

Voters Approve Municipal FTTH In Lafayette, LA; Margin is 2:1

From BBP Wires

Lafayette, LA – Local voters in July approved the sale of up to \$125 million in revenue bonds to fund a municipal fiber-to-the-home system. The vote was 12,481 to 7,621 with 27 percent of eligible voters going to the polls. The turnout was higher than expected for a vote with no candidates on the ballot. The vote was 62 percent for and only 38 percent against.

The project has been fought by BellSouth and Cox Communications, the largest local cable provider. BellSouth had gone so far as to say that it would pull jobs from a local call center it runs with Cingular, if residents approved the municipal system. The companies sponsored state legislation and a lawsuit that forced the vote. This is believed to be the first time that a municipality has won such a vote.

City-Parish Attorney Pat Ottinger said “The vote confirms what the City-Parish council has been saying all along” about public support for the project. Attorney Jim Baller, who helped local officials navigate toward the referendum win, said, “The voters of Lafayette have sent a wake-up call to incumbent [cable and telephone companies] and legislators across America. It’s time for the public and private sectors to put conflicts like this aside and get American broadband moving again.” “Two years from today we ought to begin serving our first

customers,” said Terry Huval, director of Lafayette Utilities Service, which currently provides power, water and sewage treatment in Lafayette. He added, “BellSouth and Cox wanted the people of Lafayette to speak, and now the people of Lafayette have spoken loud and clear. Now it’s time for BellSouth and Cox to accept what the people have said and stop throwing hurdles in our way.”

The state’s Public Service Commission must set the rules under which LUS will operate the fiber system. The state must approve the utility’s plan to use revenue from its electric, sewer and water divisions cover the bond payments until the new division makes enough money to do so. That issue was pending at press time.

If there aren’t any delays, Huval said, LUS could have the bond money in four to five months. Then it would hire an engineering firm to prepare the system design.

The vote came after BellSouth, Cox Communications and a citizens group called Fiber 411 won a lawsuit forcing it. Fiber 411, at press time doesn’t plan to file or join any further legal challenge, organizers Tim Supple and Neal Breakfield told local press. “I think we won,” Supple said. “We started off wanting to get people the right to vote. We accomplished that. We tried to get people to understand the issue. We accomplished that, I hope. We won.”

Home Town Cable Picks Eagle Broadband and GlobeCast for IPTV

From BBP Wires

Houston and Miami – Home Town Cable, which serves 5,000 customers in western Ohio with FTTH, says it plans to use IPTV technology from Eagle Broadband and GlobeCast. The companies’ IPTVComplete will deliver advanced video and entertainment services over Home Town Cable’s state-of-the-art, fiber-to-the-user broadband network to residents and businesses in western Ohio.

“We selected IPTVComplete to deliver our video service because it offers a faster, more economical way for us to provide a high-quality entertainment bundle to our customers,” said Scott Prueter, President of Home Town Cable. “We have been impressed with Eagle Broadband’s and GlobeCast’s broad capabilities and expertise as well as their responsiveness to our requirements. IPTVComplete greatly

simplifies our video deployment and allows us to maximize our revenue opportunities while reducing our risk and time to market.”

Home Town Cable will get a bundle of video technology tailored to meet its specific needs, including design and installation of a video head-end that will be provided and operated by Eagle Broadband, satellite distribution of a fully encrypted video stream ready for distribution over Home Town Cable’s last-mile fiber network, and 24-hour network monitoring and customer service.

The solution reduces the time, effort and costs for new and incumbent broadband providers looking to offer high-quality entertainment services over their fiber or DSL broadband networks. For additional information call 800-628-3910 or

281-538-6000 or email iptvinfo@eaglebroadband.com.

Eagle Broadband has been selling the Media Pro line of HDTV-ready IP set-top boxes that enable broadband providers and hotel operators to deliver interactive entertainment services; and the SatMAX satellite communications system that provides government, military, homeland security and enterprise customers with reliable non-line-

of-sight voice and data communications. The company is headquartered in Houston, Texas. For more information see www.eaglebroadband.com. GlobeCast (www.globebroadcast.com), a subsidiary of France Telecom, operates a global network of satellite distribution platforms for DTH and cable broadcast, enterprise media and advanced IP-based content delivery.

