

FTTH Deployments

By Masha Zager, Independent Telco Editor

New deployments of Verizon Communications' (www.verizon.com) FiOS fiber-to-the-premises service have been announced in 11 New York State communities, and the company has also expanded its service areas in Redmond, Washington, and Fort Wayne, Indiana. Verizon recently announced an agreement with the developer Southern Crafted Homes to provide three new Pasco County, Florida, communities with FiOS broadband and television service.

Cable franchises for FiOS TV were recently approved by a number of local governments in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Based on previous franchise approvals, Verizon is now launching FiOS TV services in eight New York State communities, eight Texas communities, five Massachusetts communities and one in Florida.

Seattle's FTTP project took a step forward in August when 28 companies responded to the city's request for information. Eleven of them were selected to meet with the

city to discuss their responses. The companies making the cut were ACI Communications, Bechtel Telecommunications, Ericsson, iTown Communications, Lucent Technologies, Nextnet Investments, PacketFront, Qwest, US MetroNets, Verizon, and Vulcan.

The city of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and the High Tech Consortium of Southern New Mexico co-hosted a broadband forum in September, bringing together industry leaders, state leaders and consumers to discuss whether a deployment similar to the UTOPIA community fiber network in Utah (www.utopianet.org) would be feasible in Las Cruces.

Canadian company TeraSpan Services (www.teraspan.com) announced that it had entered into a non-binding letter of intent to construct a fiber-to-the-premises network, and to offer advanced services that include basic TV, high-speed internet, pay TV, pay-per-view, and digital phone services. The provider for which TeraSpan is building the network was not named.

In France, the Free group, owned by Iliad SA (www.iliad.fr), announced that it would build a fiber-to-the-home network as part of the "Paris – Digital City" project launched by the city's mayor. According to Free, the network, which will be available to 2.1 million residents in Paris and the surrounding communities, will enable "virtually unlimited symmetrical bandwidths and extensive multimedia applications: multi-device HDTV, self-produced video content, etc." The company said that the network will be open to all operators, and that cable will be supplied by Draka Comteq (www.drakacomteq.us). Free has reportedly decided to use Active Ethernet technology.

Smartlinx3 (smartlinx3.net.nz), a community open-fiber network in New Zealand, has been awarded government funding to bring high-speed Internet service to three New Zealand cities. Also in New Zealand, the country's major telephone provider, Telecom New Zealand, is launching a fiber-to-the-premises pilot project in a greenfield development at Mission Heights in Manukau City.

TVNZ Simplifies Business Operations With ScheduALL Operations Management Software

From *BBP Wires*

HOLLYWOOD, FL – TVNZ (tvnz.co.nz), New Zealand's public broadcaster and largest free-to-air network, is now using ScheduALL (www.scheduall.com) to manage all of its production resources, including both facilities and personnel. ScheduALL provides TVNZ with a single solution for managing all the elements of its internal productions, as well as projects for external customers.

After consolidating business units around the country into a single national team, TVNZ needed a facilities management system that mirrored its new structure. The broadcaster previously used four different software packages, manual systems, and spreadsheets. Now, a single integrated system serves as the source of information for decision-making and allows the system's users to follow common processes.

ScheduALL lets TVNZ analyze its business performance nationally from a common base of information. Resource availability is now more visible across the business, and opportunities to move staff and equipment around the country are easier to identify. As the broadcaster continues to grow, TVNZ need only update and expand its ScheduALL system, rather than multiple systems across the business.

Focus on Technology – New Advances that Will Affect Upcoming Equipment

New chip sets and new enhancements planned for GePON and GPON standards promise even faster, more interoperable equipment in the next few years. Coming: 10GePON.

Full Service Access Network Group Meets

From BBP Wires

PETALUMA, CA – At the fall meeting of the Full Service Access Network (FSAN) group, hosted by Calix (www.calix.com), service providers and equipment suppliers from around the world met to discuss standards for passive optical networking (PON). FSAN members are working to ensure a smooth transition from the current ITU standard, GPON, to the next-generation access network. Many of them expect this transition to involve wave division multiplexing (WDM) with a separate wavelength to every home, making the GPON specification blind to the WDM wavelengths so GPON and WDM can coexist on the same fiber. Attendees also focused on interoperability solutions that would allow any GPON optical line terminal (equipment in the central office or local point of presence) to control and provision any optical networking terminal (customer-premise equipment). Engineers from FSAN vendor members tested their equipment for data service activation using the proposed interoperability solution, OMCI. The goal of the ongoing test events is to achieve true multivendor interoperability.

PMC-Sierra Introduces Analog Front End Devices for GPON and EPON Central Office Equipment

From BBP Wires

SANTA CLARA, CA – PMC-Sierra, Inc. (www.pmc-sierra.com) announced four new Analog Front End Devices (AFEs) for GPON and EPON fiber-to-the-home equipment. These new physical-layer devices will complement PMC-Sierra's line of networking system-on-chips (SoCs) for GPON and EPON systems. The new devices will enable OEMs to produce higher-performance access systems at lower cost using either flavor of passive optical network (IEEE or ITU). EPON (GePON) is widely deployed in Asia, and GPON is increasingly popular in North America.

