

## **Alcoa Sees Future in Hybrid BPL/Fiber**

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When optical fiber networks firm AFL Telecommunications talks about hybrid BPL/fiber networks, it sometimes gets “what’s that?” in response.

Thus the firm created a webcast as a primer.

The program featured David Shpigler of The Shpigler Group and is available for viewing free at AFL’s website (<http://www.afletelecommunications.com/WebEx/>).

Other fiber firms may see BPL as a new competitor but AFL saw how the two can work together in Manassas. AFL built the fiber network in Manassas and believes combining fiber and BPL will make sense elsewhere, AFL’s Director of Access Solutions Kent Brown told us. He co-hosted the webcast.

When firms using fiber and other technologies, for example mesh wireless networks, see the second generation of BPL “hit the ground,” Brown expects the idea of hybrid systems to spread. One advantage of having optical fiber as the support infrastructure for BPL is the ability to send a fiber line out to a customer that wants it, noted Brown.

AFL was created in 1984 when Japanese optical fiber firm Fujikura approached ALCOA to make use of the American firm’s ties to the electric industry. AFL is now a world leader in aerial cables, optical ground-wire and ADSS, a plastic jacketed optical fiber well suited for use in the presence of high voltage wires. Brown sees fiber getting a “rebirth.” AFL recently started carrying Fujikura’s last mile electronics – its first time offering products “with a blinking light,” he explained.

Fujikura would no doubt like to see the success of fiber to the home in Japan duplicated in the West and *BPL Today* shares belief that combining technologies to solve the myriad of networking problems that will arise makes good sense.