



GigE Wireless Beats Fiber In Oregon Court Battle



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Gigabit wireless (GigE) broadband has won in the Oregon court system - not a lawsuit but rather a contract, in which the technology is going to be used for the primary key link to the current wired system that reaches some 70 sites and more than 2,000 people, and is based primarily on dozens of legacy T1 circuits. The decision has important implications for any enterprise application where a fat pipe is needed to connect a key facility that needs but doesn't already have gigabit connectivity.

The big loser is fiber, which the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) looked at ruled would cost far too much to implement for its needs. And there doesn't look to be any appeal from that ruling.

The big winner is BridgeWave Communications, whose AdaptRate model AR60 GigE 60 Ghz wireless hardware the OJD has bought for the deployment. The AR60 delivers full-rate Gigabit & fast [Ethernet](#) over one-mile links with what BridgeWave touts as "fiber-equivalent performance" including five nines (99.999 percent uptime) quality of service (QoS).

The stage for the battle between wireless broadband and competing technologies - primarily fiber but also microwave - was set when the OJD had the chance to consolidate its network operations in a centralized secure facility. The problem was that the facility, located some distance from the Oregon Supreme Court building where operations had been located and which was where the state court system had its fiber hub, didn't have any broadband connectivity of the capacity that the OJD needed.

The OJD explained that its IT team supports the evolving business practices and information needs of the state's Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Tax Court and 36 circuit courts in 27 judicial districts. It provides technical support for more than 2,000 OJD employees, with responsibility for making sure that judges, attorneys, paralegals and administrators can access crucial court documents and case files. The Oregon Judicial Information Network (OJIN) links 70 remote sites to its network backbone, until now using a multitude of traditional leased-line T1s. The problem, the OJD said, was that "continuous expansion, including ubiquitous wireless access and public Internet kiosks in Oregon's courtrooms as well as ever-expanding file sizes and increased use of video overburdened the slower network connections."

First, the OJD said, it looked at digging a one-mile-long trench between the new facility and the Supreme Court building. That, it said, was going to cost \$250,000. And that was just for the trench - not even including laying the fiber. Then it looked at a shorter trench to a nearby building that did have fiber - local providers wanted \$150,000 plus \$4,800 in monthly access fees. The Oregon agency said it also "briefly" considered 54 Mb/s microwave radios before finally settling on the BridgeWave technology - which among other things operate in a license-free portion of the spectrum, and are also crafted with a 100 Mb/s fallback speed to provide at least some connectivity when band weather blows in.

In the end the system, installed by local Portland wireless solutions provider ezWireless, was a "double hop" installation, that first linked the new court system network operations center (NOC) to Oregon Public Services offices only a block away, and from there went to the Supreme Court building.

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