Inside Towers

Friday, November 15, 2013

T-Mobile and Sprint Will Not Be Bidding in the US Government Spectrum Auction in January

On November 11th, T-Mobile announced that it was commencing an offering of 66,150,000 shares of its common stock in a registered public offering. It was believed that T-Mobile would be using the funds from this sale to participate in the spectrum auction in January. However, on Tuesday, November 12th, Reuters posted this statement, “T-Mobile US Inc said on Tuesday it would not participate in a spectrum auction the U.S. government plans to hold in January but still left investors in suspense over how it will use the proceeds from a roughly $2 billion stock offering.” T-Mobile lags behind AT&T and Verizon, the leaders in the wireless communications industry, and many believe it’s because of the spectrum T-Mobile owns. This is why it’s curious that they won’t be participating in the auction. Sprint issued a statement on Wednesday that they would rather buy low-band spectrum than bid for the 10 MHz of 1900 PCS frequencies the FCC plans to auction. Sprint Chief Financial Officer Joseph Euteneuer said the carrier "felt comfortable" with its spectrum capacity, adding that the auction's rules were a factor in Sprint's decision.

FCC Speed Test App Provides Consumers With A Way To Evaluate Their Mobile Broadband Network Performance

Yesterday, the FCC released the first public version of the FCC Speed Test app for Android smartphones. “The FCC Speed Test app accurately measures mobile broadband (cellular) and Wi-Fi network performance and delivers consumers an in-depth, real-time view of key metrics related to their mobile broadband experience,” the FCC explains. The FCC is working toward evaluating mobile broadband performance and their first step towards that goal is arming consumers with information to make informed decisions about their wireless providers. According to the FCC, “Data collected will help inform consumers, industry and policymakers with the goal of improving mobile broadband performance nationwide.” Once it’s easier to determine where there are gaps in mobile broadband performance, these companies can work to remedy this problem by constructing cell sites, updating their equipment on towers, or installing DAS networks to improve the quality of service.

LTE Technology Has Become the Choice for Global Wireless Operators

It’s no secret that the LTE build out is steady in the United States, but this wireless technology has also become the choice for wireless operators from around the world. Reportbuyer released a study regarding this industry explaining that, “Rapid deployments of smart devices, increased mobile data use, the complex nature of LTE network deployments, and difficulty in meeting consumer needs are expected to continue driving demand in the LTE test equipment market.” Because of the growing number of mobile customers with LTE capabilities, the wireless infrastructure industry needs to keep pace with the demand for this technology. Most wireless carriers are working to have their 4G LTE networks established by the middle of 2014, but will that be quick enough?

Should Police Be Able To Locate You Using Cell Phone Towers?

This is a hot topic as of lately and many people have very strong opinions regarding this topic. Some feel that it is an invasion of privacy, while others believe it's public knowledge and should be used to locate you if you have committed a violent crime. Recently, in Milwaukee, WI a murderer was located by police in a manner of hours. Now the actions of the police in finding this criminal are being debated before the Wisconsin Supreme Court. According to the wireless industry, there are currently more than 326-million active mobile phones in the United State and most people don't realize that just by carrying this phone on you, you are providing your location to law enforcement and other agencies that can use software to determine where you are based on nearby cell phone towers. The case involves a Milwaukee homicide that took place on June 9th, 2009. It was a seemingly random shooting near 16th and Locust that was captured on the surveillance camera of a nearby corner store. It took the police six hours to locate the man responsible for this crime. While it's argued that this is excellent police work, others believe it's violating a person's privacy and a search warrant should be secured before using this new technology.

Be Sure Your Wireless Alarm Monitoring Systems are Working Properly

Many home and businesses are changing from analog to digital telephone technologies, and in a press release the Oregon State Fire Marshal, Mark Wallace, reminded people to be sure these new technologies were compatible with their fire and sprinkler alarms. "Most alarm systems communicate with alarm monitoring centers through a telephone line using a complex touch-tone signal sent to the alarm monitoring station. With new digital communication technology such as digital subscriber lines (DSL), voice over internet protocol (VoIP), and wireless, the signals may or may not be received correctly by an alarm monitoring station," the press release explained. We all know how congested communications towers can become during emergencies, so be certain to test your safety equipment beforehand to ensure your safety.

Tower Ticker

Symbol	Last Sale	Change	% Change	Share Volume	Market
AMT	$79.10	0.93	▲ 1.19%	2,046,706	NYSE
CCI	$75.50	0.87	▲ 1.17%	2,041,021	NYSE
SBAC	$89.40	0.75	▼ 0.75%	2,457,036	NASDAQ

Information as of 4:00pm ET 11/14/2013

Wireless Tower Assistance Fund Granted in West Virginia

On Tuesday, the Mineral County Commission of West Virginia met to approve the submission of an application for a wireless tower access assistance fund grant that will be used to build a new tower. The goal of this project is to improve wireless broadband service in the area as well as improve public safety. According to the Cumberland Times-News, "A new 340-foot tower will cost almost $538,000 and will improve the coverage in the north end of the county. The county will be responsible for 20 percent of the costs (about $107,400) and the grant will cover the remainder, according to Bill Hentosh, director of the Mineral County Office of Emergency Management. The grant won't cover the $270,000 cost of IRP radios, repeaters, installation or antennas. Hentosh plans on asking

the state for a cost share for the radios." If the funding for the tower is approved then it will take about 12 months to construct a new tower.

Union Wireless Returns to Colorado Seeking Appeal on Cell Tower Vote

Union Wireless, a telecommunications provider in the Rocky Mountain Region, is returning to Routt County, CO to seek an appeal about constructing a cell phone tower after they were denied in September by the Planning Commission members. The members denied the request to build a telecommunications tower on a private island about seven miles south of Steamboat Springs. Union Wireless is returning to the Planning Commission with more specifics that may change the minds of the members. They plan to construct a tower that resembles a 50-foot evergreen tree known as a monopine and they are looking to build the new tower on Routt County Road 41 in the middle of two rural subdivisions. Union Wireless is downgrading the size of the tower from an 80-foot tower to a 40-foot tower to please the members of the community and reduce visual impact. Union Wireless will present detailed site and engineering plans as well as photographic images showing how the monopine would look standing above the mix of aspens on the ridge top where it would be located.

AT&T Seeks to Build 345-foot Tower in Nebraska

If you live in or around Uehling, NE then your AT&T cell phone service could get a lot better if the company is allowed to construct a 345-foot tower along County Road 24. "The primary objective of AT&T in placing a facility at this location is to provide adequate coverage to the residences in this area and vehicular traffic in all directions of the proposed site. This geographic area is an existing coverage gap in AT&T's network, and customers in the area experience a high frequency of 'dropped call' and 'no signal found,'" wrote Steve K. Ward of Ward Development Service, an authorized agent for AT&T, pointing out that local police and fire departments report that 70 percent of 911 calls originate from wireless devices. This tower will allow for three other wireless carriers to lease space on the tower, improving wireless services to a number of different service providers.

Tower Safety

NATE Offers 16 Different Training Courses for Tower Technicians

The National Association of Tower Erectors recently launched the NATE EXCHANGE, which is a premier safety education resource for tower construction and maintenance companies as well as individual tower techs. The program offers courses in: Confined Space, Electrical, Equipment/Vehicle Operations, Fall Protection and Rescue, First AID/CPR/AED, Gin Pole, Hazards, Hoist, Ladder/Scaffolding, OSHA 10-Hour, OSHA 30-Hour, RF Awareness, Rigging/Signal Person, Rope, Technical, and Wind.