

City of Joburg's broadband network to go live on 1 July

The City of Joburg Broadband Project will go live on 1 July, 2013, after a three-year build phase, which BWired will operate for 12 years. The completion of the fibre optic network covers all seven regions of the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) municipality and will deliver a live network that will immediately be able to offer key services to all municipal buildings connected to the network.

The fibre optic network was designed by Ericsson South Africa and uses world-class leading technologies utilised in smart cities around the world, and marks one of the biggest roll outs of its kind in the southern hemisphere in terms of its 1.2Tb core capacity and 940km coverage, giving the City of Johannesburg true smart city status.

The Johannesburg Broadband and Network Project (JBNP) is the realisation of the city's long-term vision of developing its economy, which will see the positive stimulation of opportunities for the business sector in terms of small to medium enterprises, effective access to public services, the development of youths in Johannesburg and increased employment opportunities for all.

All civil work was completed at the end of April 2013, with the fibre installation work being at 90% completion at this time. The network build will be completed at the end of May 2013. When the network goes live on 1 July, it will offer full WAN accessibility, VPN services, and will bring Internet to all of the CoJ buildings in the region. The JBNP will be service ready to transition all of the agreed upon services as of 1 July.

Bridging the digital divide within the CoJ

"We support the vision of the CoJ - and the completion of this successful build phase on time and within budget is testament to our commitment to the project and its objectives," said Musa Nkosi, BWired's CEO. The network was developed by the CoJ in partnership with Ericsson, with the aim of creating a platform for bridging the digital divide within the CoJ. The delivery of the network will allow the CoJ to assume smart city status, which is supported by a strong broadband backbone. The benefits of broadband to any city are far-reaching - including economic growth, the enhancement of the public service offering through e-government, added capacity and efficiencies for private enterprises, social benefits through e-learning, job creation through community portals, and right through to city-wide platforms for emergency services.

"The principle behind this network was to provide ICT communications at a vastly lower cost, not only reducing the CoJ's communications costs, but enabling the rest of the residents of the city to benefit from the network roll out," said Nkosi. Although connecting all of its buildings, the CoJ will only use a small percentage of the projected network capacity, meaning other telecoms service providers, and industry at large, can plug into the remaining capacity on a wholesale and open-access basis. "We are already working with one of country's largest mobile service providers with over 200 sites connected

and operational to date. We are also running a number of POCs with Tier 1 ISPs, as well as other network operators. This shows how BWired is extending its network's functionality beyond the CoJ Municipality requirements and realising true inclusion for all within the City of Johannesburg," added Nkosi.

The CoJ Broadband Project will enable digital inclusion through the provision of affordable broadband to the public.

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