



Z-Tel turns to VoIP

By Carol Wilson

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Having read the UNE-P handwriting on the wall, Z-Tel Communications is now turning to Voice over Internet Protocol to deliver its business and residential voice services. The national CLEC has installed and tested a VoIP network in Tampa, Fla., and will add service in New York City in mid-January and Atlanta after that.

How quickly Z-Tel rolls VoIP out nationally will depend "on money--how this works and how we do with it," said Andrew Graham, corporate counsel for Z-Tel.

Z-Tel has relied largely on reselling local access circuits purchased from Bell companies, and adding value-added services such as free calling features, Web-based service activation and a network-based personal assistant service, to build its customer base. That dependence became a liability when federal rules requiring the Bell companies to resell their lines at a discount were overturned, and Z-Tel announced in September that it would pursue a facilities-based strategy.

Z-Tel, which will change its name to Trinsic in January, said it will use Cisco Systems' softswitches and Integral Access PurePacket broadband access platforms to deliver the VoIP service, as it moves away from dependence on Bell networks.

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