

Profiting from the Power of Broadband Wireless



How one savvy Internet service provider is using a Motorola Powerline system to cost-effectively deliver better broadband communications to tenants in multi-dwelling units in Chicago.



Background

Gunnar Kauke, co-founder and president of the Chicago-based Internet service provider (ISP) American Wireless Broadband (AWB), was looking for an economical way to deliver broadband wireless to multi-dwelling units (MDUs) in the Chicago area. As a veteran of the telecommunications industry who founded AWB in 2001, Kauke was familiar with broadband over powerline (BPL) technology, which he knew could provide a cost-effective means of delivering broadband to a large group of users within one building.

But he had some concerns about the technology. AWB had tested a BPL product out of Canada several years ago and was not happy with the results. In fact, the BPL technology only supported first-floor tenants, leaving users on higher floors without service.

But Kauke had been working with Motorola's Canopy® team to deliver broadband wireless to customers for years, and he was confident of the quality of Canopy products. So when he discovered that the proven Canopy Wireless Broadband Platform served as the foundation for Motorola's Powerline technology, he decided to try it.

He's very glad that he did. Not only was the system incredibly easy to install, it has worked flawlessly since its installation. Best yet, Kauke estimates that using BPL technology will allow him to reduce his current operational costs by 50 percent by eliminating the need to send a truck roll to deploy each individual new customer.

The Motorola Powerline Solution: A Powerful Technology

Kauke began by installing a Motorola Canopy subscriber module on the roof of the Colonial Village Apartment building, which is located just outside of Chicago and houses about 60 tenants. He then ran a cable from the subscriber module to the Powerline MU Gateway in the basement of the building. The Gateway then automatically delivers the broadband connection throughout the whole building via the electrical wiring.



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GUNNAR KAUCHE, CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN WIRELESS BROADBAND

Motorola’s Powerline BPL Solution: A Cost-Effective Alternative for MDUs

Motorola’s Powerline MU BPL solution is a low-cost, scalable, secure system that integrates wireless broadband, radio, Ethernet, networking, HomePlug® and modem technologies to deliver high-speed data over existing power lines. The Powerline MU solution works in even the hardest-to-reach building environments, and can use any type of Internet signal, including DSL, T1, E1, cable and satellite.

Powerline MU enables service providers to quickly and easily bring high-speed broadband access to business and residential customers in multi-unit buildings. By transforming a building’s existing electrical system into a powerful broadband communications network, Powerline MU helps you transform your revenue streams by reaching profitable customers you could never reach before.

His first pleasant surprise was the ease of installation of the Motorola system. “Installation took just a few hours,” Kauke said. “Motorola equipment is just so easy to deploy.”

Kauke first beta tested the system by providing service to four tenants on several different floors. His second surprise was how well the system worked – and how easy it was to set up end users. “To access the service, users simply plug a modem into an electrical outlet,” Kauke said. “It doesn’t matter where they plug it in – it can be in the kitchen, the bedroom or anywhere. And they always get comparable speeds.”

And although the specifications for the Canopy system promise network speeds of 8 to 12 Mbps, one test showed the network in the Colonial Village apartment building was supporting speeds of 15 Mbps, Kauke said. And AWB is in the process of delivering more bandwidth to the building, which will enable them to serve even more customers.

As a bonus to residents, Colonial Village is providing free Internet service in the laundry room so that residents can surf while washing their clothes. Building management is now considering using the system for video surveillance as well.

“Through AWB, we offer our residents six months of free Internet service. We also advertise the availability of broadband in all of our ads and brochures, and it definitely helps us attract residents,” said Stephanie Saladino, leasing agent at the Colonial Village Apartments. “I’m a user myself, and I’ve been extremely pleased with the reliability, speed and flexibility of the service. I can plug in anywhere in my home and start surfing the Internet immediately.”

BPL Technology Delivers 50 Percent Savings by Eliminating the Truck Roll

By far the biggest benefit of Motorola’s BPL system, Kauke said, is the savings it provides over “standard” broadband delivery systems. “First of all, one point-to-point antenna can support 60 people or more,” Kauke said. “But that’s not the best part. The best part is that I can take an order over the phone, FedEx the modem to the customer and have that customer up and running the next day. And that means no truck rolls for installation. This saves me about 50 percent of my operational costs.”

Prior to relying on BPL technology, AWB had to send out a technician to set up broadband service for each new user – a process that could take hours, not only because of Chicago traffic but because of the many steps involved in the installation. “Before, to set up a user, we would have to go into the apartment and tone the lines. Then we would have to go to the basement, find the customer’s line and hook it up to special equipment. Then we would have to install and test the modem,” Kauke said. “Now the customer opens up his mail, plugs in the modem and he’s connected.”

Plans for Expansion Already Underway

Kauke is already planning to expand AWB’s use of BPL technology by installing it in the multi-dwelling units that it already serves. Under AWB’s business model, AWB installs, owns and maintains the network in each building. AWB’s lowest-priced package is \$9.95, but prices can reach in the several hundred dollar range for business installations, such as a retail store in a building. And, thanks to the cost benefits offered by Motorola’s Powerline system, AWB can now apply a lot more of this revenue to profits, not operations.

“Motorola’s Powerline system is an amazing technology that saves us both time and money. It can open new doors for us – and dramatically change our future with MDUs,” Kauke said. “We are excited by the possibilities.”



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