

BellSouth Threatens to Move Jobs if Louisiana City Installs Its Own FTTH

By BBP Staff

Baton Rouge – How far will ILECs go to derail municipalities that wish to start their own FTTH utilities? BellSouth, after fighting the Lafayette (Louisiana) Utilities System's plans for FTTH for the past year, pulled what it hopes will be a trump card out of its deck of tricks. Bill Oliver, president of BellSouth Louisiana, says it may pull Cingular's call center out of the town. BellSouth owns 40% of Cingular. The call center employs about 1,300. That's a major employer in a community that has fewer than 120,000 residents.

BellSouth wasn't coy. Oliver made his threat at a meeting

with the editorial board of Baton Rouge's alternative weekly, The Advocate, in February. The paper said Oliver asked rhetorically, "Why would BellSouth want to keep all its operations in a parish [county] where it had no other significant business interest?" He also noted, "The call center, which handles customer service tasks for Cingular, could be located in Timbuktu and still perform the same services.... Would you still keep people there?"

BellSouth offers only DSL in Lafayette, but Oliver says it will be building a fiber to the curb system there soon, with a top bandwidth

of 24 Mbps. Cox Communications, the local cable service, has also been fighting the local utility. BellSouth, Cox, the Louisiana Cable and Telecommunications Association and a group called Fiber 411 had just won a state district court ruling that LUS must hold a referendum on the \$125 million bond issue it seeks to raise to build the system. That would be about \$3,000 a household, at the high end for FTTH deployments.

Joey Durel, Lafayette's mayor, has not said whether the utility will appeal the ruling. Any referendum would, of course, be costly and would include campaigning by those whose jobs are being threatened, so he wants to avoid a public vote. The city has spent \$400,000 fighting for the system so far.

BellSouth's "Cingular" move comes after a year of court cases, a request that the FCC regulate the town's utility like a private monopoly carrier (using the so-called "Part 64" rules) and a failed attempt to get a restrictive state law passed. In November, the state enacted a law specifically allowing municipalities to build their own broadband systems.

On February 25, the PBS news show Now ran a segment on the issue, focusing on another case, Verizon's fight to keep Philadelphia from installing a citywide Wi-Fi system. The show noted (inaccurately) that although Pennsylvania passed a law barring municipalities from building such systems, Philadelphia's plan was grandfathered. Actually, any municipality in Pennsylvania has until next year to get a system under way.

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Caspian and Korean agency ETRI to Develop Solution for Korean Broadband

By BBP Staff

SAN JOSE – Caspian, a major supplier of high-performance, flow-state solutions for the telecommunications industry, announced February 28 that it has signed an agreement with the Korean Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI) to co-develop advanced IP flow-state solutions for South Korea's Broadband convergence Network (BcN).

"Korea has recognized the need for a new communications environment for its people and the world," said Chu-Hwan Yim, president of ETRI. The organization has particular technical expertise in simplified multi-protocol labeling switching (sMPLS). The BcN project is building an integrated network with bandwidth of 50 to

100 Mbps per end user that can offer seamless multimedia services to 20 million Korean subscribers using wired and wireless communications among heterogeneous networks.

Todd Acree, Caspian's director of marketing, noted that in Korea, 80 percent of households have access to broadband and property values are determined partially by how much bandwidth you have. "At high speeds with good QoS, you need something beyond raw bandwidth. You need deterministic services, flow state technology, not just packets. The Koreans have a "best effort" network now, not good enough for video on demand or VoIP. So they want to have real time services over the extension of

that network." The technology will be used throughout the Korean system, from headends to dwelling units, depending on the specific local network architecture, he said. Rollout will begin in 2005 and is scheduled for completion in 2010.

ETRI is a non-profit research center supported by the Korean government. It developed CDMA technology for mobile communication and the TDX switching system, positioning Korea as one of the strongest countries in the information and telecommunication industry. See www.etri.re.kr. Caspian Networks is headquartered in California, with offices in North Carolina, the United Kingdom, Japan, Korea and China. See www.caspian.com.

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LightSpeed Technologies to Distribute Amedia Networks' 100Mbps QoStream

From BBP Wires

Holmdel, NJ – Amedia Networks, a provider of Ethernet ultra-broad-

band equipment and software, said LightSpeed Technologies, an

FTTH systems integrator, will include Amedia's QoStream products as a part of LightSpeed's system designs. Amedia sells into the ESON (Ethernet Switched Optical Network) market. The QoStream AS5000 Aggregator Switch, the QoStream PG1000 Premises Gateway (with inside and hardened outside versions), as well as the QoStream Director Network Management System, are suitable for MDU and single-family homes. Each subscriber can receive up to 100 Mbps over a 90 km reach from a central office or headend.

Wave7 Optics Tapped by Brazilian Education Ministry for "Triple Play" FTTP Net

From BBP Wires

Atlanta – As we went to press this month, Wave7 Optics (see International Roundup, this issue) announced it has been selected by the government of Brazil for a major network project sponsored by that country's Ministry of Education (MEC). Working with Brazil's Dquest, Wave7 Optics will construct a network linking 48 municipalities in the southern Brazilian state of Santa Catarina.

The pilot project is being spearheaded by a consortium of 19 power and utility co-ops and will eventually expand to serve approximately one million people with connections to their homes and 1,500 public and private schools.

Subscribers will receive the network connection and network interface free and pay about \$25 per month to access the triple play services. That's a stiff fee for the average Brazilian, but within range for the growing middle class.

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FONS Introduces "Pathways" End-to-End FTTP Connectivity Products

From BBP Wires

Marlboro, MA – Fiber Optic Network Solutions (FONS) Corporation, which saw its sales more than triple in 2004 to \$120 million thanks in large part to orders from Verizon, has introduced its Pathways solution, a complete line of passive optical network components and connectivity products that enable customers to implement reliable FTTP networks including to MDUs. Products include:

Central Office/Headend: Fiber management solutions for cabling and connecting between network transmission equipment and the outside plant include high density fiber distributing frames, termination patch panels and splice shelves, high performance cable assemblies, WDM and optical component modules and shelves, and entrance splice enclosures.

Outside Plant: FONS' fiber distribu-

tion hub (FDH), the primary convergence point for locating optical splitters in the outside plant, and the RC ("rugged connector") system, drop cables, drop terminals, and MDU terminals.

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