

Independent Telcos and FTTH

Our monthly summary of news of special interest to independent telephone companies

By Masha Zager ■ *Contributing Editor*

Capitol Infrastructure

(www.capitolinfrastructure.com), an FTTH infrastructure provider based in Cary, North Carolina, announced a strategic alliance with DAVE.TV. Capitol Infrastructure will integrate DAVE.TV's IPTV and Cross-Platform Digital Content Ecosystem into its quadruple-play offerings. DAVE.TV content received on the customer's television can be pushed to portable and mobile devices. Trials of the service will begin this winter in Capitol Infrastructure's deployments in Atlanta.

Guadalupe Valley

Telecommunications Cooperative

(www.gvtc.com) of New Braunfels, Texas, is working with Optical Solutions to bring FTTP to commercial customers in the nearby town of Boerne. Businesses, government entities, hospitals and other non-residential customers in Boerne will be able to purchase telephone, video, data, and security services over FTTP. Business service levels will include T1, DS3, and PRI (Primary Rate Interface). The project is a competitive overbuild and will provide the first competitive telephone service in Boerne.

Northeast Florida Communication

(www.nefcom.net), an ILEC based in Macclenny, Florida, will provide OSI's fiber-to-the-home solution to four new subdivisions in Macclenny, eventually reaching several hundred homes. The company will sell voice and data services over FTTH.

Oxford Networks

(www.oxfordnetworks.com), a telco that deployed the first FTTP system in Maine

in 2003, has expanded its FTTP service to 400 additional businesses and more than 1,000 additional homes in Lewiston and Auburn. Oxford also announced that it will be providing Siemens Communications' SURPASS Home Entertainment portfolio of IPTV solutions to its FTTH customers in central and western Maine.

Paul Bunyan Rural

Telephone Cooperative

(www.paulbunyan.net) of Bemidji, Minnesota is overbuilding areas of Bemidji, Cohasset, and Grand Rapids with FTTH, using the Optical Solutions gateway, and plans to bring FTTH into its ILEC territory next year. Voice and data services were offered initially, and video service is being rolled out now. Eventually, about 7,500 homes will be passed.

TDS Telecom

(www.tdstelecom.com) headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin, has begun a limited trial of a fiber-to-the-home offering in the Madison suburb of Fitchburg, using Entrisphere's Broadband Loop Multiplexer. At present, only voice and data services are offered.

Video Messaging:

The Benefits of Convergence

The "triple play" of telephone, Internet, and video has become the standard offering of fiber-to-the-home providers, whose bandwidth easily accommodates all three streams and more. But is triple play only a marriage of convenience, or are there benefits to be gained from bundling these services?



VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

DAVE.TV

(www.dave.tv)

Entrisphere

(www.entrisphere.com)

Integra5 Communications

(www.integra5.com)

Optical Solutions

(www.opticalsolutions.com, www.calix.com)

Siemens Communications

(www.usa.siemens.com/index.jsp)

Vendors like Integra5 Communications (www.integra5.com) are betting that convergent products that mix telephone, computer, and video will appeal to consumers. Their products are catching the attention of triple-play providers, including both cable companies and telcos. Foothills Telephone Cooperative (www.foothills.net) in rural Kentucky will soon become the first telco to offer Integra5's video caller ID and voicemail service to its FTTH customers.

Subscribers to the new service will see the caller's name displayed on the television screen – along with the caller's picture, if they've added it to their address book – when they receive a phone call while

watching television. If the television is off, the call will be logged and saved, even if the caller doesn't leave a message. Foothills is setting up a "virtual channel" where subscribers can review calls they may have missed.

Shawn Thompson, Foothills' headend engineer, says even customers who don't subscribe to digital video can use the new service – all that's required is a set-top box. In fact, the company is hoping that some of its analog video customers will upgrade to digital service once they have the set-top box in the house. (Cable providers who have offered Integra5's video messaging service have found that it does increase the digital video take rate.) Though pricing hasn't been finalized, Foothills expects to charge only a dollar or two per month for the new service, and may even offer a free month to introduce it.

Integra5 plans to add bells and whistles to its video messaging product, says Meredith Flynn-Ripley, the company's executive VP for marketing and sales. Within the next year, the call-logging service will be upgraded to a full-featured voicemail. By clicking the remote control, subscribers will be able to listen to voicemail and even return telephone calls. They will also be able to use ringtones to identify individual callers. In addition, SMS, the text messaging technology used on cell phones, will be available through video.

The messaging service offers phone companies a new way to communicate with their customers, according to Flynn-Ripley. Telcos can deliver messages to selected set-top boxes – for example, they can send information about service problems only to affected subscribers, or notify customers about special offers. And while video messaging seems like a natural fit for FTTH providers, the service is actually technology neutral and can be delivered over any kind of television and telephone lines.

Also in This Issue:

- Starting a Telco-Based Video Service
- Negotiating and MDU Access Agreement
- An IPTV Primer and News Update
- ...And More