



Meet Me in Chicago

A continuing series examining the dominant “meet me” facilities in major North American cities

With lots of good interconnect options, Chicago is my kind of town. Yet whenever the Chicago market comes up in interconnect conversations, or a network operator wants to know where to go to get connected, two names typically get dropped: the EP Connect Lakeside Technology Center and Printers’ Square at 600 South Federal Street.

Even though there are a few other carrier-style properties in the city, the general perception is that these buildings are where most networks in the area are accessible. Since the purpose of this series is to validate general perception, let’s dig deeper and see where the connections actually happen within the sites.

Printers’ Square – RACO

Without exception, Printers’ Square has one of the largest telecom tenant bases in Chicago’s central business district (CBD) and offers superior connectivity to the tenants of other CBD telecom facilities. The property’s nearly 30 telecommunications tenants include long haul and local fiber providers; competitive local exchange carriers; and long distance, data, voice, wireless, collocation and cable companies. The building is owned by Waterton Printers’ Square LLC and managed by WPS Management LLC.

Printers’ Square consists of five original buildings and six annexes situated on a 1.72-acre site that occupies one-half of two city blocks. All buildings are joined by one- to three-story annexes, creating a common hallway running through the first floor. This is a big building, so where does one go to get easy access to the carriers within it?

In 2002, RACO Chicago began

operations within Printers’ Square. RACO Chicago facilities incorporate more than 5,000 square feet of fully operational carrier neutral collocation and network interconnection space. RACO is one of the most experienced operators of this type of facility in North America. Its success in Chicago is due to the premier

Attributes of Carrier Hotels

	600 S. Federal	Lakeside Technology Center
Building size	161,000 sq. ft. and expandable	Approx. 1.2 million sq. ft. on nine floors
Union building	No	Yes
Building generator	No	Yes, for life safety systems. Tenants install their own generators for standby power.
Generator rooms for tenants	Multiple	Generators for most tenants are located in an outdoor yard adjacent to the building. A few tenants have interior generator rooms.
Roof access	Yes	Yes
Tenant conduit rights	Yes	Yes
Is there a meet me room?	No	Yes
Is this MMR the featured site?	No	Yes

Attributes of the Meet Me Room/Interconnect Facility

Attribute	RACO	EP Connect
Facility size	5,100 sq.ft	17,786 total sq. ft. equals 4,480 collocation, 5,386 passive space and 7,920 expansion area.
Suite	Suite 700	2 nd floor MMR
AC power feed	600 amp & 480 volts	2,400 amps 480-3ph-60 Hz total/ 1,600 amps @ 480-3ph-60 Hz conditioned
Generator	30KVA expandable	1,000 KW 480-3ph-60 Hz
Control system	Yes	Access control including video monitoring and recording
UPS	Yes, 2,400 amp hours of GNB batteries	Redundant UPS system with available redundant PDU’s
DC plant	Yes, Nortel Helios 2,000 amp plant	Yes, expandable to 2,000 amp
HVAC	Two 20-ton Liebert Systems	Four 30-ton Liebert units in the 4,480 sq. ft. collocation area; N+1
Fire suppression	Preaction	Dual action/preaction fire suppression system

Interconnection Guidelines

	RACO	EP Connect
Can customers order cross connects to any other meet area customer?	Yes	Yes
Is the average turnaround time for cross connects 48 hours or less?	Yes	Yes
Is on-site technical support available 24/7/365?	Yes	No
Can customers access the site 24/7/365?	Yes	Yes
Can the technicians test and turn up circuits?	Yes	Yes
Does the meet area operator perform the cross connect?	Yes	Yes
Can the customer perform the cross connect?	No	No
Are all cross connects tagged and inventoried?	Yes	Yes
Is there a shared fiber panel (MDF, CFDP)?	Yes	Yes
Can the customer bring and install its own fiber distribution panels?	Yes	Yes
Is there a shared COAX or copper panel?	Yes	Yes
Can the customer bring and install its own COAX or copper panel?	Yes	Yes
Are there monthly recurring charges to cross connect in the meet area?	Yes	Yes

Interconnect options for carriers not in the meet area

RACO: All tenants are within reach to RACO's entire building conduit system and meet me boxes on every floor and basement meet me points.

EP Connect: All connections between building tenants occur in the 2nd Floor MMR. Interconnections can also occur in tenant's space if the tenant has brought other carriers to its premise from the outside manholes.

Costs and availability

RACO: The costs and availability are determined based upon the order.

EP Connect: Availability is determined by tenants. Tenants negotiate circuits with each other and then order the cross connect. All cross connects have a fixed install cost along with a monthly re-occurring fee for each fiber pair cross connect.

600 S. Federal Street location, carrier neutrality, on-site technical staff 24/7/365 and quick circuit delivery times.

The Lakeside Technology Center – EP Connect

The Lakeside Technology Center is the largest dedicated telco hotel in the Chicago market. EP Connect is the owner of the building and also the operator of the meet me room (MMR). In addition to being a central point of interconnection for the network operators in the building, EP Connect sees the MMR as having an important role in preserving the structural integrity of the building by preventing direct conduit builds between tenants, thereby preventing massive amounts of random core locations and unstructured conduit routed through the halls and floors. By being a defined central point, the MMR saves the tenants the capital expense of having to build multiple conduits.

The meet me room has no competitors in the building. Colocation is available in the MMR but not marketed as a product. Colocation prices are set to recoup construction and operating costs of the MMR. The main purpose of the colocation is to provide an equipment space to facilitate transporting the cross connected signal back to the tenants lease space. It is a very large building and some signals cannot survive the distance without amplification or transformation.

A secondary purpose of the available colocation is to provide a place to jumpstart new tenants of the building. It can take many months for a new tenant to build out a lease space. The tenant can utilize the MMR colocation for a temporary equipment location to immediately establish its services in the building, thus removing the need to spend additional capital on expediting construction.

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Carrier Lists

RACO	EP Connect
Ameritech (SBC)	AT&T
AT&T Local	360networks
WorldCom	AboveNet (MFN)
Dominion Telecom	Ameritech (SBC)
Sprint Canada /CNCS	Dominion Telecom
Group Telecom	Fidelity
Shaw Big Pipe	Level 3 Communications
WitTel (Williams)	Looking Glass Networks
	OnFiber Communications
	Qwest Communications
	T Systems
	Vartec Telecom
	Verio
	WitTel (Williams)
	WorldCom
	XO Communications