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CLEC Plans IPTV Service, Triple Play in Manhattan

A Manhattan CLEC plans to introduce a new IPTV service and triple-play bundle with 100 Mbps broadband speeds. Media Three Corp. submitted a second application to the FCC last week for certification as an open video system (<http://xrl.us/bnmow3>). Comments on the application are due Wednesday, Aug. 22, a public notice issued Tuesday said (<http://xrl.us/bnmoux>). The CLEC has collocated facilities with Verizon and plans to lease local loops from the phone company and lease dark fiber from other providers to provide its service, Ted Flomenhaft, Media Three senior vice president and one of its three owners, told us.

Plans call for a lower-cost bundle of broadband, phone and pay-TV service, initially targeting low-income and primarily Chinese immigrants in lower Manhattan, Flomenhaft said. The company plans to use a combination of ADSL2+ and VDSL2 technology to offer faster broadband speeds over the same copper wires Verizon uses, he said. Additionally, the company plans to serve Confucius Plaza, a large apartment building, with a 10-Gbps fiber connection that will offer residents broadband speeds of up to 100 Mbps per subscriber, for the same price incumbents charge for much slower service, he said. If successful, the company hopes to expand to other large buildings using similar methods, he said.

"If you look at a fiber map of Manhattan, it's like a spaghetti bowl," Flomenhaft said. "Once we show we can bring the fastest Internet and TV service to a low-income residence in Chinatown, we can bring it anywhere in Manhattan." He said the company is looking for other large buildings and tenements with inadequate broadband access.

Media Three plans to offer a lower-cost IPTV service that will include most of the major U.S. networks, local TV stations and an affordable tier of more than 50 Chinese-language channels, Flomenhaft said. "We'll be a solid alternative to the major cable-TV distributors" he said. "We'll have all the premium stations, all the major networks."

And Media 3 also plans to offer the international programming independent from the U.S. networks, he said. "One basic package is going to have the U.S. stations, and another basic package is not," he said. "There are low-income people within Chinatown who want to be very careful about how much money they spend on entertainment so we're going to have more a la carte options," he said. Media Three already offers phone and Internet service in the area under the Empire One Telecommunications, or EOT, brand, Flomenhaft said. The company has not yet decided how it will brand the new triple-play and IPTV services, he said.

The company also must seek approval from New York's local franchise authority before it can begin putting in its own network, conduit, fiber and copper, under the streets, Flomenhaft said. "We feel comfortable that that's not going to be a major issue," he said. "But until we have it, we don't have it. We'll see how it goes." — Josh Wein