



Steve (l) and Tom Lynn (r) get together with Kevin Christy (centre) at the office of the Westport Telephone Company on Main Street this Tuesday. WTC Communications purchased Christy's company RBS Internet last year and has been improving and expanding wireless internet service in eastern Ontario ever since. Photo by Marco Smits.

WTC Communication continuing to increase wireless market share

By Marco Smits
The Review-Mirror

Even before the days of the internet, Kevin Christy was interested in communication. Growing up rebuilding television antennas and setting up two-way radio's, the progression into advanced network systems seemed natural for him.

At the time it seemed only normal to Christy to look for high lying areas to build small transmission towers that could reach far into the rural settings of the Rideau Lakes. He approached landowners and began transmitting a wireless internet signal that eventually funnelled into the optic fibre network of the Westport Telephone Company.

In the years that followed, Christy built up a dedicated customer base through his company Rural Broadband Service Internet (RBS), which he founded in 2003. Because the network was so well designed, and used the fast and direct services of WTC the work for Christy was steady, and at times hard to keep up with.

Christy developed a waiting list for installations and spent much of his evenings answering customer support emails.

Last summer, RBS Internet was acquired by WTC Communications.

"Because we already provided wireless in the Inverary area, we needed to get bigger so we could have someone devoted full time to manage our wireless division. One of the key factors was to make that division big enough so it was going to be viable and that has worked out quite well," said Steve Lynn, general manager of WTC Communications.

"Kevin was right next door and he was already buying bandwidth from us so it was a very easy tran-

sition into ours," Steve Lynn said.

The partnership worked out for everyone, WTC, RBS as well as their customers.

"It was a great transition. The company was growing pretty fast on me and basically outgrew the original planning," said Christy, wireless manager of WTC. "Now with WTC it has been great for the customer and it has been great for me as well. Now we have the resources of the technical support team, and we are able to focus more on continuing to expand the coverage area and providing a higher level of service," Christy said.

At the moment WTC connects one or two new users a day, and they expect that to increase to three or four a day as summer residents return. With several installers on the road and a reliable support network in place that still leaves room to think ahead to expanding even more.

Christy says the strength of the current WTC network providing coverage to eastern Ontario is two tiered. In part they are ahead of the competition -which includes ExploreNet and Ripnet- because of the strength and reliability of their signal, but that is not all.

"First and foremost I believe it is the local, personalized service. Because we are right in the area we can provide immediate and more personalized service if they do require maintenance or upgrades," said Christy.

Tom Lynn, president of WTC, explains that his company is experiencing growth in many aspects of the business, and that a current marketing campaign focussed on Kingston is just another expression of that growth.

WTC has only recently

begun to provide regular telephone service in Kingston, using their own hardware equipment while leasing the actual copper line network already in place in the lime city.

"We started that last year in about February, right now we are doing it in down town Kingston and we are also in Inverary and Collins Bay and very shortly we will open up in Napanee. We should have Napanee opened up in four weeks. That is why there has been a lot of heavy advertising going on in Kingston for that service," said Tom Lynn.

In the Kingston and Napanee areas, WTC Communications is competing with large corporations such as Rogers and Bell, and yet, the same competitive advantage gives the Westport company an edge as it does in the rural wireless internet branch of the business.

"We are quite pleased with the way our expansion is going and yet, we remain small enough to react a little quicker than the Bells and the Rogers," said Lynn.