

Telecom Industry News

By: Scott St. John

This month, Mobile World Congress Americas provided a brief flurry of news from the City of Angels. Together, Ericsson, Intel, AT&T and T-Mobile demonstrated the first public 5G NR over-the-air data call, and Sprint debuted its newest Magic Box Generation 3 all wireless small-cell plug-and-play unit. A new worldwide relationship between Sprint and Ericsson will result in a dedicated IoT environment to better handle skyrocketing device data flow and generate immediate intelligence. And AT&T and Aira have expanded their collaboration to serve members of the blind and low-vision communities at over 5,000 locations across the US with Aira's wearables or via smartphones.



Other stories from the month are summarized below. To view all the news as it breaks, check out *Pipeline's* [News Center](#) or [subscribe](#) to receive our news summary each week.

Network News

[Windstream Enterprise](#) (WE) announced it has expanded fixed wireless service availability to more than 50 markets nationwide. Following the successful launch of a fixed wireless core site in Houston, Texas, the service area covers over 350,000 pre-qualified enterprise businesses. A new partnership was also announced between [Microsoft and Illinois-based Network Business Systems](#) will deliver broadband Internet access to rural communities in Illinois, Iowa, and South Dakota. Part of Microsoft's Airband Initiative, this expansion will provide access to more than 126,000 residents who are currently unserved. And [CHR Solutions](#), a network infrastructure and BSS/OSS provider, announced it will support electric co-ops and municipalities with network solutions to optimize fiber deployment in rural America while providing billing software to support operational efficiency and monetization.

In the New York and New Jersey metro market, [ZenFi Networks and Cross River Fiber](#) have completed a merger. The combined company, which will operate as ZenFi Networks, will provide enhanced communications infrastructure to enterprise, carrier, and wireless operators.

In network enhancement news, [Georgia Public Web \(GPW\)](#), an Atlanta-based regional carrier, selected the Federos Assure1™ solution as its unified service assurance platform. Assure1 will unify and simplify service management across GPW's fault, performance, topology, and HTML multi-tenant portal environment. [Mist](#) announced this month that it is bringing greater automation and insight to wireless networks with new enhancements to its Wi-Fi Assurance and Marvis Virtual Network Assistant (VNA) services. Features include an expanded conversational UI leveraging Natural Language Processing (NLP), anomaly detection using deep learning, AI-driven Radio Resource Management (RRM) for automated self-healing, and new Wired and Wide Area Network (WAN) classifiers.

In the Philippines, [Converge ICT Solutions](#)—the country's leading provider of pure fiber Internet solutions—has achieved MEF CE 2.0 Certification to strengthen its Carrier Ethernet services capabilities.

5G News

This month [Ericsson and Intel, together with AT&T and T-Mobile](#), demonstrated the first public 5G NR over-the-air (OTA) data call using 39 GHz mmWave band, completed with Ericsson Radio System AIR 5331 and the Intel 5G Mobile Trial Platform.

This month, [Ericsson also announced](#) it inked a \$3.5-billion multiyear deal to support T-Mobile's nationwide 5G deployment. Ericsson will provide T-Mobile with the latest 5G New Radio (NR) hardware and software compliant with 3GPP standards. Ericsson doubled down on Operational Support Systems (OSS) by agreeing to acquire [100 percent of the shares in CENX](#), a move that boosts Ericsson's OSS portfolio with vendor-agnostic service assurance and closed-loop automation capability. Since 2012, Ericsson had held a minority stake in CENX. And, with 5G use cases to bring more demands to networks, [Ericsson](#) will build on its radio expertise and add best-in-class transport technologies from Juniper Networks and ECI Telecom. These enhancements will strengthen its end-to-end mobile transport solutions.

[Coriant and wireless communications leader SIAE MICROELETTRONICA](#) are embarking on a collaboration to demonstrate SDN-enabled Layer 3 microwave and millimeter-wave backhaul solutions optimized for the high-capacity, low latency demands of next-generation services and applications, including 5G and IoT. This multi-vendor, multilayer Proof of Concept involves working closely with a European Tier 1 mobile operator.