Espial IPTV Has New HD Set-Top Box Support

From BBP Wires

THE NETHERLANDS – Espial IPTV (www.espial.com), a provider of IPTV middleware and applications, introduced the latest version of its Evo service platform and announced its support for the first wave of High Definition (HD) set-top boxes. The Evo service platform is now running on Tilgin's new High Definition IP STB, the Mood 400. The Evo platform allows operators to offer subscribers a HD experience that is graphically rich, fully skinnable, fast, open and customizable. It supports a range of new standards and customization tools such as HTML 4, JavaScript 1.5, AJAX and Macromedia Flash 7. Operators can brand and customize their offerings to their exact specifications.

Evo includes applications such as Electronic Program Guide, Video on Demand, Interactive Portal, Personalized Settings and Browser.

Oki Electric Adds HD Video to its Softphone

From BBP Wires

TOKYO – In the last few years, many companies have been installing softphones, or computer-based telephony software, to give employees more flexibility in their communications. To meet this demand, Oki Electric Industry Company (www.oki.com) has now unveiled its new Com@WILL Softphone*2, part of the new lineup for its Com@WILL Series, application software for its IP telephony server. Oki's Com@WILL Softphone makes it easy for users to establish remote video calls from their desks and add participants during the conference calls.

The new release offers high-definition video, significantly improving video quality for video telephony and videoconferencing. According to Oki, its eVideo codec enables stable video transmission on an IP network, making voice and video conversation more realistic.

The software also includes enhanced functions for voice mail, phone recording and address book sharing among terminals. Going forward, Oki plans to connect Com@WILL Softphone with video conference systems, which will enable softphone users to participate in remote video conferences.

Telecast Announces New Modules for Viper II Fiber Video Transport

From BBP Wires

WORCESTER, MA – Telecast Fiber Systems (www.telecast-fiber.com) has launched its next generation of fiber optic video and audio transport module sets for the company's widely used Viper II family, featuring higher performance and additional convenience.

Several Viper II Series 6000 module sets are already available for the transport of Serial Digital Interface (SDI), a standard for digital video transmission over coaxial cable, and high-definition SDI. They range from single HD/SDI transport to multichannel transceivers and digital audio multiplexing.

Tyco Gel Sealing Technology Improves Antenna Connections

From BBP Wires

HARRISBURG, PA – Tyco Electronics Corporation (www.tyco-electronics.com) brought out a new gel seal for in-line and antenna connectors. The GSIC seal provides a weatherproofing system for sealing jumper-to-feeder and jumper-to-antenna connectors that are exposed to outside environments. According to Tyco, gel-sealing technology is gaining acceptance in telecom infrastructure due to its wide tem-

perature operating range, reliability and performance.

Additionally, since GSIC closures can be opened and closed many times, there is no cost to inspecting the inside of the closure. Tape, mastics and other external installation materials are not required.

The closure system includes a locking clamshell enclosure filled with high-performance sealing gel, which simplifies installation by al-

lowing installers to wrap around connectors and in-line components without un-mating the connectors. The tool-free locking mechanism provides audible indication when the clamshell is locked. Installers can open and re-close the clamshell for repairs or inspections.

The gel-filled internal cavity provides an effective barrier against moisture and foreign material to the clamshell, to IP 68.

Amino Announces Internet TV Platform

From BBP Wires

CAMBRIDGE, UK – IPTV platform supplier Amino (www.aminocom.com) announced the AmiNET125i, a device that lets consumers access video content from the Internet on their televisions. Internet TV is being hailed by many analysts as the next potentially “disruptive technology” that, in time, may overshadow conventional telco, cable or satellite TV and alter the economics of service provision. Content on Internet TV today ranges from user-generated videos on sites like MySpace and YouTube, to professionally produced niche content like extreme sports programming, to mainstream content such as reruns

of hit television shows.

The ad-supported and pay market for Internet TV is expected to reach a combined \$16.2 billion by 2010, according to Michael Wolf, an analyst at ABI Research. But Amino and other vendors are betting that viewers will want to view Internet content in the living room, on the television. Devices such as the AmiNET125i are designed to help consumers bridge the gap between PC and TV.

The AmiNET125i is designed to deliver video streams in several formats to a TV by supporting a range of popular decoders. A powerful host processor ensures that the user experience is on a par with that of a

PC-based web portal. In anticipation of DRM issues, the AmiNET125i supports Microsoft Windows Media Digital Rights Management 10 (WM DRM10), which prevents the interception and piracy of digital content. The unit also allows content to be resized to fit the larger TV screen.

Amino is partnering with Narrowstep (www.narrowstep.com), a provider of IP-delivered video content, in its quest to bring Internet TV to the living room.

According to Narrowstep, content owners will be able to combine the Amino and Narrowstep offerings to launch a “TV station in a box” solution.

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Mergers, Partnerships and New Offices

It was indeed an active month on the business front – new alliances and new business offices to take advantage of the FTTH explosion worldwide.

