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Ingram Micro to help customers go after stimulus dollars

by Chris Talbot

A new program from Ingram Micro will help solution providers take advantage of opportunities created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (aka the Economic Stimulus Bill).

Through IMStimulus (which launches on July 1), Ingram Micro will help solution providers find and develop opportunities being created by the Economic Stimulus Bill. The new program is the result of more than three months of work learning about what opportunities will be created that Ingram Micro's customers will have access to.

"It's a big, big opportunity. What we saw everybody kind of doing was just watching where stuff was, and being a sales guy, I was trying to figure out where that money was going to flow," said Bob Laclede, vice president of business development at Ingram Micro US.

Industry statistics put the value of the Economic Stimulus Bill related to IT at between \$60 billion and \$80 billion, spread across six major buckets -- healthcare, education, energy, infrastructure, public safety and broadband. Laclede said the money will flow from two pieces, with 60 per cent of it coming from line item budgets and the remaining 40 per cent from grants.

The grants element is new to Ingram Micro, he said, and the distributor has been learning about the grants and how solution providers and their customers can effectively use them. IMStimulus will offer information related to grants, the grant application process and what's required to get grants.

The focus of the program is on enabling partners to be able to secure deals based on the Economic Stimulus Bill and win more business. IMStimulus should increase their chances of winning deals, because it will get them going on deals before the competitive RFPs have been released, he said.

"We still think it's \$2-to-\$5 billion just on the things on our linecard in hardware and software," Laclede said.

The program has been in beta with select solution providers for several weeks, and the Web site is now live. The program officially kicks off at the beginning of July.

IMStimulus was developed to help those already serving the public sector space learn about the opportunities the Economic Stimulus Bill provides and help them to take advantage of them.

"It's probably not a program targeted for people who have never worked in public sector before," Laclede said.