



Irish Broadband takes it to the WiMax

By John Kennedy

WIRELESS broadband provider Irish Broadband

says it is preparing to offer mobile WiMax services to compete with and complement the advent of HSDPA (high-speed downlink packet access) by the mobile operators by early next year.

The company's chief executive Neil Parkinson told *siliconrepublic.com* that the company's existing wireless broadband is upgradeable to WiMax.

WiMax is a standards-based wireless technology that provides high-throughput broadband connections over long distances. WiMax can be used for a number of applications, including broadband internet connections, hotspot and cellular backhaul and high-speed enterprise connectivity for businesses.

WiMax supports point to multi-point broadband wireless access rates up to 2Mbps-plus over a minimum coverage area of three to five miles. Low network investment costs and non-line-of-sight operation over licensed or non-licensed radio spectrum makes WiMax an attractive technology.

In March last year Irish Broadband entered into a joint trial of WiMax in the Leixlip area. Last year Intel brought out its first WiMax chip and further Centrino chips with WiMax chips are understood to be on the way.

Parkinson explained that 2007 will be an important year in the development of WiMax services. "We'll be looking at offering portable WiMax in a number of forms, whether it's

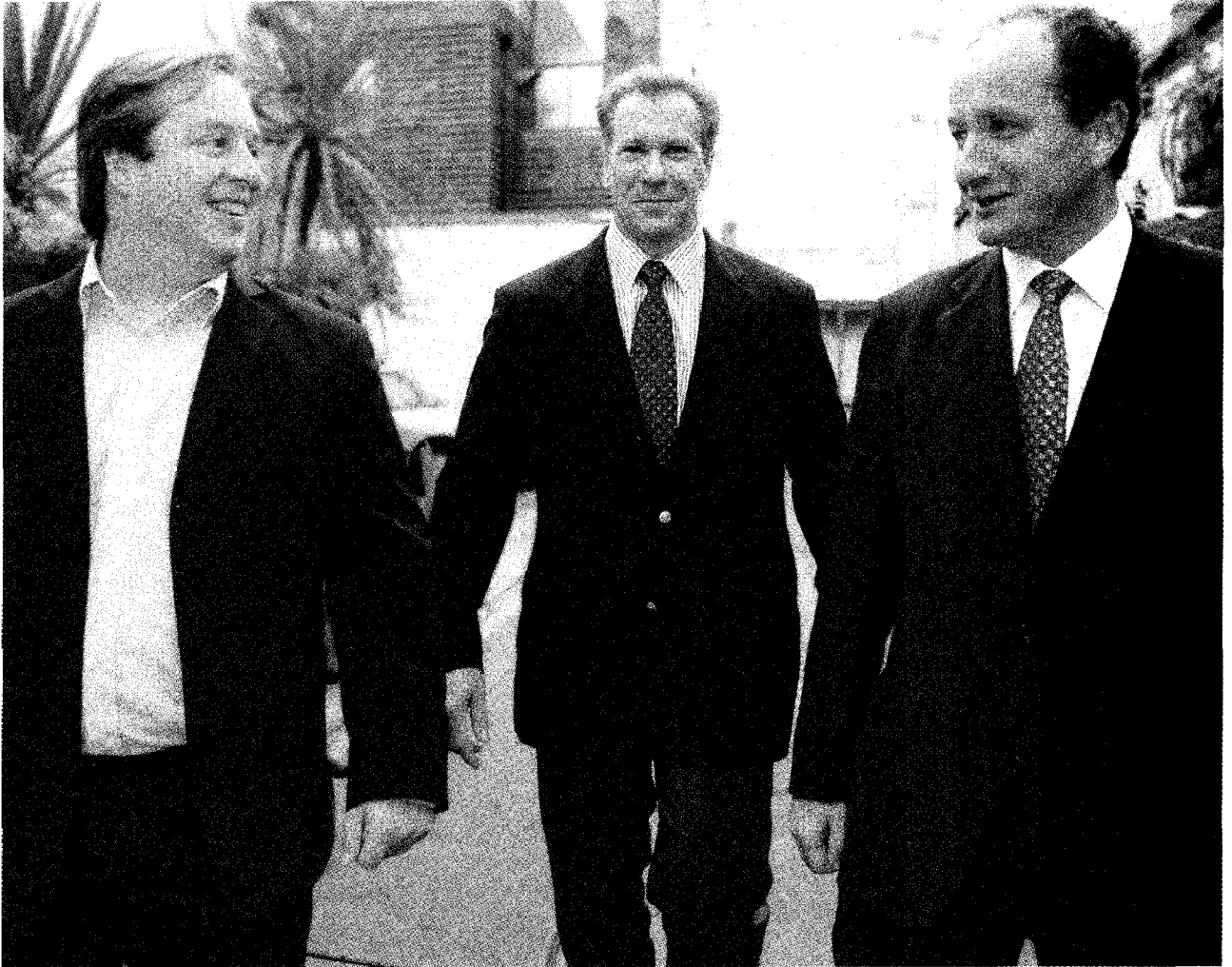
a PCMCIA card in your computer or a handheld device. The ongoing development of the technology will see WiMax in digital cameras, phones and iPod devices."

Parkinson said that voice over IP (VoIP) services would be one of the major advantages that WiMax will afford and when coupled with a mobile service the results could be advantageous for players like Irish Broadband.

"We are currently testing a Siemens phone for VoIP over wireless and Samsung have developed a dual GSM- and WiMax-enabled mobile phone. When these products come onto the market we will be ready to build services around mobile products," Parkinson said.

He explained that one of the first products out of the stable later this year or early next year will be a Navini PCMCIA card that slots into a notebook computer and provides 500KB connectivity. "Within a few months we will be able to release a software upgrade that enables the device to handle WiMax services."

Parkinson stressed that there will be two kinds of WiMax in the marketplace — fixed and mobile — with a smaller wireless network area footprint for the mobile devices.



Mike Stacey, chief technology officer, Jeremy Nel, director and Neil Parkinson, CEO of Irish Broadband