B&B Electronics Provides Communications Infrastructure for Final Leg of Volvo Ocean Race

B&B Electronics announced that its European operation has provided an extensive fiber, cellular and wireless communications network for the Volvo Ocean Race Galway Grand Finale (http://www.volvooceanracegalway.ie/ [1]), the nine-day festival built around the final leg and finish line of the Volvo Ocean Race 2011-12 in Galway, Ireland, June 30 – July 8.

B&B Electronics Europe, based in Galway, previously provided network expertise for the Galway leg of the Volvo Ocean Race in 2009. According to the Grand Finale website, the skippers who raced in 2009 chose Galway as the 2012 end port because they “had never experienced such a spectacular stopover as they had in Galway.” The 2009 event drew large crowds (some 600,000 visitors to the Race Village and 120,000 spectators along the shores of Galway bay), and the 2012 event is expected to attract more than 800,000 visitors to Galway. The six boat fleet racing the final 550 miles from Lorient was due into Galway sometime between midnight on Monday and 3am on Tuesday, July 3rd.

B&B Electronics Europe is again providing and monitoring the physical communications infrastructure including internet access and a ruggedized network used by the race teams, media and Galway event management team. Fergal Concannon, the B&B Electronics engineer responsible for the network both in 2009 and for the current event, said, “It’s the most difficult network project I’ve ever managed in my life.”

The network, deployed across 10 event locations including the docks area, event headquarters, media center, Race Village, Global Village and seaside resort of Salthill, supports security, crowd management, web feeds, live TV and radio broadcasts, video streaming, credit card and point-of-sale facilities, commentator feeds, big screen displays and interfaces to Volvo’s own IT Group. B&B worked with the Galway event organizer, Let’s Do It Global, in providing the network.

Fiber, cellular and other wireless communications technologies were used to make difficult remote connections and to ensure network redundancy. The 20km of fiber in the docks area includes sections microtrenched into the ground as well as marine fiber installed by divers. The company used its GhostBridge Wireless Ethernet Bridges to create point-to-point equipment links across the harbor and to establish internet connectivity at remote locations where wired infrastructure was not feasible. Other network equipment included B&B Electronics’ ELinx Ethernet Extenders, ELinx ESW Series Ethernet Switches, Power-over-Ethernet (PoE) Switches, and Cellular Wireless Routers used for failover connectivity. B&B Electronics drew from its recently-expanded portfolio of industrial networking products including long-range, last-mile fiber acquired from IMC, and cellular technology for M2M device connectivity acquired from Conel.

“This installation really pushes the edge,” explained Jerry O’Gorman, managing director of B&B Electronics Europe. “Our engineers are increasingly asked to help connect M2M devices being deployed in increasingly challenging locations, and where network boundaries are being relentlessly stretched to reach them, but this project takes the cake.”

B&B Electronics: www.bb-elec.com [2]

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