DirecPath to Acquire Apartment MediaWorks

From BBP Wires

DALLAS and ATLANTA –DirecPath, formed earlier this year by Dallas-based Hicks Holdings in partnership with The DirecTV Group (www.directv.com), has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Apartment MediaWorks, LLC (www.aptmediaworks.com).

Based in Atlanta, MediaWorks is a provider of pay television, broadband Internet and related services to multiple dwelling unit and gated-community owners in the southeastern United States, serving markets that include Atlanta, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; and the South Florida area.

The transaction, whose financial terms were not disclosed, is the largest to date by DirecPath since it was formed in May 2006 to provide bundled DirecTV programming, broadband voice and data services and security to multiple dwelling units and gated communities across the United States. Completion of the transaction is expected to occur within 30 to 45 days. With the acquisition of MediaWorks, DirecPath will be the largest private video operator in the Southeast and one of the largest in the United States.

Apartment MediaWorks, with some 40,000 homes passed in the Southeast, was founded in 1996 by its president and chief executive officer, Bryan J. Rader, who upon completion of the transaction will become a member of DirecPath's senior management team. Rader is a columnist for Broadband Properties Magazine, contributing the "Provider Perspective" column each month.

John Suranyi, president of DirecTV Sales and Service, said the MediaWorks acquisition would enable DirecPath to rapidly build the critical mass necessary to compete in major markets across the Southeast.

Telco Systems Establishes APAC Headquarters in Singapore

From BBP Wires

SINGAPORE – Telco Systems Asia Pacific (www.telco.com), a wholly owned subsidiary of BATM Advanced Communications and a provider of carrier-class transport and access solutions, announced that it had set up its Asia Pacific Headquarters in Singapore.

According to Telco Systems, Singapore's vibrant economic ecosystem, extensive market reach, excellent infrastructure, political stability and skilled workforce make it a strategic springboard for Telco to accelerate its market penetration in the dynamic Asia Pacific telecommunication industry. In addition, Telco's OEM partners,

including Alcatel and Nokia, have their regional headquarters in Singapore.

According to Leigh Wilson, Telco Systems' Vice President for Asia and Japan, the company plans to invest \$10 million in the region over the next 2 to 3 years.

White Rock Ceases Operations

By Linda A. Schoener

The board of White Rock Networks (www.whiterocknetworks.com), a provider of metro optical solutions, decided on August 31 to suspend virtually all operations while it waits to see if its search for an acquirer can be quickly concluded. If not, White Rock will proceed to sell its key assets and wind the company down permanently. The company has filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11.

White Rock's founder and CEO, Lonnie Martin, blamed the residue of the telecom depression for taking a toll on his company and other recent entrants into the marketplace. The company's products are deployed in the networks of more than 130 U.S.-based ILECs, CLECs, CATVs, wireless, and institutional customers.

Sony Europe Allies with Front Porch Digital

From BBP Wires

AMSTERDAM – Sony (www.sonybiz.net) announced a strategic alliance with Front Porch Digital (www.fpdigital.com), a provider of digital archive management and transcoding solutions, to deliver archive infrastructure solutions to broadcasters. The two companies are offering combined solutions featuring Front Porch Digital's DIVArchive archive management application and Sony's SAIT PetaSite tape storage systems.

Verizon Appoints Executive for Interactive TV Programming

From BBP Wires

NEW YORK – Verizon (www.verizon.com), which is adding interactive features to its fiber-optic FiOS TV service, has hired technology and cable-industry executive Rachelle Zoffer to manage interactive programming.

As director of interactive TV, Zoffer will be responsible for obtaining interactive programming that will one day enable FiOS TV subscribers to access information and interact with programs such as reality shows, sporting events, newscasts, quiz shows and shopping channels. For example, customers could use their remote controls to vote for their favorite contestants, dig deeper into news stories, access sports statistics, answer quiz-show questions or order items for sale.

In June, Verizon launched its first interactive TV application, FiOS TV Widgets, which provides real-time weather and traffic information from the remote control. New interactive features now in development will complement the hundreds of digital TV channels and on-demand services that FiOS TV offers subscribers in parts of seven states.

Verizon provides FiOS TV, as well as voice and high-speed data services, over its all-fiber network, which connects directly to millions of homes and businesses. Verizon's planned upgrade of its FiOS network to the GPON standard will enable the addition of more interactive features to FiOS TV.

Accedo Broadband and IntAct Software Partner for IPTV

From BBP Wires

AMSTERDAM – Accedo Broadband (www.accedobroadband.com), an aggregator of TV-centric applications distributed over broadband, and IntAct Software (www.intactos.com) announced that Accedo's applications would be available on set-top boxes powered by IntAct IPTV software.

Under the collaboration agreed between the two companies, the complete Accedo Application Portfolio will be available to IPTV service providers for all devices powered by IntAct IPTV software, including the AmiNET range from Amino Communications, giving them the opportunity to differentiate their IPTV solutions and create additional revenue streams.

The Accedo Application Portfolio is the largest available collection of interactive value-added services such as games, karaoke on demand, weather, puzzles, horoscope, comics, quizzes and PlasmaArt for IPTV. IntAct IPTV software is deployed on over 700,000 IP set-top boxes worldwide.

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