

Our Global Report Brings It All Home

The Broadband Beat – Dubai to Winona



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Let's take a quick trip around the world. Ready? Hold onto your PDAs. To achieve the inclusive coverage in this issue, editor-in-chief Steven Ross started by flying to Amsterdam for the European Fiber-to-the-Home Council meeting. But we didn't stop there. The whole planet is our beat; you'll find our scope and interests extending from Central America to Africa, from Dubai to Vasteras, Sweden, and from Berlin to Brisbane. And as you'd expect, there is plenty of news from Asia, where in Japan half the households have broadband service and 90,000 sign up for fiber monthly.

We take the global perspective because the speed with which a particular technology gets implemented in Japan, for example, may affect prices around the world. You can see the dynamics of worldwide commerce in Jackson, Tennessee – a great example of the value of our editor's decree in his column on page 4 to think globally and act locally.

Interest from Brazil

In recent months the Jackson Energy Authority entertained visitors from Denmark, China, and the Netherlands. In January, JEA welcomed travelers from Brazil, including a senator, the director of national education, the advisory minister to the Brazilian Department of Science and Technology, and the president of the National Bank for Economic and Social Development.

Their purpose: to learn all about Jackson's fiber-optic, broadband communications system from Kim Kersey, senior vice president of telecommunications for JEA, and Kyle Spurgeon, vice president of business development. "They are trying to enhance life in rural areas with fiber-optic capabilities," Kersey said, and "trying to stem migration of people from the rural areas to the already overly crowded large cities."

What I found striking is how much those words and the concern for economic development mirror the goals of state and local initiatives in the U.S. Mark Daley, the 27-year-old communications director of Opportunity Iowa, which aims to accelerate the spread of

broadband connectivity, told me how his organization was geared up to reverse a trend that saw "the fewest number of young people" moving to his state. Not long after I heard Mark lament the fact that inadequate broadband facilities meant "people from Iowa are leaving for Minnesota," I spoke with James C. Erickson, president of the newly formed FiberFirst Minnesota, who says he launched his organization in response to a strong demand for education about the benefits of Fiber-to-the-Home.

Mark Steinglein, a county commissioner from Minneapolis, was eager to weigh in on the topic: "Minnesota *must* keep up with the rest of the world in telecommunications," he said. "That means fiber optics all the way to the home and business. FiberFirst will help us do that." Charter member Gary Evans, president of Hiawatha Broadband, a triple play provider in Winona, says the group will become "a model for other states to follow." Check out the website, www.FiberFirstMn.org, and note the high-powered conference the group is holding on March 30. It is part of the Towns and Technologies series offered by *Broadband Properties* and Fiber Optic Communities of the US.

Wave7 Optics Gets the Contract

There is no question that a state or municipality that sets out to be a leader can have an impact by thinking globally and acting locally – as can a company. One final note about Jackson: The international visitors were invited to the city by Wave7 Optics, from whom JEA has purchased broadband equipment. The upshot to the visit can be found in our news section, in a story announcing Wave7 was just selected by the government of Brazil for a major network project sponsored by that country's Ministry of Education.

And that's just one of many world-class broadband success stories in this issue.

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