

## US Broadband System to Be Used in Brazil's Education Project

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Atlanta-based Wave7 Optics Inc., a world supplier of point-to-multipoint Ethernet FTTP (fiber-to-the-premises) systems for residential and business services, yesterday announced that they have been selected by the Government of Brazil for a major network project sponsored by that country's Ministry of Education (MEC).

Working in conjunction with their partner in Brazil, Dquest, Wave7 Optics will construct a network linking 48 municipalities in the southern Brazilian state of Santa Catarina.

The initiative is being spearheaded by a consortium of 19 power and utility co-ops and will eventually expand to serve approximately one million people with connections to their homes and 1,500 public and private schools.

This deployment is part of a pilot project, announced on February 17th in Brazil by Minister of Education, Mr. Tarso Genro, that will enable free state-of-the-art broadband telecommunications service to the public schools in the region.

"This is undoubtedly one of the most exciting projects we've been involved with to date," said Tom Tighe, President and CEO of Wave7 Optics.

"We are gratified for the opportunity to deploy our equipment in such an important education and economic development initiative within the country of Brazil."

Subscribers will receive the network connection free of charge from the co-ops and pay about US\$ 25 (70 reais) per month to access the triple play services.

The public schools also will receive the network interface and service free of charge from the co-ops, with private schools receiving the service at a charge to be determined.

As noted in the Minister's announcement referenced above, the MEC will have a fiduciary role and will monitor the progress of the pilot project and evaluate the possibilities of how the technology can be applied to improve education.

Possibilities to be studied by the MEC include the ability to provide distance learning and accredited college courses to a mass audience and continuing education to young adults and educators.

The implementation of the project involves the National Bank of Economic and Social Development (BNDES) of Brazil, who are financing the installation of the consortium of the cooperatives; the Department of Science and Technology, who are responsible for the installation of an R&D center; the Planning Department, who will assist in the local implementation of a factory and support the further expansion of the technology beyond the pilot; and The Pontific Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC), who will provide additional R&D resources.

Wave7 Optics has established itself as an industry leader in optical broadband access systems with an expanding FTTP product portfolio featuring a variety of architectural options, based on Ethernet and IP or ATM standards, for "triple play" voice, video and data services.

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