

Gathering at the Grand Broadband World Forum
– An Interview with Thomas S. Costello, VP of the IEC

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Caption of the photo: Thomas S. Costello, vice president of the IEC: Broadband in China has more business opportunities and development space than any other parts of the world.

On 17 April, China Netcom and the International Engineering Consortium (IEC) jointly announced that the Broadband World Forum Asia 2007 (BBWF Asia) will be held in Beijing from 5–8 June. This is also the first time the IEC has held the forum in mainland China, with the IEC and China Netcom as the organizers. Then what kind of event is the BBWF Asia? What kind of role does it play in the development of broadband industry? With these questions in mind, our staff reporter interviewed Thomas S. Costello, vice president of the IEC.

Mr. Costello started with an introduction of the IEC. It was established in 1944 as a nonprofit organization sponsored by universities and engineering societies and became dedicated to continuing education for the U.S. electronics industry. To date it has developed into one of the largest non-government and nonprofit international associations in the world. It is composed of industrial professionals and academic people from more than 90 countries all over the world. It is dedicated to promoting technology advancement and commercialization process in the world and bringing academia and industry together to provide the highest-quality and most innovative forms of continuing education to the telecom industry.

The Broadband World Forum is an international forum initiated and organized by the IEC. The purpose of the forum is to organize in-depth discussion of the development, deployment, challenge, business and application of global broadband technology. The forum will cover extensive topics, including broadband communication technology,

standards, application, policy, development trends, next-generation networks and more. The BBWF comprises three regional meetings—the BBWF Europe, the BBWF Americas and the BBWF Asia, with an average of 1–2 meetings in each region. The participants are mostly operators, manufacturers, software companies, system integrators, and research and academic community members in the telecommunications industry. The first BBWF was held in 2001 in London, United Kingdom, with BT as the official host sponsor. To date the IEC has successfully organized 11 influential BBWF events. Since the beginning of 2004, BBWF Asia has been held in South Korea, Japan and Hong Kong, China. The IEC worked with major local telecom operators such as KT from South Korea, NTT from Japan and PCCW from Hong Kong as official host sponsors. The BBWF Asia has been enjoying increasing influence all over the world, and more and more global telecom companies are paying attention to the forum.

Mr. Costello pointed out that the mission of the BBWF Asia is to promote the cooperation and development of the global broadband industry. It is in line with China Netcom's development strategy—to build itself into a “broadband communication and multimedia service provider.” That's one of the main reasons that the IEC chose to work with China Netcom. Mr. Costello also said that China Netcom is the “fixed-line communication service provider partner for the Beijing 2008 Olympics” and a prominent leading telecom operator in China. Therefore, the theme of this forum is “Olympics of Global Innovation.” In the broadband industry, China Netcom has made great efforts and has seen some successful results. Currently, China Netcom is dedicated to developing its broadband communication. Its various kinds of services and products' brand names have been well known in China, such as Broadband Business, CNCMAX Broadband My World, Golden Club and 10060. During this forum, it is believed that the innovative products by China Netcom in the areas of AVS, wireless broadband and ICT will become the highlights of the technology exhibition.

Currently, the development of the global broadband industry has different regional characteristics. Mr. Costello explained that the European broadband market is more mature in terms of broadband applications and contents. The American market's focus is

to deal with a vastly underserved market and bring broadband services to common people. The distinctive feature of China's broadband market is broadband Olympics. The broadband market in China is probably larger in opportunities than any other market around the world. In addition, China doesn't have the burden of existing old technologies in place. Therefore, China can adopt the latest and most advanced technology and achieve huge success quickly.

Finally Mr. Costello said that this forum will address a series of cutting-edge topics, including broadband content, broadband entertainment, IPTV, wireless broadband, broadband network technology, digital family, mobile TV, broadband Olympics and more. Meanwhile, a 4,000-square-meter technology exhibition will be held during the forum. The highly anticipated 2007 Broadband World Forum Asia will surely be a grand event for the global telecom industry.