Recognizing the tremendous costs that come with 5G, [Veluxsys](#) has announced that it is poised to help make cost-effective 5G network deployments a reality. Using highly sophisticated photonics technology, Veluxsys is designing a whole new type of radio-to-multiple-antenna system that will save network operators money and help 5G networks become reality.

IoT News

In IoT news, [Sprint unveiled the Curiosity IoT platform](#), introducing a new standard in how IoT is managed and secured. Enterprises will now be able to manage IoT devices and connectivity over the air across multiple SIM profiles. Intelligence from device data will be generated instantly through the dedicated, distributed and virtualized core, built together with the new operating system. And the ultimate level of security will be provided from the chip to the cloud. This month also brought news of a new global relationship between [Sprint and Ericsson](#) to build a distributed and virtualized core network dedicated specifically to IoT as well as a world-class IoT operating system. Purpose-built for the future of IoT, this new environment is designed to handle the skyrocketing data flow from devices, enabling immediate, actionable intelligence at the network edge for end users and enterprises.

In other IoT developments, [Samsung](#) introduced its new SmartThings Tracker. This lightweight GPS tracking device, connected through an LTE-M1 network, can be attached to backpacks, keys, pet collars, and more to allow users to accurately and quickly track valuable items. SmartThings Tracker became available through AT&T on September 14 and will roll out with Verizon later in 2018.

[Adesto Technologies](#) presented new research this month on Resistive RAM (RRAM) technology's potential for use with high-reliability applications in automotive and IoT. Led by Adesto Fellow Dr. John Jameson, the presentation took place at the ESSCIRC-ESSDERC 48th European Solid-State Device Research Conference, held in Germany in early September.

In response to demand from enterprise customers, [Vodafone](#) is set to double the number of European cell sites in its 5G Narrowband Internet of Things (NB-IoT) network footprint by the end of next year. The world's biggest, international NB-IoT network will be available in 10 European countries, including planned launches in the UK, Romania and Hungary.

[Dr. Bernardo Huberman](#), a technology pioneer and futurist whose inventions have affected business and residential behaviors, will be a special guest speaker during the Opening General Session for SCTE.ISBE Cable-Tec Expo 2018. His keynote, set to take place on October 23, will address how Silicon Valley and the cable and telecommunications industry can jointly ride the tidal wave of Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things technologies to unlock new areas of growth.

Customer Experience News

Customer experience news included a range of interesting global developments. To bring new experiences to the blind and visually impaired, [AT&T and Aira](#) have continued to expand their relationship. Now, all AT&T company-owned retail and authorized retail stores will be Aira Access Locations, which means that any member of the visually impaired community with a smartphone or Aira's wearables can become an Aira Guest and receive free use of Aira's service. Over 5,300 retail locations across the country will be Aira Access Locations.

Nuance has launched [Nuance Prediction Service](#), which leverages AI and deep analytics to anticipate customer requests, predict intent, and speed resolution. This hyper-personalized approach to customer experience is in line with use cases for AI supporting CX—which Gartner predicts as holding the most promise for business value and revenue growth through 2020.

In Denmark and Norway, [Altibox has selected Federos's Assure1](#) solution to enhance customer experience. Assure1 will help Altibox provide customer-focused, integrated service assurance across a large number of deployed systems. In South America, [Vodafone and Telecom Argentina](#) embarked on a new Partner Market agreement to enhance customer experience for Argentinian customers. Vodafone will provide strategic advice to Telecom Argentina and share global best practices on customer service and retail, technology, IT and procurement, among other areas.

Cloud, Edge and Virtualization News

To enable service providers to roll out secure virtualized services at scale, [Ensemble—a division of ADVA](#)—launched a major new release of its network functions virtualization (NFV) platform. The upgraded Ensemble suite now features powerful management and orchestration (MANO) capabilities. And, [Windstream Enterprise](#), a leading supplier of advanced network communications, announced that its SD-WAN service met the standards this month for Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) Version 3.2 Compliance. Amid growing global concern over protection of sensitive data, this independent, third-party designation can inspire customer confidence.

