

Telecom Industry News

By: Scott St. John

News on key road-to-5G updates was dominant this month. The completion of the world's first over-the-air 5G data transmission using 2.5 GHz and Massive MIMO on Sprint's live commercial network was a collaborative accomplishment between Sprint, Nokia, and Qualcomm. Ericsson and Qualcomm also completed the first 5G data call on the 2.6 GHz band, and Huawei completed the last phase of its 5G NR test at 2.6 GHz. In other developments, a new specification from ETSI and a new agreement between the Telecommunications Industry Association and the Internet of Things Community should advance the development of smart city technology.



The top 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 Evolution News

In an important milestone toward the 100 Gbps future, [Ericsson and Deutsche Telekom](#) became the first companies to successfully demonstrate a millimeter wave link with a data transmission rate of 40 Gbps in a joint innovation project at the Deutsche Telekom Service Center in Athens. The partners achieved four times greater data throughput compared to current commercial millimeter wave solutions to prove the commercial viability of future wireless backhaul technology.

[Telstra and Infinera](#) unveiled a major boost to Telstra's network services for customers in Asia Pacific, with a significant increase in fiber capacity to its subsea infrastructure using Infinera's Infinite Capacity Engine 4 (ICE4). And in Italy, [Nokia has been selected by Open Fiber](#) to bridge the digital divide in a fiber-to-the-home rollout that will bring speeds of 1 Gbps to small towns and rural areas.

Stateside network evolution updates came in as well. [Windstream Enterprises](#) announced that it will double the availability of 100 Mbps Kinetic Internet Service across its 18-state footprint in the first quarter of 2019 and expand availability of speeds up to 1 Gigabit for 100,000 commercial locations. In addition, ongoing network enhancements will make 25 Mbps and 50 Mbps speeds available to more Windstream customers. [Windstream Wholesale](#) announced that it will use existing long-haul fiber assets to expand its core network by over 200 miles into Montreal, Quebec. The expansion will connect Windstream's network within Cologix's Montreal ecosystem. Services are expected to be available in Q1. And [Arvig](#), a Minnesota-based broadband service provider, announced it is extending its fiber network from Scott County to the Nebraska Data Centers in Omaha. This project will expand Arvig's service area by more than 350 fiber route miles, providing a connection from the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area directly to Omaha.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai issued [a statement](#) on the end of Auction 101, which will provide spectrum in the 28 GHz band for 5G wireless services. Chairman Pai noted the successful conclusion of the US's first high-band 5G spectrum auction and committed to aggressively pushing more spectrum into the commercial marketplace with additional auctions in 2019.

5G News

The month brought a flurry of progress updates on the march toward 5G. Together with Nokia and Qualcomm Technologies, [Sprint](#) completed the world's first over-the-air 5G data transmission using 2.5 GHz and Massive MIMO on Sprint's live commercial network. The accomplishment is a significant milestone toward launching mobile 5G service later in 2019. [Ericsson and Qualcomm](#) also completed the first 5G data call on the 2.6 GHz band, adding a new frequency band to those tested for commercial deployment. And [Huawei](#) announced the completion of the third phase of the 5G NR (New Radio) test at 2.6GHz spectrum in the 5G trial organized by the IMT-2020 (5G) Promotion Group.

IoT News

This month, partnership news percolated in the IoT space. To accelerate the digital transformation of the Internet of Things and further the development of smart buildings, the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) and the Internet of Things Community (IoT) have announced the [signing of an agreement](#) to work in collaboration on a range of initiatives. [Senet and Neosen Energy](#) announced a partnership to accelerate the widespread deployment of campus-based LoRaWAN IoT networks for asset and personnel tracking and safety systems. Through this partnership, Neosen Energy will deploy campus safety products connected over Senet's LoRaWAN network, providing the fastest response geo-locating system on the market. And [Vodafone and Telefonica UK](#) plan to extend the existing network sharing partnership term and include 5G at joint radio network sites, enabling both to deploy 5G faster and offer 5G services to more customers at lower cost.

