

K6-2 550MHz "VALUE" SPEED LEADER

By Kevin Krewell {3/6/00-02}

AMD has pushed the 0.25-micron K6-2 up one last speed grade, to 550MHz, topping Intel's Celeron by 17MHz and taking the top frequency spot in the value segment. The part will also fill the frequency void after AMD obsoletes the 550MHz Athlon. In the most

recent round of AMD list price reductions, the 550- and 600MHz Athlons are listed at exactly the same price, indicating a quick departure for the Athlon-550.

The AMD-K6-2/550 processor was introduced on February 22 with a list price of \$189. The remainder of the K6-2 line underwent a price reduction on February 28, with the K6-2/533 falling from \$167 to \$127, leaving a huge price gap between it and the 550MHz part. At the moment, the K6-2/550 is certainly not a price/performance leader, but we expect AMD will lower its price after Intel introduces its new, SSE-enabled Celeron within the next two months. We

suspect that, at 550MHz, this is the last gasp for the K6-2 in AMD's 0.25-micron process and that the forthcoming 0.18-micron Coppermine-based Celeron will quickly outpace it in clock speed. The K6-2 will then be relegated to the lower-value segment by Q3, competing with sub-\$100 processors like VIA's Cyrix III and integrated processors like Intel's upcoming Timna.

While this may be the K6-2's last stand on the desktop, the 0.18-micron K6-2+ will be AMD's mainstay in the mobile market until a mobile-friendly version of the Athlon can be deployed, sometime in early 2001. ♦

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