is one of the highest honors given by the national education policymaking organization. The award recognizes an organization or individual whose work may be outside the realm of education policy and education systems, but whose contributions to public education are significant and enduring. Previous honorees have included Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates and his wife Melinda, Intel Corporation Vice-President Keith L. Thomson, and Paula Harper Bethea, Chair Emeritus of the United Way of America's Board of Governors.

"Bob has made a significant, lasting impact on our public education system and on the lives of students in Maryland," said Brenda Welburn, NASBE Executive Director. "He has played a key role in helping the state narrow the digital divide among students. In addition, through his work with AWS, he has broadened the application of technology in schools across the nation," said Welburn.

Marshall is President and CEO of AWS Convergence Technologies and Chairman of COTE, a coalition of education and business stakeholders. The COTE committee is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the "Maryland Plan for Technology in Education." Within COTE, Marshall developed the first online technology inventory system that has since served as model for many states. He has also made contributions to Maryland's "Visionary Panel for Better Schools".

AWS, which Marshall co-founded, is a pioneer in developing engaging educational tools for schools and colleges. Its core offering, WeatherNet Classroom, is a unique Web-based weather teaching tool that uses live weather data to enhance student achievement, particularly in math and science. It incorporates real world conditions from a real-time weather station atop the school into classroom instruction, helping students connect learning to their lives outside school. AWS' WeatherBug application has become the nation's number one source for online weather and is the leading distributor of life saving severe weather alerts to schools and consumers.

"I am proud of the role that I have been able to play to help improve education for students around the country. Continued progress is essential to the future of our country," said Marshall. "I share this honor with the entire Committee and my colleagues at AWS, who work hard to ensure that our state uses technology to its fullest and that no Maryland child is left behind."

The award was formally presented at the President's Dinner on the concluding night of NASBE's 2003 Annual Conference, on October 18. The ceremony will be held at the Wyndham Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, MD.

NASBE represents America's state and territorial boards of education and is the professional association of state board members. NASBE's primary mission is to strengthen state leadership in education policymaking and assure responsible lay governance of public education.

About AWS Convergence Technologies, Inc.

AWS Convergence Technologies, Inc. (aws.com) owns and operates the largest network of weather stations in the world. This live network gathers comprehensive, up-to-the-second weather information from more than 6,000 communities and powers the company's various products and services, including: WeatherBug®, an online weather service that provides live neighborhood conditions to more than 27 million registered PC users; WeatherNet Media Services, which delivers live weather information to more than 80 million U.S. households through partnerships with more than 100 local television stations; WeatherNet for Education, which provides engaging weather information and educational tools to schools and colleges, including an innovative set of online lesson plans and software called WeatherNet Classroom; and AWS Data Services which uses AWS' unique weather network and software to provide high-value solutions for vertical industries such as energy, retail, and first response.

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