



## Georgia City Launches Wireless Broadband Network

By Vikki Lipset

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In what might be the beginning of a new trend for small city governments, Adel, Ga., this week launched a new city-owned wireless broadband network to bring high-speed Internet access to businesses and residents.

Broadband options in Adel, a city of 5,300, were limited before the city stepped in. DSL service was available in some areas, but not city-wide, said Jerry Permenter, Adel's city manager. So the city decided to take advantage of its existing fiber optic ring to build the new Southlink.us network.

The result is a hybrid system that combines the city's 14 miles of fiber with both line of sight (LOS) and non line of sight (NLOS) wireless equipment from Navini Networks and Motorola Canopy. Adel will sell broadband service to residents and business owners much as it does electricity, water and natural gas. "This was just a natural fit for us," said Permenter.

Indeed, the city-as-WISP model makes sense for a lot of small cities, noted Daryl Scholar, an analyst with In-Stat/MDR. "So many cities have laid fiber to try to attract businesses," he said. "This is the next logical step."

Adel's network was deployed by Tri-State Broadband, which has installed similar networks for five other cities in Georgia. The Roswell, Ga.-based company designed the network from start to finish, and will also maintain it for the city. "We do everything from the feasibility study to engineering studies to the development of the sales and marketing plan," said John Overley, vice president of sales and marketing for Tri-State Broadband.

"We built the Web site, we do all the branding. We do anything and everything." That includes billing and authentication, which the company handles through its network operations center (NOC) in Atlanta.

In this case, Tri-State used gear from Navini and Motorola to set up the network, but Overley said the company has used equipment from other wireless broadband vendors, including Alverion, Proxim and Waverider, in other deployments. He said they always set up two separate systems -- one LOS and one NLOS -- to address the different bandwidth needs of commercial customers and residential users.

Having a fixed wireless system in addition to a fiber backbone allows municipal governments to offer a wide range of services and pricing schemes to the community, said Overley. "By putting in a wireless adjunct product as part of your portfolio, you increase your flexibility."

In Adel, residents and businesses can choose from plans that range from \$42.95 per month for up to 256Kbps ("Residential Lite") to \$119.95 per month for up to 1.5Mbps ("Business Premium"). The city is waiving installation, activation and modem fees for the first three months.