[Juniper Research](#) has released a new whitepaper with data predicting Robotic Process Automation (RPA) revenues in banking will reach \$1.2 billion by 2023, a growth of over 400 percent in five years.

This month, the [ETSI CIM group](#) released a new full-feature specification for context information exchange to help advance and power the development of Smart Cities and smart city apps.

Customer Experience News

Domestic CX news updates included T-Mobile's launch of its new [Caller Verified](#) technology, its implementation of the STIR and SHAKEN standards. These standards combat illegal caller ID spoofing, which occurs when scammers temporarily hijack a phone number to match the area code and three-digit prefix of the person they are targeting, making the incoming call look familiar. [Windstream](#) announced that it is launching WE Connect, a unified services portal and mobile app uniquely designed to elevate the customer experience. WE Connect will deliver services such as SD-WAN, Cloud Security, and OfficeSuite UC Unified Communications as solutions alongside self-service controls on a 'single pane of glass.'

[Juniper Research](#) released research findings on growth in mobile ticketing and the urban mobility revolution. Its findings note that mobile ticketing—for transportation, sports and entertainment, and more—will account for 1.9 billion of the 2.2 billion ticket market by 2023.

Overseas, [Telefónica Group has selected Nokia](#) as its Service Operation Center vendor to support the operator's journey in the UK from a traditional network-centric operation towards a customer-centric operation. Nokia's evolved Service Operation Center (eSOC) platform will be implemented for Telefónica UK's 32 million customers. In the Middle East, [Optiva announced that Ooredoo Palestine](#) has agreed to a software upgrade and multi-year support agreement that will assist Ooredoo in launching new products and enhancing customer experience.

Cloud News

[IBM and Vodafone](#) have entered into a new \$550 million extension of their existing commercial strategic agreement. The two companies will form a new venture designed to drive adoption of

cloud technologies and innovative business applications enabled by 5G, edge and SDN. SDNbucks has chosen [Nokia's Nuage Networks](#) to power SciSports' cloud-based data analytics service for professional soccer organizations around the world.

Mergers and Acquisitions News

Merger and acquisition news heated up this month, pointing toward the reshaping and expansion of select markets. In Europe, [EdgeConneX](#) has acquired strategic data center assets at Landsberger Strasse 155, Central Munich, Germany—marking its continuing expansion with its ninth European data center. Necessitated by increasing customer demand and lack of well-connected data center space in the region, EdgeConneX's Munich edge data center will offer a carrier-neutral facility for cloud, content, network and IT providers to deploy their infrastructure in close proximity to their customers in the region, ensuring optimal performance, security, availability and economics for their services.

In the US, [Bluebird Network](#), a Midwest telecommunications company, will be acquired by Macquarie Infrastructure Partners, with the acquisition to be financed by Uniti. An immediate Midwest fiber expansion ensues: Uniti will acquire Bluebird's fiber network and then lease it back to Bluebird under a long-term lease. As part of the transaction, Bluebird will also acquire Uniti's Midwestern fiber business and receive a long-term lease over Uniti's Midwestern fiber network, which consists of approximately 2,500 miles of network predominantly in Illinois. [Transaction Network Services \(TNS\)](#) has acquired Chicago-based market data, connectivity and hosting specialist R2G Services, making TNS a unique full-service managed infrastructure provider that can meet the demanding needs of financial market participants through a single supplier relationship. [Guavus has acquired SQLstream](#), expanding to provide telecom and IIoT customers the power of AI and real-time analytics from the network edge to the network core. [AGC Networks Ltd.](#), a global solutions integrator, has significantly expanded its North American presence by completing the acquisition of Black Box Corporation, a leading digital solutions provider.

[Kerlink](#) announced it recently acquired a 51 percent stake in Wyres, a French company that specializes in indoor geolocation technology. The acquisition will drive growth in priority IoT markets, including airports, smart cities, asset tracking and manufacturing. Based on LoRa™ technology, Wyres' robust indoor geolocation system enables IT, R&D and engineering departments, as well as integrators and software vendors to master the challenging tasks of designing and deploying advanced geo-located, IoT industrial applications.

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