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Leap Details EV-DO Upgrade, New Service

BY BRAD SMITH

Leap Wireless will upgrade its network in all of its markets in 2006 to provide cdma2000 EV-DO and market new gaming, streaming and downloadable music to its subscribers, Executive Vice President Al Moschner said at CTIA Wireless I.T. & Entertainment.

The content will be appropriate not only for Leap's Cricket brand but also for the Jump Mobile prepaid brand the carrier launched officially Sept. 23. Jump Mobile is targeted at mobile-dependent urban youths and is available in Phoenix and Tucson, Ariz.; Denver; Dayton, Ohio; Memphis, Tenn.; and Charlotte and Greensboro, N.C.



Moschner: Audience wants full-track music downloads.

As part of its EV-DO network rollout, Moschner says, the carrier has partnered with content provider Motricity. The Durham, S.C., based company recently received an award from Frost & Sullivan for its content management platform, Fuel. Motricity also recently acquired M7 Networks.

Moschner says Leap's demographic audience wants full-track music downloads, music on demand and Web access to search for content. The EV-DO network will make that possible, he says. Leap expects to spend about \$475 million to upgrade its existing and new markets with EV-DO.

The new content from Motricity will be available across all of Leap's footprint, which includes both the Cricket and Jump Mobile brands.

Just like Cricket, Jump Mobile will be a separate line of business for Leap, with its own distribution, marketing and branding strategies.

A prepaid service, Jump Mobile offers free unlimited inbound and outbound text messaging, free incoming voice calls and 10-cents-a-minute outbound voice, says Linda Wokoun, senior vice president of marketing.

Wokoun says Jump will be marketed in ways that may be unique in the wireless industry. That means it will sell not only through current stores and distribution channels but also through convenience stores, barber shops and local community venues.

Jump has aligned with a marketing company called Rebel that also did the marketing for the Toyota Scion. "They rely on street teams for event marketing," Wokoun says, "sort of guerilla viral marketing. Youths tend to be skeptical of traditional methods."

There likely will be marketing events customized for each urban area, such as working with local night clubs and DJs. Jump might sponsor some events, like street basketball tournaments or skateboarding events.

"With an attitude and a customized approach to the market, we believe Jump Mo-



The Jump prepaid bubble pack includes the Motorola c341.

bile will appeal to urban youth, who have traditionally been drawn to prepaid wireless products. We are thrilled with the direction that the Jump Mobile product is headed," Wokoun says.

Jump Mobile is launching with a "bubble pack" phone, the Motorola c341, at a price of \$69.99 that includes 150 minutes of outgoing calls and unlimited incoming calls. Subscribers also can have access to roaming and BREW-based applications.



Wokoun: Thrilled about Jump's direction.

Moschner says the EV-DO upgrade will include all of Leap's current networks as well as those covered by the FCC's Auction 58 last winter. Leap acquired licenses in San Diego, Kansas City, Houston, and Temple-Killeen, Texas. Cricket, through its partnership with Alaska Native Broadband, acquired nine licenses in Cincinnati; Lexington and Louisville, Ky.; Colorado Springs; Austin, San Antonio, El Paso and Bryan, Texas, and Las Cruces, N.M. **WW**