DAY 1

THE 2019

# INCOMPAS SHOW

NOVEMBER 4-6 | LOUISVILLE | KENTUCKY

# SHOW DAILY

BEKA Business Media

## INCOMPAS Continues Its Battle for Broadband

As we look into the near future and investigate the possibilities and importance of 5G, it's clear that during the next few years the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will have a focus on broadband deployment. In turn, INCOMPAS will be fighting for its members with an emphasis on increasing competition, reducing deployment barriers and fostering investment in faster next-generation networks, said INCOMPAS CEO Chip Pickering.

For starters, Pickering believes INCOMPAS members that are building high-speed broadband networks should be very excited about the FCC's announcement that it is establishing a Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF), which will commit $20.4 billion during the next decade to network development in rural America.

*Chip Pickering, INCOMPAS CEO*

"This represents a significant investment that can help address the persistent broadband availability problem that we see in this country," he said. "It also will enable the deployment of robust, sustainable, scalable and future-proof technologies that will be used to deliver both wired and wireless digital opportunity for millions of Americans and their communities."

With respect to the RDOF, the FCC proposes to conduct a reverse auction in two phases: first targeting unserved rural areas and then partially served areas.

"INCOMPAS supports a reverse auction and believes that allowing numerous entities to compete for funding will promote more efficient distribution of high-cost funding," said Pickering. "Furthermore, we have voiced our support for the FCC's proposal

***(Continued on page 6)***

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# INCOMPAS Teams with DISH on Video Offerings for Members

INCOMPAS is using its annual show to officially kick off a new partnership with DISH on a Retail Partner Program that will enable association members to offer DISH TV, value-added video and streaming services to their residential and business customers nationwide.

Through the Retail Partner Program, DISH will enable service providers to have a convenient and rewarding way to offer their customers popular video platforms, including Hopper 3, DISH's whole-home DVR featuring integrated apps; DISH Anywhere, which connects viewers to live and recorded TV from smartphones or tablets at no additional cost; Dish Outdoors, a live TV solutions for tailgating, camping, off-roading or RVing; streaming service Sling TV; and AirTV, an Android-based OTT streaming device optimized for Sling TV.

According to INCOMPAS CEO Chip Pickering, the agreement with DISH is another example of how the association is continually thinking of ways to help members grow their businesses, as well as seeking opportunities for members to work together. The process started earlier this year when DISH became a member of INCOMPAS.

"At the same time DISH joined the association, we were having discussions with our members about their desires to provide content and local programming options that could be sold with their other communications services," said Pickering.

"Through our relationship with DISH," he continued, "we were able to quickly bring this program to market and are excited to be rolling it out here in Louisville."

DISH representatives are on hand at the show to demonstrate the offerings and host sessions about the retail program. Demonstrations will take place at Kiosk 9 in the Expo Hall, and the DISH informational sessions will be in the Hikes Point Room on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"As we look to grow our retailer network, we seek companies that are innovative, competitive and put customers first," said Amir Ahmed, DISH senior vice president of sales. "INCOMPAS members share our passion for connecting consumers to the content they want and the technology they need, and they are a great fit for our program. We are proud to become the official video provider of INCOMPAS and look forward to welcoming members to our DISH retailer family."

While participants are required to be an INCOMPAS member to be eligible for this program, INCOMPAS is looking to make the DISH program available for any interested company.

"We have designed a new membership category that will make it very easy for a non-member to join and be a part of the program," explained Pickering. "In short, this program is not only a great thing for INCOMPAS and its members, more importantly it is yet another way to introduce greater competition in the market and bring even more value to all consumers." ❒

## DISH Retail Partner Informational Sessions

Want to learn more about the DISH Retail Partner Program? Check out one of the following information sessions scheduled today and tomorrow in the Hikes Point meeting room at the Omni.

**Tuesday, November 5**
11 a.m. – Noon
2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

**Wednesday, November 6**
10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

For more information onsite, contact Sonya Jamula, DISH sales manager at 951.233.6245 or sonya.jamula@dish.com.

# TransNexus Offers 'Three Free Months' to INCOMPAS Attendees

Today at The 2019 INCOMPAS Show, TransNexus announced a special offer for show attendees: free STIR/SHAKEN services for three months. This software enables voice service providers to authenticate and verify caller ID to help give their customers relief from unwanted robocalls.

