Inside Towers

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nTelos Announces Tower Sale

Yesterday, nTelos Holdings Corporation announced the sale of its remaining wireless towers to an affiliate of Grain Management, a private equipment firm with investments in the media and communication sectors. nTelos has agreed to sell up to 103 towers located in its western markets to Grain Management for $41 million. "Today's announcement of an agreement to sell these towers reflects an opportunistic sale of non-strategic assets and is consistent with our previously stated strategic objectives," said Michael A. Huber, Chairman of the Board of NTELOS Holdings Corp. "We expect the proceeds from the sale will enhance our financial flexibility to continue executing our strategic refocus on our Western Markets." This sale doesn't come as too much of a surprise as nTelos said they were seeking to monetize their towers when the company announced the divestiture of its eastern markets in early December. Jennifer Fritzsche, Senior Analyst at Wells Fargo, said, "The price per tower of $400K, however, is higher than we expected, as we previously had assumed $100K per site when estimating NTLS's core asset value. The positive postpay and prepaid net adds show signs of improvement in its retail business, although we believe the competitive environment in its western markets will continue to be challenging."

A Closer Look at T-Mobile South v. Roswell

By Alexia Sparling, an insider at Lease Advisors

Last Wednesday's Supreme Court ruling in the T-Mobile South, LLC v. Roswell, Georgia case has been celebrated as a small win for wireless carriers. T-Mobile South argued that the city of Roswell did not comply with the Telecommunications Act of 1996 which requires local governments to provide a written record with support and substantial evidence when denying requests for cellular sites. T-Mobile South, owned by Deutsche Telekom AG, said that Roswell fell short of these requirements in 2010 when a brief letter was sent to the company denying a request to erect an 11-story cell tower in a residential neighborhood. Instead of detailing reasons and providing evidence to support its denial, the letter referred the company to city council minutes where the council member's rationale was left to their own interpretation.

Supreme Court Justices, Antonin Scalia, Sonia Sotomayor, Anthony Kennedy, Stephen Breyer, Samuel Alito and Elena Kagan came to a ruling with a 6-3 vote. The Court's opinion, authored by Justice Sotomayor, rejected T-Mobile's argument that the city should have explicitly provided a written decision including the specific reasons for rejecting the tower. The opinion did find fault in the

city of Roswell for their delayed provision of the council minutes. T-Mobile General Counsel Dave Miller called the ruling a “great victory” when the court established that such materials must me provided “at essentially the same time,” allowing carriers adequate time to review the decision and decide if they will challenge it in court before the 30-day deadline. Miller added that “Transparent and fair decision-making by local governments will allow wireless service providers to improve the nation’s wireless networks to meet consumers demand.” Continue reading here.

School Cell Tower Moves Forward

Milestone Communications has been given approval to begin informing community members about a tower being proposed at Elon Elementary School in Amherst, Virginia. The Amherst County School Board gave the company the go-ahead late last week. The school will receive a one-time site access fee of $25,000 and an annual $12,000 fee per carrier that co-locates on the tower. The tower will be constructed to hold equipment for up to five carriers. According to the News Advance, “A separate financial arrangement would allow the landowner to receive a lump sum payment of $100,000 for a 10-year period. In year 11, the landowner would receive the standard annual rates.” Milestone Communication proposed the Amherst County School Board last September about the project, and later that month entered into an agreement to allow the company to seek interest from the carriers.

Cell Service Improved in Vail

Changes have been made to the wireless connectivity in Vail, Colorado, in preparation for the 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships. The complaint that launched the boost in wireless networks came in 2013 from Ron Riley, a restaurant owner, who was so frustrated with his cell service he started a crusade to change it. Since then, the town of Vail has signed a contract with Crown Castle. Now a total of 30 towers are in place around town, and while most are exclusive to AT&T, Verizon will be adding their equipment to the structures soon. Most of the new towers that have been placed throughout the town are smaller. Many residents, including Riley, are thrilled with the outcome. 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships will begin on February 2.

Verizon Tower Approved

Verizon’s application to construct a 120-foot tower in the Bethlehem Township of Pennsylvania has been approved. Construction is expected to begin later this year so the tower will be operational by 2016. The structure will be build on the PPL Pointe North Substation property, and will include an additional 5-foot lightning rod. The tower will increase capacity and alleviate jams in the wireless connections for several areas currently without service west of Route 512 and northwest of Bethlehem.

