The Forest in the Trees

by Aimee Kalnoskas, Editorial Director, Wireless Design & Development Magazine

The case can be made that the state of the wireless industry is something like the drought that currently affects over half of North America and that has led to the eruption of deadly forest fires. Out-of-control flames are removing not only the underbrush that keeps the stronger, healthier trees from thriving, but also those stalwart trees themselves that have either been reduced to ash, weakened by the flames or are still in the path of danger. The remedies coming out of Washington include everything from prescribed burns that would remove just the underbrush to timbering acres of 'selected' trees and underbrush in order to hopefully extinguish the threat of future uncontrollable forest fires. Whatever the solution, it is clear that nature once again, won't be fooled with. One hundred years of putting out all fires has led to a condition where any fire has the potential to rage out of control.

What looks like a shakeout in the wireless industry to one person can seem like an uncontrollable burn to another. Too much got too big too fast and no one was going to suggest putting out fire with fire so the laws of economics took over instead. It was bound to occur and many of us just happened to be 'lucky' enough to be around for the conflagration.

Hopefully, we've all learned a thing or two and appreciate that there are major players with plenty of growth potential still standing. Whatsmore, many of them are looking around for partnerships or acquisitions to make them even stronger the next time a match strikes. For example, Fairchild Semiconductor and Royal Philips Electronics announced late last month that they have formed a working relationship to become a multi-source supplier for small-scale logic packaging. Alcatel and STMicroelectronics have recently entered into an alliance for the joint development of DSL chipsets. Wi-LAN and Fujitsu Microelectronics are currently working on proprietary W-OFDM SoCs for broadband wireless applications. And Silicon Wave and Intel® have announced that they are working together to implement

technology that enables the simultaneous operation of Bluetooth and Wi-Fi (IEEE 802.11b) wireless technologies in notebook PCs. Perhaps even more encouraging is that 182 wireless firms have raised more than $1.8 billion over the past year for startup, according to research from Venture Reporter (New York, NY). That kind of serious interest in a startup in this economy leads me to believe that at least some of these companies have the potential to become another 'stalwart' in the forest.

I'm proud to say that *Wireless Design & Development* still stands in the industry to serve the microwave and RF design and development engineers utilizing and applying microwave and RF technology for the commercial wireless market. I'm proud because as the former editor of WD&D and the current editor of a sister publication, *ECN Magazine*, I now have the opportunity to serve in a role as Editorial Director, partnering with Editor-in-Chief Kim Potts, to help make *WD&D* an even stronger publication.

To those of you with whom I am working in my role on *ECN*, hello again. And to those of you who I worked with in the past on WD&D, it's good to be back in the forest.

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