

SUPPORT EDUCATION WHILE YOU'RE ON VACATION

Click Here

NIE Newspapers in Education

www.statesman.com/NIE

FACTORY MATTRESS

We want to sell you a good nights sleep



BUSINESS

[Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Employment](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Personal Finance](#) | [Markets](#) | [Last 7 days](#)

[E-mail this page](#) | [Print this page](#) | [Most popular](#)

Georgia, not Austin, gets chip center

IBM, Toshiba, Sony pick Geogia Tech to explore potential of Cell processor, which was developed in Central Texas.

By Bob Keefe
WEST COAST BUREAU

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Three of the biggest names in technology plan to announce today that they will start a research center at the Georgia Institute of Technology to explore ways to expand the reach of a promising new semiconductor design.

The move would sidestep Austin, which was a contender for the center and is where the technology was developed.

Advertisement

View Site

Chaparral Crossing

4.125% INTEREST RATE*

on HOMES CLOSED by 11.27.06

From the \$90's



Terms & Conditions

Melbourne Homes
By REYTEX

MOST POPULAR STORIES

- [Horns' loss to Kansas stirs up a lot of questions, hard-to-swallow answers](#)
- [Hullabaloo, kaboom kaboom: Aggie president takes over Defense Department](#)
- [Brown: 'We've got a lot to learn from this one'](#)
- [Prosecutors drop murder charge against Michael Moore](#)
- [Study no boon for toll opponents](#)

Sony Corp., IBM Corp. and Toshiba Corp. compare their new Cell microprocessor to a supercomputer on a chip that can handle some applications 10 times as fast as traditional computer microprocessors.

The technology that the companies jointly developed in Austin over five years at a cost of \$400 million is making its debut in Sony's new PlayStation 3 video game console. The \$500 console went on sale in Japan last week and will hit U.S. store shelves Friday.

Now, the companies want to take the Cell technology much further.

With \$320,000 of funding from the three Cell partners and additional money from outside grants, researchers at Georgia Tech's new STI Center of Competence will explore ways to adapt the technology for other industries, including biotech, finance and digital media creation.

The center, to be in the school's new Christopher W. Klaus Advanced Computing Building, will also teach students and outside companies how to program computers and write software for the new type of chip.

In picking Atlanta's Georgia Tech for the Center of Competence, the Cell partners sidestepped Austin and other high-tech hubs across the

country. More than a dozen U.S. schools, including the University of Texas, were vying to land the center, according to officials involved.

"Texas universities were absolutely part of the consideration," said Hina Shah, the Austin-based Cell development program director at IBM. But Georgia Tech won out in the end, she said, partly because it

curriculum and areas of expertise matched up better with the interests of the three companies involved.

For Georgia Tech, the center is the latest in a series of big wins and increased prominence for the College of Computing.

The school has benefited from its extensive programs in high-performance computing, digital media and video game design. But since the 2002 arrival of Rich DeMillo, a former chief technical officer for Hewlett-Packard Co., as dean, the school has redesigned its curriculum to focus less on computer science theory and more on real-world applications.

"In many ways, we found them to be much more grounded about focusing on what's needed not 10 years from now but what's needed today and tomorrow," Shah said. "That made a huge difference."

Landing the center puts Georgia Tech at the forefront of a ground-breaking type of semiconductor design. David Bader, executive director of the school's high-performance computing program, said he thinks that the center will be the only one of its kind in the United States.

"We really see this as the future of technology and innovation," Bader said. "This is so high-impact."

The Cell chip design is in its infancy and has a lot to prove. The chip isn't expected to make a big dent in the traditional semiconductor market controlled by Intel Corp. and Advanced Micro Devices Inc. anytime soon. Reaching into other markets also won't be easy.

What makes Cell so promising is its potential power, especially for graphics-intensive programs such as video games, broadband Internet video processing and other digital media applications.

Just recently, Intel released its first "dual-core" and "quad core" microprocessors that essentially put two or four processors on one chip.

Cell chips have already leapfrogged that capability. The chips in Sony's PlayStation 3, for instance, essentially have nine cores: eight sub-processors that work in connection with a central processor.

Future Cell designs could have as many as 16 sub-processing cores, which could dramatically increase the speed and the number of applications that Cell-equipped computers can handle.

"This really is a new era in performance," Jim Kahle, an IBM fellow who oversaw the chip's design in Austin, said during the announcement of the first Cell chips in San Francisco last year.

Sony has the most riding on Cell. The Japanese giant is counting on the chip to help it regain ground in new technology development that it lost in such areas as digital music.

Sony is exploring putting Cell processors into a wide array of products, including computers, televisions and mobile phones.

Toshiba plans to use Cell processors in its televisions and in other products.

IBM has introduced powerful computer servers based on the design.

Sponsored Links

[What's Your Credit Score?](#)

The average U.S. credit score: 675. The cost to see yours: \$0.
www.freecreditreport.com

[Texas Discount Realty](#)

Save money when you buy or sell real estate in Austin, Round Rock Area
www.TexasDiscountRealty.com

[Professional Web Design](#)

Save 20% on your next project with us when you start today!
www.CorporateWebImage.com

[RE/MAX Real Estate](#)

Find Real Estate Information From Experienced Professionals At RE/MAX
www.REMAX.com

[Buy a link here](#)

Advertise [Online](#) or [in Print](#) | [Subscribe to the Newspaper](#) | [Make us your Homepage](#)
Presented by [The Austin American-Statesman](#). [Contact us](#). [Corrections](#). [Site Requirements](#).
Please read our [Privacy Policy](#). By using this site, you accept the terms of our [Visitor Agreement](#).
Copyright 2001-2006 Cox Texas Newspapers, L.P. All rights reserved.

