



Affiliate Newsletter

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ZCorum begins hiring for new customer care center

ZCorum is rapidly advancing plans to open an additional customer care center in Swainsboro, Georgia. The broadband Internet and communications support facility is expected to have the same rapid rate of expansion as ZCorum's other sites have experienced.

The Swainsboro location will provide 24-hour technical support and advanced networking services for Affiliates—such as independent telephone companies, utilities, cable companies, and municipalities—and the Affiliates' customers.

A variety of factors made Swainsboro the location of choice for ZCorum. The excellent colleges and technical schools in the area mean an educated populace. The forward-thinking and determined attitude of local leaders means a commitment to economic development and job opportunities in the community. Plus, the willingness of the State of Georgia and the University of Georgia to participate in and help fund technical programs mean that ZCorum and other high-tech companies in the area have a constant pool of skilled candidates from which to hire.

As with ZCorum's other facilities, the new center will support Affiliates and their customers 24x7x365.

In July, ZCorum sponsored a career fair in Swainsboro, Georgia to attract applicants. "The fair was highly successful," said Ben Ow, President of ZCorum. "From the hundreds of applications we received, we pinpointed many promising candidates. We have already hired and begun to train the cream of the crop, who are an important part of our future." ☞

ZCorum will be the largest high-tech employer in the region, which includes all of Emanuel County. Approximately 150 technical support and information technology positions will be required to run the center at the outset. The employee base is expected to increase steadily in the coming years.

searching for candidates, we are able to recruit and employ top-notch employees."

Though many high-tech companies have experienced a decline in business, ZCorum and its affiliates are continuing to report the same steady growth

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—Julie Caruso, Executive Vice President of ZCorum

The application process at ZCorum is rigorous, including several hours of initial evaluations and interviews with both managers and executives.

Renzie Richardson, Director of Human Resources, explained that the investment ZCorum makes to attract and review candidates is well worth it. "By making special efforts during the application process, and by constantly ☞

that they have seen for years. The building of a 25,000-square-foot, \$3 million facility is just one of many signs that ZCorum is thriving.

"We are proud of ZCorum's financial solidity and long-term success," said Julie Caruso, Executive Vice President. "Our growth in 2001 is greater than in any prior year, and our long-term strategy is right on target." ☞

High-tech employees never stop learning

In the world of high-tech, a variety of job skills are needed, from computer programming to web design, from technical support to database construction. The positions available in a broadband Internet and communications corporation like ZCorum are multifaceted and varied, not just from position to position, but within the same position day to day.

ZCorum employees have educational backgrounds ranging from a doctorate in information systems to an associate's degree in user interface design, and experience levels ranging from fresh out of school to 30 plus years in the industry. Regardless of education and experience, employees must constantly update their skills to keep up with industry trends. ZCorum encourages this ongoing learning by providing availability to computers after hours, by giving in-house and on-the-job training, and by subsidizing outside classroom training.

ZCorum works in conjunction with the State of Georgia to ensure that educational opportunities are available to everyone. For example, ZCorum co-sponsors the Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP), which is taught at University of Georgia colleges. ICAPP provides advanced training in software and hardware skills, networking, web design, programming, and Internet support.

"Even the most experienced employees will find their skills outdated in a short time unless they continue to learn," said Renzie Richardson, Director of Human Resources at ZCorum. ☞



Broadband market booming despite lagging economy

One-third of U.S. households currently subscribing to dial-up Internet service are interested in upgrading to broadband service in the next 12 months, according to a survey by Parks Associates. As of the end of June 2001, an estimated 8.6 million U.S. households were subscribing to broadband service. This latest data confirms that, despite general economic uncertainty, consumers are willing to purchase broadband.

According to data compiled by the Federal Communications Commission, high-speed Internet access in the United States increased by 63 percent during the second half of 2000, and the rate of growth for the full year was 158 percent. Approximately 70 percent were residential and small business subscribers.

High-speed subscribers are reported present in 97 percent of the most densely populated zip codes. The comparable figure is 45 percent among zip codes with the lowest population densities, which is up from 24 percent a year earlier.

The differential between broadband accessibility in areas of high versus low population densities is expected to disappear within a few short years. With many larger players suffering, such as AT&T, IBM, and AOL, a unique short-term opportunity exists for independent telephone companies, utilities, and cable providers, among others. A preexisting customer base and a known name to the provincial populace give local companies a tremendous marketing advantage. Plus, businesses that offer Internet services in addition to a primary service can often offer bundled billing, which is very popular among consumers.

The number of subscribers to broadband Internet access services is expected to quadruple by 2005. The fact that broadband is quickly becoming the norm is not debated. The only unknown is which communications players will get the billions of dollars worth of broadband business. ♣

ZCorum announces Wireless Demo Program

Executive Vice President Julie Caruso announced on August 1st that ZCorum has implemented a Wireless Demo Program. This program, which will be in place through the end of the year, offers businesses a seven-day trial period to use a wireless system without any obligation to purchase the equipment. An interested company must have a tower or tall building for mounting the base antenna, an environmentally protected place to put the electronic equipment, an Ethernet connection, some basic computer equipment, and installation personnel. ZCorum provides an on-site engineer to demonstrate how the equipment works.

Building traditional communications networks is costly, and many areas do not have the revenue potential to make copper, fiber, or coax worth the investment. Wireless broadband solutions can be deployed quickly in most markets, and the modular design allows for incremental growth as customer demand dictates. Wireless also has a low cost of entry and a fast return on investment relative to other broadband solutions.

