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FULL SPECTRUM PROVIDES ANOTHER COMMUNICATIONS OPTION

Oct 21, 2010 5:47 PM, By Donny Jackson

Amid all of the work being done on commercial and public-safety LTE networks, WiMAX has gone overlooked by many. However, California-based startup Full Spectrum has developed a high-speed data solution based on mobile WiMAX that may appeal to many LMR users.

Unlike LTE, which operates at low power levels and requires many sites to provide wide-area coverage, the Full Spectrum FullIMAX solution can operate at higher power and provide coverage up to 20 miles from a tower.

"One of the things that makes our system different is we designed it very similar to land mobile radio for performance, in terms of coverage," Full Spectrum CEO Stewart Kantor said.


Kantor said Full Spectrum uses software-defined radios that are tunable from 40 MHz to 958 MHz in its system and do not need the large blocks of contiguous spectrum. For instance, Sioux Valley Energy — an electric utility serving portions of South Dakota and Minnesota — is deploying the FullIMAX mobile broadband system to support the utility's smart-grid applications, he said.

Operating in the 218 MHz band, the Sioux Valley system provides up to 17 miles of coverage, maximum data rates of 10 Mbps and mobile connectivity with devices traveling at speeds up to 50 mph, according to Kantor.

"We're basically bringing new uses to legacy spectrum that is underutilized," Kantor said, noting his belief that Full Spectrum is the only vendor with a mobile WiMAX solution that works in the UHF and VHF bands.

For public-safety agencies and enterprises that have their sights on broadband networks at 700 MHz or in another band in the relatively near future, the FullIMAX solution may not have much appeal. However, for those entities that doubt that they can secure all the sites and money associated with an LTE network — or simply do not want to wait for the national network — FullIMAX may be another data option worth considering while potentially being able to leverage their existing LMR towers.

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October Web Poll

Which mobile broadband application is most intriguing to your agency?

- Mapping
- Video
- Tracking and monitoring personnel/equipment
- Multimedia database queries
- None—all we need is LMR voice

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