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ATHLON XP PASSES 2GHZ

By Tom R. Halfhill {8/26/02-03}

AMD has announced two faster speed grades of the Athlon XP processor: the 2600+ and 2400+. The model numbers are benchmarking comparisons with Pentium 4 clock speeds that deliver similar application performance. Actual core frequencies of the new Athlon XP

processors are 2.13GHz and 2.0GHz, marking the first time AMD has reached 2.0GHz.

The announcement came on August 21, Athlon's third birthday. AMD is already shipping the faster processors to customers and expects them to be available worldwide in September. Prices in 1,000-unit quantities are \$297 for the 2600+ and \$193 for the 2400+.

Both processors are based on the same Thoroughbred core found in previous Athlon XP processors. They have a 266MHz front-side bus, 128K L1 cache, 256K on-chip core-speed L2 cache, and 3DNow! Professional instructions.

They are manufactured at AMD's Fab 30 in Dresden, Germany, in an eight-layer-metal 0.13-micron copper process on 200mm wafers. (Fortunately for AMD, the Dresden fab was spared by the recent flooding of the Elbe River.)

AMD is fighting hard to keep up with Intel's soaring clock frequencies. The top-of-the-line Pentium 4 previously ran at 2.53GHz, but Intel announced a 2.8GHz part five days after AMD's announcement to maintain its lead in both estimated performance and actual clock speed (see *MPR 8/26/02-04*, "Pentium 4 Reaches 2.8GHz"). The Pentium 4 first reached 2.0GHz a year ago. ♦

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