Officials: 'Net service first in U.S.

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ABBEVILLE — Mount Carmel Elementary, the feeder school for Vermilion Catholic High, has become the first school in the nation to be connected to a wireless Internet service, according to school administrators and business people.

The Local Multipoint Distribution Service provided by Louisiana Competitive Telecommunications Inc. of Kaplan is an experimental system to be used at the school on a six-month trial basis, company President Carl Turnley said at a recent installation ceremony.

The system is designed to provide access to the World Wide Web at a much faster rate than other systems, Turnley said.

He said the pilot program at Mount Carmel was made possible when his company submitted the winning bid at an auction sponsored by the Federal Communications Commission.

Louisiana Public Service Commissioner Jimmy Field was among the dignitaries at the hook-up ceremony.

"This is a great example of a cooperative endeavor among business, government and schools that benefits everyone involved," he said.

Danny Wilson, marketing chief for BellSouth, said the new technology is a tremendous breakthrough in the telecommunications field to provide high-speed data for a variety of applications.

"We're happy to be part of such a worthwhile project and look for great things to come out of it," he said.

The project is designed specifically to provide high-speed Internet access, Web filtering service and voice service, Turnley said.

He said the first two goals already are reality and the third should be reached by the time school starts in mid-August.