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Optical Internetworking Forum Reaches Major Milestones

New Signaling Working Group will Tackle Key Issues to Optimize High-Bandwidth Transport Networks for Internet Applications

FREMONT, CA – March 6, 2000 - The first Optical Internetworking Forum (OIF) Technical Committee meeting for 2000, held January 31-Feb 1 in New Orleans, LA marks significant progress in the development of intelligent, interoperable optical internetworks. By combining high-performance switching and routing with the latest developments in optical transmission, optical internetworking will enable very high-capacity networks to effectively carry packet-based (IP) communications.

The OIF achieved significant milestones in several of its existing working groups and formed a new working group to focus on signaling between the electrically and optically switched domains. “The goal of the Signaling Working Group is to develop an interoperable User to Network Interface (UNI) during 2000,” said Andrew Greenfield, VP Marketing. “With Optical Switching technology being deployed with router technology, this interface will mark a turning point in the deployment of true intelligent optical internetworks.” Signaling will allow automated service provisioning and traffic management in optical internetworks, and will be key to scaling the Internet.

Milestones achieved by the Architecture Working Group included completing a draft Architecture Requirements document which sets the foundation for further specific work. Milestones achieved by the Physical & Link Layer Working Group include completing key internal system interface specifications for OC-48 and OC-192 data rates. These documents have been forwarded to the OIF membership for straw ballot, and we believe will be finalized as OIF Implementation Agreements before the end of the year.

“Each of these documents represent a significant effort by our membership,” said Joe Berthold, Technical Committee Chairman. “These final documents have shown the OIF is an effective organization in developing interoperability agreements between a diverse group of vendors and service providers.” Completion of the architecture requirements forms a reference model for the further development of new interoperable optical internetworks and provides the basis for the formulation of the Signaling Working Group.

“The OIF’s Physical & Link Layer Working Group is unique in the optical networking industry. The OIF provides the only forum for the development of interoperability
agreements in a number of new areas,” states Carol Sensale, President of OIF. The SER/DES Framer Electrical Specification for OC-192 formulates a common interface between framers and serial/deserializer parts used to implement OC-192 and STM-64 interfaces. The SPI-3 Packet Interface for Physical and Link Layers for OC-48 provides system designers with a common Packet Over SONET (POS) Physical Layer interface, providing a versatile bus interface for exchanging packets within a communication system.

Ms. Sensale continued, “The SER/DES and SPI-3 efforts will allow the creation of integrated electronic and opto-electronic modules by a number of subsystem vendors, increasing the level of integration and decreasing the time to market of optical internetworking equipment. Creation of these open interfaces allows best of breed technology to come to the market sooner, increasing capacity and decreasing costs. The OIF’s Physical and Link Layer Groups, combined with Signaling, Architecture and OAM&P Groups, highlight our diverse membership working together in the area of Optical Internetworking. We expect to see a number of other unique projects show results during 2000.”

The membership of the Optical Internetworking Forum also elected a new Board of Directors. Joining President Carol Sensale (Telcordia Technologies), and Vice President of Marketing Andrew Greenfield (Cisco Systems), are Vice President Adam Dunstan (Avici Systems), Treasurer Bob Tkach (AT&T), Sam Halabi (Extreme Networks) and Mike Ahdieh (Nortel Networks).

About the OIF

The mission of the Optical Internetworking Forum (OIF) is to foster the development and deployment of interoperable products and services for data switching and routing using optical networking technologies. Launched in April 1998 by Cisco and Ciena, founding members also include AT&T, Bellcore, Hewlett-Packard, Qwest, Sprint and WorldCom. The OIF is a rapidly growing, non-profit organization with 167 member companies to date, including many of the world’s leading carriers and vendors. With the goal of promoting worldwide compatibility of optical internetworking products, the OIF actively supports and extends the work of national and international standards bodies. Formal liaisons have been established with The ATM Forum, IEEE 802.3 HSSG and the IETF. More information on the OIF can be found at www.oiforum.com.

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