



#### **04/09/03: HIGH SPEED INTERNET USERS MAY GET A CHARGE OUT OF ELECTRIC POWERLINES**

SUSIE GHARIB: For most Americans, getting high speed broadband Internet and video service is still a pipe dream. But that dream may have come a step closer to reality today, ironically, by using a different type of pipe. As Stephanie Woods reports, the solution may be an everyday hookup now in virtually all American homes.

STEPHANIE WOODS, NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT CORRESPONDENT: It looks like an ordinary home, but it's not. Inside, it has high-speed Internet connections, but not from DSL or cable modems. This house is connected using electric power lines. For years, electric utilities have been experimenting with ways to leverage their power grids to sell telecommunications services. Current Technologies, the company that put together this demonstration, is working with electric companies Pepco (POM) and Cinergy (CIN) to try out service in about 100 homes.

JIM MOLLENKOPF, SYSTEMS ENGINEERING DIRECTOR, CURRENT TECHNOLOGIES: Several different companies have tried through the decades to actually make this work and safety has been one of the very big problems. Obviously the electricity companies are very interested in a safe and reliable system. Maintaining that while achieving the broadband rates is something only today's technology has made possible.

WOODS: What the new technology does is use power line modems like this one inside the house and a device on the pole to allow electric and broadband signals to travel over existing transmission lines at the same time. Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Michael Powell, came here to show his support for this alternative method of delivering broadband into homes across the country.

MICHAEL POWELL, CHAIRMAN, FCC: Increasingly we're going to be pushing toward more and more platforms that can do all kinds of things no matter what. One of the things that that's going to do for us is bring more competition and more pipes to the home.

WOODS: Current Technologies plans to roll out commercial service in the fall, but some observers expect it will be five to 10 years before broadband over power lines will be a true competitor to cable and DSL.

LAWRENCE SPIWAK, PRESIDENT, PHOENIX CENTER: There's so many factors that are involved, between energy regulations and telecom regulation and the simple economics of the broadband business, that it's, I think, a much more complicated process than people think.

WOODS: FCC Chairman Powell says he will do his part to make sure regulators don't stand in the way of new technology. That effort will get under way later this month when the Commission begins to examine legal and regulatory issues that might short circuit broadband over power lines. Stephanie Woods, NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT, Potomac, Maryland.

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