ZCorum offers end-to-end services, including market and network feasibility studies, RF engineering, network design, deployment, installation and support. ♣

CASE STUDY

Wireless installation a boost to business

The City of Washington, Georgia is working with ZCorum to quickly install state-of-the-art wireless technology to offer businesses and residents high-speed data services. This new service offers Internet access up to 100 times faster than dial-up services.

"We understand the urgent need for this service, and we are responding to a groundswell of requests from local businesses who need fast Internet service not only in order to grow, but merely to survive," said Frank Thomas, Mayor of the City of Washington.

"This solution gives us the ability to offer services quickly and the flexibility to expand services as we need them," said Mayor Thomas. "Our initial plan is to cover as much of the city and the industrial district as possible and to expand in the future as business develops. The influx of revenue stemming from the implementation of this technology will have an immediate positive effect on our economy and will give us the ability to continue growing in the decades to come."

Citizens eagerly await a speedier route to the Information Superhighway. Features offered include e-mail, personal web pages, e-commerce capabilities, and access to tens of thousands of newsgroups. ♣

The city already provides utility services, and has reliably done so for the past 100 years. The utility fees and Internet cost can be bundled in one bill.

Washington's economic base was once heavily dependent on agriculture. In recent years, with the assistance of local government, there has been an increasingly sound balance between agriculture and industry in the area. ♣



The courthouse in Washington, Georgia, shown above, demonstrates the architectural and historical significance of the area. Washington is proud of its national landmarks and numerous properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. ♣

ZCORUM NEWS

On-Line Registration (OLR) CD improved

ZCorum has released an improved version of its On-Line Registration (OLR) CDs, which customers use to create user accounts and mailboxes.



The new OLR CDs are simpler to run and incorporate design features that work in tandem with ZCorum's new email platform. †

Improved mail platform on its way

ZCorum is improving the mail platform used by Affiliates and their customers. This platform allows for longer user names, a bigger selection of names, and a reduction in SPAM. Also, more mailboxes will be available for commercial web accounts. Beta testing is currently underway. Emails from ZCorum will keep Affiliates up-to-date on the implementation schedule. †

Strategic Alliances mean more choices

ZCorum has added a number of Strategic Alliances, including Alvarion and Terayon, which embrace new technologies and give Affiliates more choices in products and services.

Alvarion

Created by the merger of BreezeCOM and Floware, Alvarion provides point-to-multipoint and broadband wireless access solutions. This new company provides a wide range of integrated wireless solutions designed to address carrier and service provider business models.

Alvarion's products and platforms operate in both licensed and unlicensed bands, which are market proven, cost-effective, quick to deploy, and easy to install. †

With its proven financial strength and strong solution portfolio, Alvarion is a secure strategic partner that will help ZCorum provide the best solutions to its Affiliates.

Terayon

Terayon provides broadband equipment used to deliver advanced data and video services over cable and telco networks. ZCorum integrates Terayon equipment into Affiliates' existing network architectures.

Since 1997, Terayon has researched and developed solutions that allow service providers to leverage their existing copper, fiber, or cable infrastructures to deliver new, revenue-generating broadband services with less expense. Terayon has dozens of patents granted, filed, and pending for voice, data, and video technologies. Terayon has its headquarters in Silicon Valley and offices in North America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and South America. †

ZCorum COO speaks at ICAAP graduation

Ben Ow, ZCorum Chief Operating Officer and President, spoke at the Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP) summer graduation ceremony. "Your knowledge of the Internet and the field of telecommunications will take you far," Ow said. "You have only just begun to learn, because this field requires an inquisitive nature and constant self-education. As graduates, you have proven that you have these attributes, as well as the willingness to work hard and the ability to work as a team."

ZCorum co-sponsors ICAPP, helps design the curriculum, and hires many graduates. This six-month program offers advanced Internet and telecommunications training at collaborating state universities. Students learn about broadband communications, and practice troubleshooting technical problems related to the Internet, computer hardware, software, and connectivity. Graduates can apply the ICAAP hours toward obtaining a Bachelor's degree. †

New tracking system developed

ZCorum has developed a new tracking system, called ZTrak, to better serve its Affiliates. ZTrak provides a web-based mechanism for communicating with ZCorum's in-house technical support and Affiliate services staff. Three tools are available within ZTrak—Tech Alerts, Work Orders, and Service Requests.

An Affiliate uses Tech Alerts when an end user is having a critical problem. The Affiliate can check on the status of the problem at any time.

Work orders are used to order equipment, such as new hardware, software, or additional On-Line Registration (OLR) CDs. Affiliates can also use work orders to request equipment upgrades or web development work.

Using service requests, Affiliates describe issues such as equipment problems. The information that the Affiliate enters into ZTrak helps ZCorum resolve the problem. †

Improvements made to Survey System

ZCorum has enhanced its tool for checking the quality and responsiveness of its technical support services. The Customer Satisfaction Survey System automatically emails a survey to each customer who calls into ZCorum's toll-free customer care line.

Survey questions ask about various aspects of the customer's phone experience with support. More than ninety percent of the time, customers rate ZCorum's service as having met or exceeded expectations.

A database compiles the answers to the returned surveys, and the results of this analysis are available to ZCorum supervisors and Affiliates via the web.

Affiliates can view a summary of survey results or display the results of each individual survey. †