

Metronet

“TCU will use the dark fiber of the SJV Metronet as a direct replacement for data services now purchased from local telecom providers, at a reduced cost. The use of high bandwidth — fiber-based technology enables TCU to implement strategic alternatives for data access, storage and business continuity plans.

“TCU will replace existing data service with a lower cost, higher bandwidth technology. The technology will enable faster data movement which allows us to implement data replication strategies to protect business-critical data in ways that prior to the SJV Metronet were cost-prohibitive due to the rates charged for data transmission services by local telecom providers.”

Crowe Chizek signed up because of the savings, speed and opportunity for redundant links that would prevent disruption and help in disaster recovery.

“The Metronet has the ability to provide cheaper access costs to the Internet and some data an alternative path in the event the line through the phone company would be disrupted.”

“Currently we use the Metronet for a high-speed Internet connection. We increased our Internet connection substantially in South Bend for Crowe. We also left some of our old Internet connection in place so we have redundancy — two ways to the Internet. It might be slower, but we would not be totally down.

“Right now, we’re looking at the possibility of increasing the speed of the connection between



Bryan Baker, director of operations for the St. Joe Valley Metronet project, stands outside the Commerce Center in downtown South Bend. The building will play a central role in the Metronet. Baker is the owner of Com Control Inc. housed in the Commerce Center.

Tribune Photo SHAYNA BRESLIN

Metronet comes across the Jefferson (Boulevard) bridge and down Jefferson (Boulevard).”

Companies with employees in different locations can enjoy connection on the Metronet.

“TCU took advantage of its Metronet access to connect two data centers for improved business days.”

Videoconferencing these days, a far cry from the early fuzzy talking heads holding a meeting, now can involve engineers in different cities working on a sophisticated product — “They’re exchanging CAD drawings and solving complex problems,” Acito says — or a doctor guiding surgery from another time zone.

A hospital in Indianapolis is being built with videoconferencing capabilities in all the new surgery rooms so the images can go long-distance for specialists to advise or for students to

and connectivity alternatives in the new area,” says Ralph Acito of Global Access Point, which has a “carrier hotel” at Union Station and uses the Metronet to provide off-site services for customers including the University of Notre Dame.

“I think it’s an advantage for our services to other companies in the South Bend area.”

Global Access is talking to a West Coast company that is attracted to the Union Station facility because of the number of carriers and because of the Metronet — “connectivity to a wide variety of buildings and locations around the greater South Bend area,” he says.

“I’m a firm believer that the Metronet has enhanced our economic development attractiveness here in South Bend.”

Butterbaugh of TCU agrees, adding that the area will need more highly skilled technology

to the community,” he says.

“These include data centers, technology support centers, research centers, communication centers and software applications development activities. This, along with the area’s comparative lower cost of living, could make it an attractive local business owners don’t realize what the service could do for them.

“In a city the size of South Bend, there are a lot of medium-sized businesses who ... have not heard of the Metronet,” Voorheis says. “It may benefit them, but they may not know it.”

“I would have to say I think most of the local businesses in South Bend are either not aware the Metronet is there and functioning, or they haven’t sat down to think about the advantages the Metronet can offer them,” Acito says. “I think the

Metronet for the work they’re doing, but they don’t realize the work they could be doing if they would take advantage of the service.

Pat McMahon of Project Future likens the situation to a rancher who hasn’t considered raising racehorses because there wasn’t a racetrack nearby. “You don’t know what you don’t know. Most people don’t know how to use it.”

Acito says many businesses should consider the possibilities.

“They may not even have a Web site,” he says. “They may distribute on a very small, regional basis and maybe have not thought of expanding to North American distribution or worldwide distribution. The Metronet could open up doors even to a small company like that,” even a Web site in different languages for worldwide sales.

“We’re playing in an arena