"Our STIR/SHAKEN software is being used by more than two dozen telephone service providers in their production networks today," said Jim Dalton, CEO of TransNexus. "We're making it as easy as possible for every service provider to offer the benefits of STIR/SHAKEN to their customers."

Unwanted robocalls, which typically have spoofed caller ID, pose a serious threat to telephone companies and their customers. These calls aggravate subscribers and discourage them from answering calls. In turn, subscribers will seek providers that can offer service such as STIR/SHAKEN, said Dalton. With this special offer, TransNexus is enabling INCOMPAS attendees to join in providing the benefits of STIR/SHAKEN to their customers. ❒

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Download the INCOMPAS Show Mobile App for instant access to everything about the show.

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## HOW TO BOOK A MEETING

### MOBILE APP

**Recommended for mobile outreach**

Find this icon in the Mobile App. Look up attendees in a variety of ways; each column can be sorted for your convenience.

### WEBSITE APP

**Recommended for Outlook calendar invites or group emails**

We recommend using the desktop version of the mobile app for easier navigation between the online attendee list and Outlook.

***Please Note:*** For the attendee lists mentioned above, if a registrant chose to keep their information private, they will not appear on the list.

# FirstLight Enhances Offering with New SD-WAN Solution

FirstLight, a leading provider of fiber-optic data, internet, data center, cloud and voice services to enterprise and carrier customers throughout the Northeast, recently announced the addition of a software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) solution to its comprehensive portfolio of fiber-based services.

FirstLight's SD-WAN solution allows users to streamline the management of their wide area networks using a simplified, centralized dashboard, explained the company. Delivered as a service, SD-WAN addresses the widespread need for businesses to better understand and optimize the performance of their networks and enables the rapid deployment of branch, data center and multi-cloud networks.

"With the sophistication of wide area networks across today's organizations, we realize the need to simplify network management and increase efficiency," said Patrick Coughlin, chief development officer for FirstLight. "FirstLight's SD-WAN portfolio provides organizations with deep insight into their network environment, with features that ensure performance optimization, network resiliency and flexibility. We're thrilled to offer this managed service over our low latency, high-capacity fiber optic network, allowing businesses to manage their WAN with confidence and ease."

With a Cisco-based architecture, FirstLight's SD-WAN offers two platforms: Foundation and Advanced, with packages to suit the varying needs of organizations. Boasting built-in advanced security features and the ability to scale from one to tens of thousands of locations, FirstLight's SD-WAN portfolio includes network assurance, which enables access to FirstLight's team of engineering experts to assist with the design, configuration and implementation of SD-WAN solutions. ❐

*Visit FirstLight in the Crescent Hill meeting room at the Omni. FirstLight Fiber's Maura Mahoney, senior vice president of Marketing and Product Management, also will participate in the panel "The Winds of Change Continue: The Ever-Evolving Communications Industry Landscape" on Wednesday at 10:45 a.m. in the Olmsted Ballroom.*

# Get Social at INCOMPAS

Social and networking opportunities abound at The 2019 INCOMPAS Show, from Monday's opening night reception to daily meals and the ongoing meet-ups in the Deal Center. Here's a look at some other social scenes coming up today and tomorrow:

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

**Slugger Social**

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

*Expo Hall, Commonwealth Ballroom*

Take me out to The INCOMPAS Show! Enjoy some of your favorite ballpark treats and hit your business out of the park by mingling with the crowd.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

**Bourbon Trail Bash and Tasting Experience**

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

*Olmsted Ballroom*

Get a taste of Louisville and explore the Urban Bourbon Trail without even leaving the Omni. Wrap up The INCOMPAS Show in style. Enjoy a tasting hosted by one of Louisville's bourbon experts sampling bourbon from some of the city's top distilleries and the Omni's exclusive Private Woodford Reserve, while noshing on signature dishes.

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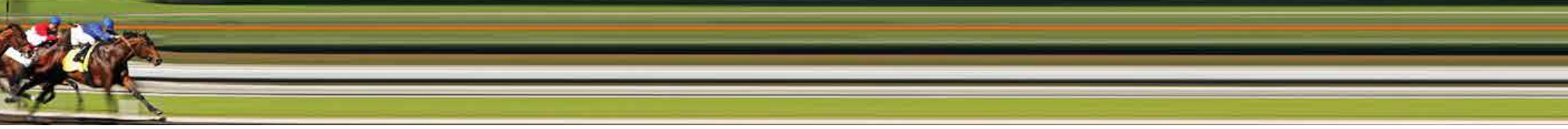

*(INCOMPAS, continued from page 1)*

to weight bids that can deliver up to 1 Gigabit speeds more favorably in the reverse auction."

