

## Four service providers earn Communications Innovators Awards

By Dan O'Shea

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**CHICAGO**--Towerstream, AT&T, Yipes Enterprise Services and Verizon Communications were the winners of the first Communications Innovators Awards at a Leadership Forum held during NXTcomm and co-hosted by *Telephony* and consulting firm New Paradigm Resources Group.

Towerstream Corp. was honored for the "Most Innovative Deployment of Broadband Wireless"; AT&T received the "Most Innovative Carrier Ethernet Service (Diversified)" award; Yipes Enterprise Services won the "Most Innovative Carrier Ethernet Service (Pure-Play)" award; and Verizon Communications received an award for the "Most Innovative Broadband Access Package."

The awards program and networking reception at Chicago's Mid-America Club featured a panel discussion with the award winners in which they discussed how they create atmospheres of innovation within their organization, as well as some of the risks inherent in being an innovator. Paul Tassinari, vice president of national engineering for Verizon's FiOS project, said, "The nature of new form of broadband access is that there are so many pieces beyond, getting the OSS/BSS right and everything else. There's such a huge amount of work that goes into launching that very first customer."

Most panelists noted that listening closely to customers is their most effective research to create innovative services. Thompson said the days of service providers created new application based on their own market sense are over. "I don't think any of us know what the Internet will show us next," he said. "We're all old, many up here on this panel, and the people creating and influencing the next generation of applications are college kids right now."

Of the award winners, Craig Clausen, executive vice president and chief operating officer of NPRG, said, "We are proud to honor organizations that drive our industry forward. The Leadership Forum and awards program is a public recognition of the ongoing innovation within the telecommunications industry. It is also an opportunity for industry thought-leaders to share their insights and ideas as a group."

"All of these award recipients have demonstrated innovation and leadership within the telecommunications industry, and deserve the recognition these awards bring," added Mark Hickey, group publisher of *Telephony*. "The Forum discussions truly represented a gathering of the industry's most innovative thinkers."

The evening awards program began with a keynote address by Robert C. Atkinson, director of policy research for Columbia University's Institute for Tele-Information (CITI). The event was sponsored by Actelis Networks, Occam Networks and Bridgewave Communications.