

RODOPI AND MOTOROLA CANOPY JOIN FORCES TO BRING AUTOMATED BROADBAND WIRELESS NETWORK TO AMERICAN SAMOA

[View Diagram](#)

Blue Sky Communications in American Samoa didn't start off life as an Internet service provider (ISP). In fact, they didn't even start life as Blue Sky Communications. In 1999, five Bell South engineers bought a number of telecom licenses, including one in American Samoa. They decided that American Samoa would be the site of their first project and by 2000, Telecom Wireless Solutions (TWS) was born. TWS provided communications optimization services throughout the island.

It wasn't long before the staff at TWS realized that they had extra bandwidth available and it made sense to become an ISP to sell the bandwidth to Internet computer users and mobile personal communications services (PCS). Since there was no other non-government run ISP on American Samoa, this idea was instantly popular and Blue Sky Communications, the only ISP in the private sector on American Samoa, was born.

At first, Blue Sky sold only dial-up service which was routed through their network, then connected to the Internet off-island via Blue Sky's new satellite system. And while Blue Sky soon began attracting hundreds of customers, issues beyond their control were putting limitations on their services. The copper cable system used by Blue Sky's network was owned by the local government and prone to interference ("dirty copper"). Plus, storms and inclement weather in American Samoa meant downed lines, effectively cutting off network access.

While their service had issues, the popularity of their new business created other issues that overwhelmed the office staff. Blue Sky suddenly found that they "needed a provisioning and billing solution to keep all 500 of our [ISP] customers organized," said Fay Alailima-Rose, Co-CEO and Chief Technology Officer for Blue Sky. They first heard of Rodopi Software in 2001 and were impressed by its price and ease of use.

Founded in 1998 and headquartered in San Diego, California, Rodopi Software (www.rodopi.com) engineers industry leading web-based operations support system (OSS) and back office automation software offering automated provisioning, billing and customer care solutions to Internet service providers (ISPs), hosting service providers (HSPs), applications service providers (ASPs) and Internet telephony (VoIP) providers. What impressed Alailima-Rose was the fact that Rodopi was designed with pre-packaged service templates allowing users to quickly and easily load their customer base, pricing structure and provisioning requirements for quick implementation. Additionally, the Rodopi product was affordably priced and easily managed, allowing a new company like Blue Sky to conserve resources.

Once the back office system was in place, Blue Sky's management realized they needed to take a hard look at the issues that were surrounding the delivery of their ISP services.

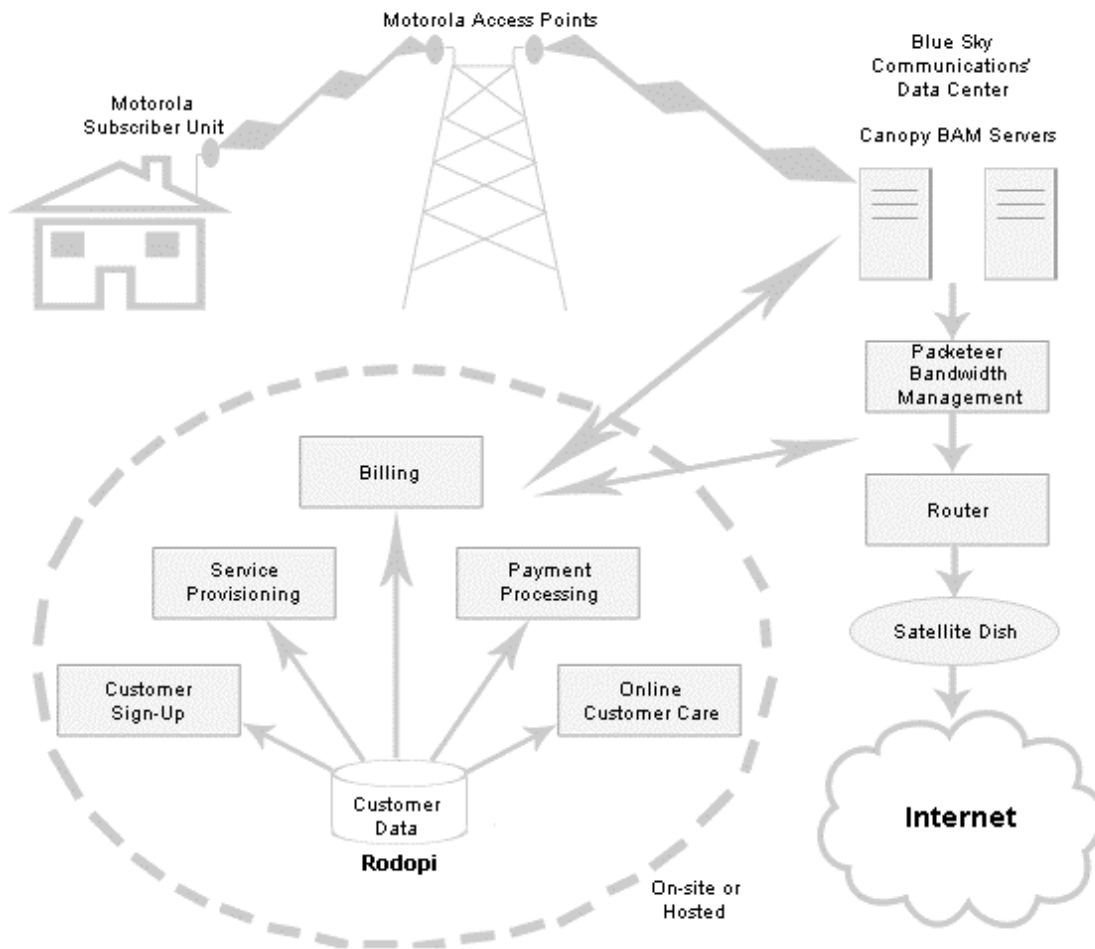
While the optimization services were slowly dying (TWS eventually closed its doors in 2003), they also realized that they could expand their company's ISP services by connecting hard-to-reach customers and by building a network that was less vulnerable to extreme weather conditions and interference. A high-speed wireless network would work well in both instances. Enter Motorola Canopy™ fixed broadband wireless.

