

BUSINESS

MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2008 | SECTION 3

INSIDE TECHNOLOGY BY JON VAN

BOB in the Big Apple: After building its Chicago wireless network with some 30 transmission sites, **Business Only Broadband**, or BOB, is moving on to New York.

The Westmont-based firm has attracted 300 customers here and has raised private-equity funds to build wireless towers in the Big Apple. There won't be any towers in Manhattan itself, however, said BOB's chief executive, **Rich Kingston**.

"Our network will be built surrounding New York with all the towers on the outside facing in," said Kingston.

BOB will be operating in New York by spring, and its fully built network should be in place by autumn.

"That's the beauty of wireless infrastructure," he said. "It goes up quickly with no digging up the streets."

Kingston said his company's plan to go slow with expansion, gathering momentum in Chicago before heading to New York. It will only move on to another market after becoming successful in New York, he said.

There is a fair amount of investor money for wireless broadband networks, said **Jeff Kohler**, an associate of Denver-based **Bathgate Capital Partners** and a co-founder of JAB Wireless.

Players such as BOB, Clearwire, TowerStream, Sparkplug and JAB have been growing their customer base at an impressive rate, Kohler said, and the sector, which has more than a couple of thousand small participants, seems ripe for consolidation.

"It's a small, fragmented industry," Kohler said. "Consolidation is coming, and organic growth runs at rates of 30 percent to 40 percent a year. This is attracting a lot of venture capital financing."

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