

# ST. LOUIS **BUSINESS** JOURNAL

Follow up -- Over the past seven months, almost 7,000 Charter Communications cable customers in the St. Louis area have signed up for the company's new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone services, which allow customers to bypass traditional analog voice connections and communicate via the Internet. In a technology section last March, the Business Journal reported on the growing demand for VoIP services and local companies' plans to pursue the market.

"We started in West County offering services and have gradually moved across the county to the city," said Mark Barber, vice president of telephony for Charter. "We will have a significant portion of the St. Louis area done this year. Next year, we should complete out the entire St. Louis metropolitan area, including the Illinois areas of Belleville, Maryville and Alton."

Charter's VoIP services are available only for residential customers at the present time, but the company plans to enter the commercial market in 2005.

The number of VoIP subscribers Charter has attracted thus far is in line with the company's projections, Barber said.

The price of Charter's VoIP service depends on where the customer lives. But in general, Barber said, a six-feature package, including call waiting, call forwarding, speed dial and unlimited long distance, combined with basic telephone services, costs about \$39.95 per month. Currently, Charter is running a promotion that offers free voice mail with the VoIP service.

Barber declined to disclose the impact VoIP has had on Charter's revenue.

Cebridge Connections, a St. Louis-based cable system managed by Cequel III, had planned to introduce VoIP service this year to subscribers in the Bootheel and Springfield areas of Missouri and select markets in Texas. But those plans have been put on hold until early 2005, said Andy Stewart, Cequel's director of corporate development. "It's still one of our key new products. But we took a step back because we had to focus on our core cable business and integrate a few acquisitions."

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