

The Staged Rollout

CFC seeks to offer each community the freedom to choose the network and service plan that suits it best

The promise of fiber optic connectivity to every home is fast becoming a reality, with new organizations arising to serve the needs of vendors and end users. In the months ahead, Broadband Properties will profile the new organizations in our Fiber-To-The-Home Spotlight. In this issue, BP features the Community Fiber Consortium, represented by Kent Brown, Director of Access Solutions for AFL Telecommunications, and Sean Gordon, head of Business Development for Foxcom.

BP: What is the Community Fiber Consortium?

CFC: We are a team of companies in different technologies and services who together offer a complete fiber-to-the-home solution based on real world expertise. CFC's message is, "Delivering the optical promise today..." Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all approach, we provide flexible solutions that can meet a community's requirements immediately and support a staged rollout.

BP: Can you be more specific? What's a "staged rollout"?

CFC: Across the country families are enjoying the benefits of "triple play" bundled services (telephony, high-speed data, and video). But some communities that wish to share the promise of fiber-to-the-home may be forced to deploy a high-value network infrastructure that assumes the provisioning of all three services from the first day.

BP: Why is that happening?

CFC: Much of the FTTH consumer-side equipment does not allow a staged roll out plan of the various telecommunication services. This can be a barrier to the implementation of an FTTH network. A staged approach provides the services which best fit the values of the community. Perhaps this means high-speed data and video without POTS, or a video-first implementation and adding data users in line with the take-up. But overall it provides communities the freedom to choose their own network and service plan.

BP: Who might join your group?

CFC: The member base is built upon the four fundamental building blocks necessary for any FTTH roll out — infrastructure, delivery, regulatory, and content. Any community, MDU owner, HOA, or integrator who wishes to learn more about FTTH should contact any of our members. We want to talk with any company with technology or services in any of these areas. We invite them to join with us in educating the market about staged or value-centered network implementation.

BP: What about the other FTTH organizations?

CFC: The existing organizations have done a wonderful job of

popularizing FTTH in the market. But we felt there was no one talking to the communities — gated developments and MDU's. These "closed" communities do not have municipal financing or the backing of the RBOCs. Typically, they are 400- to 1,000-home communities, each with its own needs, and all looking for a flexible solution.

The CFC does not start out with a particular FTTH solution; we start with communities' needs. Through our members we offer the benefit of our common experiences in crafting the best network with the best-in-class market-validated technology.

BP: What is the mission of the Consortium?

CFC: To provide a central point for communities wishing to learn more about fiber-to-the-home — the business, technology, content, infrastructure and legal and regulatory issues . . .

BP: What scenarios do you see unfolding for projects?

CFC: Many communities have numerous existing or legacy telephony solutions and are typically un-interested in making the required investment in the CO termination equipment and marginal added costs of the CPE to support POTS. Traditional lifeline POTS is expensive and complex. Therefore, solutions which "force" regulated lifeline telephony onto the video and data network add an unnecessary economic burden and can be an impediment to the community enjoying the benefits of FTTH. They would best take advantage of the data and video pieces and leave the telephony to the local RBOC or CLEC, or roll out in parallel a VoIP solution.

BP: Do you find it dangerous to let the RBOC in the door?

CFC: The major concern is in the data space, specifically the RBOC's xDSL offering. However, even at VDSL speeds the RBOCs will never get close to the data rates offered over FTTH. Therefore, we think the threat is minimal.

BP: What hurdles exist today for FTTH networks?

CFC: Many communities simply do not know that the FTTH promise is available to them. They need to know where to procure content, how to develop a business case, plus equipment selection, and most importantly the network elements and design. CFC will provide answers on an ad hoc basis. ❖

For information call: 864-433-8072 or visit CFC on the web at www.communityftth.org.