

Aperto sees India leapfrogging to WiMax

By NWC Newsdesk, May 22 2007

Declaring that the WiMax wireless technology was the “next big thing in the access infrastructure space,” Aperto Networks CEO Michael Pratt said that India was particularly well-poised to adopt the technology. Pratt was in India recently to announce expansion of local operations.

According to him, WiMax is expected to have far greater impact on access to the Internet than existing technologies such as DSL. In India’s case, he expected growing demand for Internet and PCs despite low penetration for both, the keenness of tier-1 internet service providers to roll out wireless services and government policies to bridge the digital divide to increase the sales of his company’s WiMax products.

While upbeat about growth opportunities for WiMax in the fixed (with WiMax modems at home or office) and portable applications (with WiMax modem/card integrated onto laptops) segments, Pratt recognized that the technology would be challenged in the mobile segment by 3G wireless technology. “We don’t know which technology will win this battle. This will be a struggle worth watching,” he said. BSNL and VSNL are running commercial trials of WiMax technology as are other large service providers.

Aperto sells its PacketMax family of base stations and subscriber units through third party value-added resellers. “Currently, it is the PM100/300 subscriber units which are mounted on the exterior of buildings that are doing well worldwide. But I think our indoor self-installed PM500 box will also gain because from the service provider’s viewpoint, they can just send out these boxes to customers by mail and have the customers install it themselves,” Pratt said.

Aperto is expanding operations in India, with a new facility that includes a WiMax development centre, a global support centre for its customers worldwide, and plans to double headcount to 100 by the end of next year.