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RCN Metro Lights Chicago Downtown



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RCN Metro Optical Networks ([News](#) - [Alert](#)) has launched its downtown Chicago network access network. The new RCN Metro Optical Networks fiber ring encompasses more than 10 route miles in downtown Chicago, augmenting the existing 538-mile fiber network RCN already has in the Chicago area. The new downtown network has 80 buildings on network.

Available products include metro Ethernet, SONET, wavelength services, IP transit, colocation and network management services.

You might think Chicago already is well supplied with high-bandwidth connections, especially in the downtown "loop," given its long history of being served by the nation's earliest alternate access providers. The same might be said of networks serving Manhattan, though.

One "peculiarity" of Chicago's tunnel system is that it is something like an underground high rise. There are all kinds of tunnels at varying depths and taking different routes underneath the downtown core. So a customer that really wants spatial diversity of its physical paths can choose any number of different providers using any number of different routes, at various depths, using distinct tunnels.

RCN makes extensive use of power utility rights of way in its other markets, and that is true for Chicago as well.

"We can provide diversity on the electrical rights of way and routes," says Phil Alvarez, President, RCN Metro Networks. "We can be a second provider or a backup."

"The reality is that electrical conduit systems are very expensive for anybody else to attack," he says. "We use similar rights of way in Washington D.C. and in Boston."

Gary Kim ([News](#) - [Alert](#)) is a contributing editor for TMCnet. To read more of Gary's articles, please visit his [columnist page](#).