Tower Ticker

SYMBOL	TIME & PRICE		CHG & % CHG		DAY'S LOW & HIGH		VOLUME
★ AMT	04:01pm EST	**97.13**	↓0.29	↓0.30%	96.14	98.00	2,011,272
★ CCI	04:01pm EST	**82.01**	↓0.62	↓0.75%	81.70	83.07	3,330,770
★ CIGW	01:09pm EST	**0.2005**	↓0.0195	↓8.86%	0.1801	0.22	77,500
★ SBAC	04:00pm EST	**110.31**	↑0.79	↑0.73%	109.16	110.60	640,288
★ TMUS	04:05pm EST	**29.54**	↑0.40	↑1.37%	29.16	30.02	7,038,727
★ VZ	04:01pm EST	**48.18**	↑0.19	↑0.40%	47.71	48.24	16,388,307
★ S	04:01pm EST	**4.16**	↑0.08	↑1.96%	4.07	4.20	14,805,924
★ T	04:00pm EST	**33.95**	↑0.15	↑0.44%	33.55	33.96	20,200,587

What's in Store for Crown Castle this Earnings Season?

By Zacks Equity Research

Crown Castle International slated to release its fourth-quarter 2014 results on Jan 21, 2015, after market close. Last quarter, Crown Castle had delivered a positive earnings surprise of 7.41%. Notably, the company has delivered positive earnings surprises in two of the last four quarters, with an average miss of 2.17%. Let's see how things are shaping up for this announcement. Increased deployment of 4G LTE network along with higher usage of smartphones and tablets has propelled demand for tower requirement by large carriers. Crown Castle's swiftly increasing tower network should therefore drive the company's top and bottom line, going forward. Crown Castle is thus well positioned in the U.S. tower market to benefit from the growth potentials of the rapidly advancing wireless industry. The company has also raised its guidance for full year 2014 and expects Site Rental revenues in the range of $3,001– $3,006 million.

However, despite an extensive tower portfolio and accelerated 4G LTE network deployment, a highly leveraged balance sheet and the ongoing merger deals between large telecom carriers may act as headwinds for Crown Castle in the near term. To add to the woes, consolidation in the wireless industry may reduce demand for cell tower deployments and adversely affect the company's top line. In addition, continuous change in technology, foreign currency exchange rate risks and higher customer concentration may dent Crown Castle's profitability. Continue reading here.

Zoning & Moaning

Temporary Tower Makes a Comeback

The temporary cell tower that was recently removed from an Exxon Mobile station in Ridgewood, New Jersey, will be coming back. On January 13, the Ridgewood Zoning Board of Adjustment granted a five-month extension to allow AT&T to install and operate the temporary tower at the site. The cell on wheels (COW) was approved last June, so AT&T would be able to provide seamless service to their customers in the area. It was believed that AT&T was looking for a permanent site to construct a tower. The COW was taken down on December 26, but a radio frequency engineer found that AT&T's customers were experiencing inefficiency in the network. AT&T looked into add-

ing equipment to the 120-foot monopole in the area, but there is no room for carrier to co-locate. Cingular Wireless, operating as AT&T, has filed an application with the zoning board to modify the current tower, and replace three cell antennas with six new antennas and install the accompanying equipment. Once they can fix the tower, or construct another one, the COW will go away.

Possible Tower in Sunrise Beach

A company has requested to construct a new cell tower in Sunrise Beach, Missouri. Sunrise Beach City Planner Roger Corbin told the village board about the request last Monday, but there's not too much the municipality can do about the request. A new state law allows tower companies to build new towers without permission of city or county government approval, unless they have an ordinance in place pertaining to cell tower placement. Corbin requested the village draft an ordinance so they will be able to give input when tower applications are submitted. The village staff requested that the Zoning Commission revise their requirements concerning cell tower placement before they draft their ordinance.

Much Needed Tower Discussed at Town Meeting

The Randolph Town Council in New Jersey met last Thursday to hear a presentation on a much needed cell phone tower. The proposed tower would stand 115 feet high, and would be used for public safety communication and board of education use, as well as hold up to four cellular carriers. The current 120-foot tower in town is only used for public safety and for the board of education. A work group had been formed to review the issue of radio frequency, and technical consultant Glen Pearson wire fired to conduct an on-site coverage study. The work group recommended that the tower be disguised as a tree, which split the public and council's decision in half. Some believed the tree to be better for aesthetic appeal, while others thought the extra branches might be more of an eyesore. The council recommended moving the process forward with the work group. The next steps for the tower are to develop a bid package, award a contract and involve the planning board for a site plan review

Tower Jobs

Eco-Site: Sr. Project Manager

Job Title: Sr. Project Manager
Reports To: VP of Deployment
Prepared Date: January 5, 2015
Exempt/Non-exempt: Non-Exempt

The Sr. Project Manager will be primarily responsible for managing the deployment team, external vendors and internal Project Managers and Project Coordinators. The Sr. Project Manager is responsible for accomplishing project objectives by planning and evaluating project activities. The preceding must be done in a manner consistent with Eco-Site's processes and specifications while always maintaining an aggressive timeline for execution. The Sr. Project Manager is expected to be able to work effectively and efficiently across multiple internal departments, including but not limited to Real Estate, Sales, Legal and Accounting. View the entire job listing.