Texas Legislature Votes Statewide Video Franchising Bill

From BBP Wires

Austin, TX – Legislation that would simplify state video franchising was moving forward in Texas as we went to press. The Texas State Senate and House of Representatives both approved deregulation bills that would allow providers such as SBC and Verizon to negotiate statewide video franchises rather than having to obtain franchises individually from each local government.

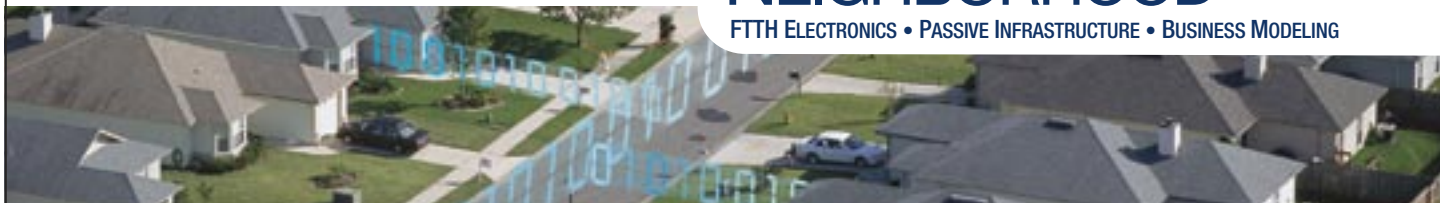
Minor differences have yet to be ironed out in the two bills, and the Governor has yet to sign it into law. Cable operators

are bitterly opposed to these bills, which they say would allow phone companies to target their investments in the most affluent areas, rather than having to offer municipality-wide service. The Baby Bells deny that they plan to do so.

If this bill becomes law it will go into effect on September 1, 2005. The bill also contains terms granting the Bells price flexibility for certain telecommunications services. The bill has been stripped of provisions that would have limited municipal broadband activity.

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IBM, Houston Utility Join To Explore 7 Mbps BPL

BBP Staff Report


Houston – CenterPoint Energy is running a pilot program to deliver 7 Mbps broadband service over powerlines to 220 Houston-area homes. The project uses new conversion technology from IBM that increases bandwidth roughly 3-fold over previous versions. The conversion units cost about \$200 each now, but would be much less expensive in mass production.

The Federal Communications Commission has pushed BPL as a counterbalance to the “duopoly” of cable and telephone companies delivering broadband service. Electric utilities can also use BPL to monitor their own networks

better, to detect customer outages and to handle billing. The FCC sees BPL as especially valuable to rural customers who have not yet been reached by digital cable or by fiber.

There have been reports, in some other tests, of interference with radio frequencies used by amateur radio operators. Interference can be minimized by choice of the frequencies used to put a digital signal onto the powerline in the first place, and by circuit design, especially routing signals around transformers. That, combined with a low ceiling on top bandwidth usable by customers, has limited utility interest in the technology.

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IMF Launches 24-Hour Music Channel With Omneon Spectrum Server System

From *BBP Wires*

Sunnyvale, Calif. – Omneon Video Networks has announced that IMF: The International Music Feed, a wholly owned subsidiary of Universal Music Group, is using a new Omneon Spectrum™ media server system as part of a three-channel broadcast system. The Omneon server system will be used for playout of programming content on IMF's 24-hour channel launched in January, which is dedicated to playing the world's best music. The Omneon system allows IMF to work with content in DV format from the time videos leave archive, throughout editing, to transmission for playout.

"Omneon was a clear choice because it is the simplest and most open server solution with respect to file management," said Jason Odell, vice president of broadcast engineering for IMF. "While other systems require some type of proprietary 'wrapper' to work with files, the Omneon server system allows the user to drag files in without concern for transcoding. It's been a very effective system so far, and with support for a broad range of remote control protocols, it provides the

flexibility to integrate with other applications as we migrate to automation."

IMF gets file-based content from archives at Bitmax in Hollywood, edits that content at its own Santa Monica facility with Final Cut Pro, and then transports files to an Omneon server located at Globecast's Culver City uplink site. On-air playout is managed with Omneon's PlayTool utility.

An exceptionally cost-effective and flexible media server designed for the professional television industry, the Omneon Spectrum media server provides IMF with a reliable and scalable foundation for its broadcast playout and storage needs. Omneon's server system is built on an open architecture that allows it to support a broad variety of third-party applications for control and transmission, media management, archiving, and collaborative production. Because the server features a scalable, distributed architecture, IMF will be able to scale system components as its operations evolve. More information about Omneon products is available at www.omneon.com.

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