



Telecom Industry Posts Slight Growth Over Year Ago

Continues to Make Up Recession-Era Job Cuts

By CHRIS CASACCHIA

Orange County's telecom industry, dominated by the nation's largest wireless carriers and cable providers, posted more modest growth in local employment.

The 28 biggest providers of phone, Internet, data services and related equipment here added 214 jobs in the past 12 months to 10,777 people, according to this week's Business Journal list.

The 2% increase marks the second consecutive year of growth following a six-year run of declines that covered the recession, as well as a trend of consolidations and restructurings.

The 2006 list showed the 15 largest companies employed 12,737 people, so companies have a ways to go before fully recovering from the most recent downturn.

Diversity

The list is comprised of a diverse group of companies, including traditional phone operators, wireless carriers, high-speed Internet and digital TV providers, telecommunications equipment makers and network-service providers.

Ten companies added jobs, and four had employment declines. Ten were flat, and four were Business Journal estimates.

The list features no newcomers, with the top six companies unchanged from a year ago.

■ **AT&T Inc.** topped the rankings with 3,500 employees, a total that's been flat for

at least two straight years. A company spokesperson told the Business Journal it no longer provides local employment figures.

The Dallas-based company, which has its regional management team in Cerritos and operations in Anaheim and elsewhere in the county, provides commercial and residential phone services and sells wireless and digital TV services.

In July it launched its U-verse high-speed Internet service, which includes bundled Internet, TV and voice services, for residential and business customers in Orange County. The upgrade is part of AT&T's three-year initiative to invest \$14 billion to expand wireless and wired broadband networks, support growth in Internet protocol data, and fund new services.

■ **New York-based Verizon Communications Inc.**, which locally provides phone service primarily to coastal OC and also sells wireless and digital TV services, was again No. 2, with an estimated 3,265 workers, flat from a year ago.

■ **Time Warner Cable Inc.**, also based in New York, moved up one spot to No. 3, adding 100 local employees for a total 900, up 12.5% from a year ago.

"We have hired more technicians, customer service and sales representatives in Orange County," said spokesman **Dennis Johnson**.



Panarisi: Latisys executive says cloud hosting demand rising

The company continues to grow its services geared to businesses and has been adding technical support positions in its Garden Grove office, which underwent a \$1.2 million renovation last year.

The largest cable provider in Southern California garnered plenty of headlines and angered plenty of basketball fans last year when it failed to reach a deal with other cable providers to broadcast Lakers games at the start of the season.

A deal was struck in November after the Lakers played a handful of games.

■ **T-Mobile USA Inc.** stayed at its No. 6 spot, despite adding 75 people for 500 total OC employees. The jump was the highest employee increase of any company on the list.

The Bellevue, Wash.-based company in the past year added seven retail locations in the county to handle increased foot traffic, which has risen by "double digits," according to the company.

"The growth in jobs can mostly be attributed to the growth in retail," a spokesperson told the Business Journal. "Orange County is a strong market for us."

The new locations include Fountain Valley, Garden Grove and Costa Mesa.

T-Mobile has been expanding its 4G Long-Term Evolution, or LTE network, throughout Southern California this year, improving coverage in Cerritos, Santa Fe Springs and Whittier, among other areas on the county's fringe.

The company made news in July when it scrapped its longstanding upgrade policy. It now allows customers to upgrade phones

twice a year for a monthly fee of \$10, which includes damage, loss and theft protection.

■ **Englewood, Colo.-based Latisys**, the largest data center operator here, added 13 people for a total of 70 local employees. The 22.8% jump was the highest percentage increase on the list. It ranked No. 13.

The company recently completed the second phase of expansion at its Irvine data center that added more than 13,000 square feet to its local operation.

The space is filling up quickly as demand for cloud hosting services surges and companies look to cut IT costs, according to **Tom Panarisi**, Western regional vice president.

That's led the company to hire more account managers and technical support personnel and to offer single storage cabinets for newer clients, such as Irvine IT service provider **Embee Technologies** and New York technology consultant **Link3**, which operates a technology center in Long Beach.

"That demand is still significant," Panarisi said.

■ **Powerwave Technologies Inc.** was the only company that fell off the list this year. The Santa Ana-based company, which makes cellular base-station gear for wireless networks, filed for bankruptcy protection in January after racking up nearly \$400 million in debt.

Powerwave had some 300 employees a year ago but cut most of its staff during liquidation proceedings. ■



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