

## **HBC tests 'plug-in' cable TV**

On Monday, HBC and Rochester Public Utilities announced they will work together to test offering broadband communications over existing power lines in Rochester homes.

They aren't alone in testing the new approach for providing high speed Internet access, but it's "definitely leading edge, the first trial in the upper Midwest," said HBC president Gary Evans. Other tests are under way in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri and Virginia.

Yesterday, the municipal utility in Manassas, Virginia declared itself the first utility to launch a broadband power line service to its customers. It expects to launch Internet through the power lines to 2,200 homes next week and the entire city by mid-year.

HBC and the Rochester utility hope to follow close behind. Evans said they hope to have their planning complete by Feb. 16 and then test the service in the spring with about two dozen houses over several months.

"Assuming that's satisfactory, we would then do a market trial with several hundred consumers," Evans said. After examining the technology, its costs compared to competition and any problems that crop up, HBC would then consider offering Rochester customers the Internet over household power lines beginning in the fall.

Said Larry Koshire, RPU general manager, "HBC's invitation to jointly investigate ways to utilize this new technology came at an opportune time."

Both HBC and RPU had independently studied power line technology leading up to the joint venture. The test of the technology will be planned and monitored by The Shpigler Group, a New York-based management and consulting service. David Shpigler has extensive experience in broadband power line technology, Koshire said.