Headquartered in Schaumburg, Illinois, Motorola's Canopy Wireless Broadband division (<http://Motorola.canopywireless.com>) offers a reliable, flexible and, best of all, weatherproof solution for extending broadband networks. Blue Sky's management team liked what they saw. "Motorola was an affordable, stable solution," said Alailima-Rose. "Also, the packaging was small and neat."

Blue Sky purchased modules in Canopy's 5200 series (5.2 GHz) as well as the 5700 series (5.7 GHz) network systems in the fall of 2003. The 5200 series network system became operational in November when Blue Sky started backhauling their base transmitter stations (BTS) for their mobile network. In January, the company began beta testing the 5700 series network system on homes and businesses and by April, Blue Sky offered their wireless Internet service to the general public. Not only does the new fixed broadband wireless service offer secure high-speed (10 Mbps) transmission, but it is also scalable, so Blue Sky can easily expand their network as needed.

To streamline their expanding network, Blue Sky's back office needed an upgrade. In the early spring of 2004, Blue Sky contacted Rodopi to purchase an interface that would allow the existing Rodopi system to communicate with the new Canopy network in order to control bandwidth management. During that process, Blue Sky also found that they could purchase a similar interface from Rodopi that would allow bandwidth control of their existing Packeteer traffic management system used for the dial-up network. Up until that time, Blue Sky had been manually managing their bandwidth directly through the Packeteer system. This upgrade made it easier to control network functionality by simply using the Rodopi software for all the bandwidth control and back office applications, rather than using three or four non-interfacing applications to accomplish the same end.

Now that the wireless network is in place and operational, Blue Sky has been working closely with the technical team from Rodopi to enter into the next phase for expanding their customer service by offering automatic credit card payment and pre-paid cards for Internet and PCS services. The Rodopi software will soon process all the credit card payments, plus keep track of the expended time and money on the pre-paid cards. These applications will be up and running by the end of May. In addition, the Rodopi software will be configured into a new consolidated billing system that will bill not only the ISP customers, but also the PCS customers starting in October. "This way, customers using both services will be getting one bill instead of two," explained Alailima-Rose.



But Blue Sky isn't stopping there – they will expand their services again in the coming months by offering both in-building PCS services and wireless backhaul services (again using the Canopy equipment) for business customers. “This is a great way to converge telephone and data services,” said Alailima-Rose. “That’s the way the industry is heading, so we’ll soon be a GSM (Global System Mobile) over IP service provider

By the beginning of 2005, Blue Sky customers will have additional options offered to them such as wireless hot spots in public buildings and private buildings, and IP PBX services for business customers. Once the systems are completed, Rodopi’s automation applications will afford Blue Sky an outstanding dial-up, PCS, VoIP, and wireless broadband back-office solution that automatically provisions, manages bandwidth, bills, and adds money to customer pre-paid accounts via individual personal identification numbers (PIN). With Rodopi, Blue Sky’s customers can activate service, determine what type of services they want, and decide how much they want to spend on their pre-paid accounts by accessing Blue Sky’s network themselves with all services included on a single customer invoice.

For more information on Blue Sky, please visit them on the web at www.bluesky.as.