[Infovista](#), unveiled a new portfolio of cloud, SD-WAN, and 5G-focused solutions to give service providers and enterprises total visibility and unprecedented control over their networks and applications. More than 1,500 service providers and businesses in 150 countries rely on Infovista to deliver quality user experience to their end customers.

This month, [Radisys introduced its Edge Computing Software Platform](#). The platform provides an access-agnostic, ETSI standards-compliant Mobile Edge Platform with a building-block framework and open APIs to enable disruptive edge applications. As service providers seek to deploy edge computing in their networks to support multiple 5G, smart enterprise and IoT use applications, Radisys' platform provides the ability to leverage a common edge computing platform for both wireless and wireline solutions. In other edge news, the [ETSI Multi-access Edge Computing ISG](#) released a new whitepaper, entitled *MEC in an Enterprise Setting: A Solution Outline*.

Innovation News

At Mobile World Congress Americas, the Mobile Authentication Taskforce demonstrated its authentication solution, which is less dependent on passwords to secure user accounts. The Mobile Authentication Taskforce is a collaboration between [AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon](#), the four largest US wireless carriers. Its authentication solution, which was developed collaboratively by the four, combines the carriers' proprietary, network-based authentication capabilities with other methods to verify a user's identity. In another MWCA debut, Sprint announced advancements in its line of all-wireless small cells with the introduction of the [Sprint Magic Box Generation 3](#). Available later this year, the latest edition of Sprint's plug-and-play units will offer speeds up to 25 percent faster than previous models, with a quicker start-up process.

While August brought a bevy of exciting developments on the connected car front, September kept them coming. [Autotalks](#) launched the first-ever global V2X solution for connected cars. Its deployment-ready V2X—Vehicle-to-Everything—chipset is the only solution available that supports both DSRC and C-V2X direct communications (PC5 protocol) at the highest security level.

In AI news, [research from Ovum](#) offered a view of the current landscape of AI assistants. Ovum reports that while Amazon's Alexa is the current market leader, Google Assistant is catching up fast, posing a threat to Alexa's supremacy. Siri, Cortana, and Bixby offer specific advantages for particular use cases but lag behind Alexa and Google Assistant—with diminishing chances to get ahead, considering the fast-growing functionality and interoperability concerns in the smart home sphere. And [MachineMetrics](#) introduced the industry's first AI-driven remote machine monitoring solution designed for OEMs and equipment providers. This predictive analytics application on MachineMetric's Industrial IoT platform will allow remote monitoring and management of machine assets in the field and at customer sites—in real time.

While new solutions and products continue to come to market, a new report released this month highlights a widespread global sales talent shortage that threatens to hamper future innovation. According to a new report from CSO Insights, the research division of Miller Heiman Group, only 16 percent of sales leaders believe that they have the talent they need to succeed in the future. The "[2018 Sales Talent Study](#)" is based on a global survey of sales executives, sales enablement leaders, sales operations leaders and sales managers at 321 product- and service-based businesses.

[Zenterio announced that Deutsche Telekom \(DT\)](#), one of Germany's largest telecommunications operators, announced it has launched EntertainTV Sat, a new high-end 4K IPTV, OTT, and satellite set-top box (STB) powered by Zenterio OS. The launch has enabled new client- and cloud-based features and services—among them OTT video-on-demand (YouTube, Netflix, and more), hybrid local/network PVR, HTML5 apps, and other broadcast and streaming innovations. The use of Zenterio OS speeds time-to-market significantly.

To read more news stories, be sure to visit *Pipeline's* [News Center](#) and [subscribe to Pipeline's weekly and monthly newsletters](#). You can also follow *Pipeline* on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#) to get news alerts in real-time. To have your company featured in this column, send your breaking news and press releases to pressreleases@pipelinepub.com for consideration.