



CASE STUDY

East West Mortgage Banks On LightPointe's Cutting-Edge, Outdoor Wireless Links for Building-to-Building Connectivity

Leading D.C.-Area Mortgage Broker Uses Fast Ethernet Optical Wireless for Redundant Network Extension and Additional Bandwidth for Growing Internet and VoIP Applications

Headquartered in the Tysons Corner, Virginia, area of the metropolitan Washington, D.C. region, East West Mortgage has experienced surging exponential growth since its founding in 1986. The company, which handled more than \$1.2 billion in loans in 2004, was recently named by Broker Magazine as the nation's seventh largest mortgage company. East West works with hundreds of banks to offer customers the most competitive rates on thousands of loan programs. With licensing in 44 states, the company helps a variety of consumers nationwide, regardless of credit history or financial status, by providing 24/7 service via the Internet or telephone. In addition, East West reaches out to a diverse consumer base by offering loan services in seven languages. Committed to customer service, the company strives to be its clients' mortgage consultant for life and provides credit counseling and guidance throughout the entire home buying process.

THE CHALLENGE:

East West's progressive customer outreach practices and its continuous growth required an additional 13,000-square feet of office space, which the company recently acquired across a busy interstate from its headquarters. With around-the-clock network availability needed for its fast-growing Internet business as well as enterprise Voice over IP (VoIP) services, the company placed a high priority on identifying a reliable, high-speed method for linking the two facilities.

"All in all, there was no better choice for our needs than LightPointe. LightPointe has proven to be a good business partner by going out of its way to meet our time, cost and performance requirements. This has enabled us during the transition of business units to the new building to continue to serve our customers according to our highest standards. Needless to say, we have been very impressed."

Doug Bui | CEO
East West Mortgage

According to Joel De Clue, IT manager for East West, the company first considered leasing multiple T1 lines from a local carrier, but quickly found the bandwidth to be insufficient and the monthly leasing costs unreasonably high. Fiber-optic cable was out of the question, because not only would installation require deep trenching beneath a busy highway, but it would also involve entering into a costly long-term leasing commitment with a service provider.



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Like other companies in the financial services industry, East West must abide by strict state and government regulations for data security. As a result, another key requirement for the new building-to-building connectivity solution was the ability to support the highest standards for reliability and data protection.

To narrow its network connectivity choices, East West enlisted JENRIC Technologies, LLC, a Chesterfield, Va.-based reseller specializing in Optical Wireless and data cabling installations. JENRIC introduced De Clue and his team to LightPointe, a pioneer in the development of Optical Wireless solutions based on free-space optics (FSO) technology. LightPointe designs and manufactures license-free, high-speed outdoor wireless products that have earned high marks in both government and enterprise networking installations. The San Diego-based company's products link two or more buildings with classic LAN-to-LAN backbone connectivity, delivering bandwidth from 100 Mbps up to 1.25 Gbps while eliminating the installation challenges of fiber.

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Before making its final selection, East West's IT team performed extensive internal research, evaluating FSO-based products from a variety of vendors including Canon and MRV, in addition to LightPointe. MRV's product was even tested in-house at East West, but in the end, East West concluded its best all-around choice for cost savings, security and reliability was LightPointe.

“LightPointe offered the high-speed connectivity we required, along with the right feature set and the right price,” De Clue stated. “The Canon solution, while impressive, was expensive and the additional features were not needed. At the same time, we encountered implementation issues with the MRV product.”

East West chose LightPointe's FlightLite 100 product, which weighs only 9.9 pounds and provides more than 60 times the bandwidth of T1, with full-duplex, point-to-point and Fast Ethernet connectivity at up to 500 meters.

FlightLite is well suited for a variety of applications and

industries with a growing need for high-capacity bandwidth free of the licensing, interference and security concerns typically associated with other wireless technologies.

THE SOLUTION:

LightPointe's FlightLite 100 enabled East West to extend its corporate network economically as well as create redundancy through the purchase of both primary and secondary Optical Wireless links. The company was able to aggregate the two pairs of the FlightLite product (four link heads) into a redundant fail-over solution with 100 Mbps bandwidth for the primary link and 100 Mbps for the backup link. As a result, East West can ensure 99.999% — or “five nines” uptime — for its business-critical applications, De Clue said.



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According to Rick Mitrovich, president of JENRIC, LightPointe's FlightLite products provide an optimum solution for growing companies such as East West. "East West Mortgage's FlightLite deployment reinforces a rising trend in enterprise connectivity. More and more organizations are turning to Optical Wireless as a more cost-effective and convenient alternative to carrier-based, leased access options such as T1 and fiber-optic cable," he said. "With increasing demand for high-speed data, voice and video transport, Optical Wireless continues to gain significant traction as the optimal building-to-building connectivity solution in urban settings around the world."

THE BENEFITS:

Beyond offering pricing and product feature advantages, LightPointe also delivered on its promise to quickly ship the FlightLite systems to East West so that the company could establish a link to its new building right away. Most importantly, LightPointe was there to support the company during installation, which took approximately eight hours for both the primary and secondary link, including cabling to the roof and mounting.

Within 24 hours of installation, the East West staff began reaping the benefits of its new high-speed Optical Wireless links. The LightPointe system makes it possible for employees to gain Fast Ethernet access to East West's shared voice and data network. Employees can seamlessly tap into core enterprise applications such as a loan origination system, financial programs, document storage, email, fax and VoIP services.

East West executives are also pleased that the LightPointe product addresses their important data security requirements. Optical Wireless, which is immune to radio frequency interference, transmits data over beams of light, an inherent security feature that makes it virtually impossible to intercept transmission.

The FlightLite performance has already proven to be extremely stable for East West. "We have encountered both heavy rain and fog, and the performance during these episodes of bad weather has exceeded our expectations by far," reported De Clue.

The added bonus is that the LightPointe FlightLite 100 product is very affordable, offering a significant cost advantage over the monthly leasing requirements of T1 or fiber.

"All in all, there was no better choice for our needs than LightPointe," said Doug Bui, CEO for East West Mortgage. "LightPointe has proven to be a good business partner by going out of its way to meet our time, cost and performance requirements. This has enabled us during the transition of business units to the new building to continue to serve our customers according to our highest standards. Needless to say, we have been very impressed."



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CUSTOMER:

East West Mortgage, headquartered in McLean, Va. (www.ewmortgage.com)

INDUSTRY:

Mortgage Banking

CHALLENGES:

- Fast-paced growth required East West to acquire additional office space near its headquarters.
- Network reliability, high bandwidth, data security and cost were top priorities.
- Fiber-optic cable required deep trenching through an established urban infrastructure.
- T1 lines didn't offer sufficient bandwidth.

SOLUTION:

- LightPointe's FlightLite 100, a Fast Ethernet Optical Wireless product that weighs only 9.9 pounds and provides full-duplex, point-to-point and Fast Ethernet connectivity at up to 500 meters.

BENEFITS:

- High-speed networking at a fraction of the price of other alternatives.
- Convenient wireless link requires no trenching for trouble-free urban installation.
- Secure, reliable LAN extension withstands severe weather and protects critical data.
- Rapid delivery of system to customer site.
- Simple installation and training.