

In celebration of Baton Rouge's bicentennial, The Advocate is sharing moments from the past, tapping its 175 years of serving the community. Throughout the year, we are publishing pages from our archives which capture some of the local, national and world happenings -- everything from wars and hurricanes to festivals and social events -- that helped shape our city.

We hope you enjoy them.

THE
ADVOCATE

Telling Louisiana's story for 175 years



Business

Thursday, June 17, 2004



INSIDE
Stocks
Markets
Puzzles

THE ADVOCATE

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

Eatel decides fiber optics way to grow

By NED RANDOLPH
Advocate business writer

Gonzales-based Eatel Corp. has signed a multimillion-dollar contract to begin connecting its 100,000 customers with fiber-optic strands of cable capable of delivering cable television, video-on-demand and other media products should the company choose to do so, Eatel President Dan Ahern said.

On Wednesday, the family-owned telephone company signed a contract with Paris-based Alcatel to start installing the advanced

network fiber for Eatel's broadband DSL Internet subscribers in Ascension and Livingston parishes.

The exact cost of the contract was not disclosed.

The company expects to connect about 2,000 customers with the fiber-optics cable by mid-August, Ahern said.

Fiber optics transmit information at high speeds via light waves.

The new "Alcatel 7340" network will give Eatel customers the ability to video conference between households, for example.

"If you happen to be a surgeon who is at home waiting for a radiological file, today this would be provided much more quickly on fiber than any other means," Ahern said. "It is the state-of-the-art."

Eatel's plan is to eventually connect all of its Louisiana and southern Mississippi customers by fiber optics, which Ahern said will be the platform for the next half-century.

"Over the last 130 years, telephone companies have relied on copper, and we've spent a lot of money trying to make that copper do more. So, we can provide DSL service over

copper today," he said. "Now we've decided it would be better to provide fiber to the home and let that take us out for the next 40 to 50 years."

Eatel is privately owned by the Scanlan family of Gonzales, which had considered selling out last year to pay off mounting inheritance taxes.

The local telephone company, which started in 1935, today employs 600 people and provides local and long-distance services.

See EATEL, Page 2D

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Born in
ASCENSION
Coming to
BATON ROUGE

BACKUP+recovery



CLOUD



DATA centers



MANAGED IT



INTERNET+phone



80 YEARS STRONG