INCOMPAS has met with the FCC about the reverse auction and has proposed the agency promote the availability of reasonably comparable services for consumers and businesses in rural, insular and high-cost areas, noting to regulators that broadband demand is growing, and rural communities need service comparable to urban and suburban areas. On Wednesday morning, Carol Mattey, principal of Mattey Consulting, will be discussing the opportunities that the RDOF presents providers, among other funding opportunities.

Likewise, INCOMPAS is working to end most exclusive monopoly arrangements in apartments, condos and commercial properties with multiple tenants that prevent competitors from offering service in these buildings. "We believe increased competition in these buildings will create a deployment boom and spur even more fiber and wireless network growth," said Pickering.

INCOMPAS members have indicated that they are regularly turned away from multiple tenant environments (MTEs) by management groups, which have exclusive agreements in place with large incumbent providers, said Pickering.

"Competition from multiple providers is the only true driver for building new networks with faster speeds and lower prices," he continued. "As such, it's long past time to ask regulators to unlock the front door of the condo to competition."

INCOMPAS has encouraged the FCC to take meaningful action on MTEs that would enable more fixed broadband deployment and competition for consumers that live and work in these buildings, and in July, the FCC initiated a rulemaking that will examine the exclusive commercial arrangements that have denied competitive providers access to MTEs, explained Pickering.

"By addressing these practices, the FCC can ensure that customers in MTEs – whether they be millennials on a starter budget, a retired American on a fixed budget or a small business on a start-up budget in a commercial property – are able to exercise their choice for broadband service and will help them reap the benefits of competition, including lower prices and higher speeds, while encouraging more broadband deployment overall," said Pickering.

The good news is that the current administration has made bridging the digital divide and increasing broadband access in underserved and rural areas a priority. However, as Pickering points out, it's difficult to provide digital opportunity without a genuine understanding of where the need for broadband service exists.

"Regulators and our industry have known for some time that the current broadband maps do not paint an accurate picture of where and how broadband service is being delivered," he said. "Rather than ask whether or not service providers are actually providing service to a specific census block, the FCC's current broadband data collection methodology asks providers whether they could provide service to these areas. This has, in turn, led to over reporting of availability and renewed questions about the Commission's management of universal service funds intended to address this issue."

Both on the Hill and at the FCC, there are concerted efforts underway to identify gaps in broadband coverage and to improve network-mapping capabilities. The Commission is already moving forward on a mapping reform effort known as the Digital Opportunity Data Collection. And Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) has introduced the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (DATA) Act in an attempt to improve broadband data maps, with the companion bill in the House introduced by Rep. Loebsack (D-Iowa) expected to be marked up soon.

Attendees of The 2019 INCOMPAS Show have an opportunity to learn more about this important issue, said Pickering. On Wednesday, there will be a panel discussion on the best way to map a better broadband future, featuring Preston Wise, Rural Broadband Advisor to FCC Chairman Pai, and Paula Boyd, senior director, Government and Regulatory Affairs of Microsoft. They will discuss these and other efforts to find the gap in unserved and underserved areas.

"We'll talk about how INCOMPAS has been working with its members to propose changes to the FCC's Digital Opportunity Data Collection, and then we'll hear from panelists on how to serve and fund those areas that lack next-generation networks," said Pickering. ❒

# Mammoth Networks to Operate Colorado's Project THOR Broadband Access Project

The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG) has selected Mammoth Networks as the network operator of its regional fiber network known as Project THOR. Funded in part by grants from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and local government contributions, the network will connect approximately 400 miles of existing public and private fiber and has the potential to provide more than 230,000 residents access to greater bandwidth at more competitive pricing, said NWCCOG.

Serving the region for 38 years, NWCCOG represents 26 jurisdictions in a five-county region of northwest Colorado covering 7,000 square miles. It provides the critical mass needed to take advantage of state and local programs. Through Project THOR, NWCCOG is delivering abundant, reliable and lower cost broadband access to local internet service providers, participating state and local governments, schools, libraries, and healthcare and public safety facilities through 12 meet-me centers or landing points dispersed throughout the region.

"Whenever there's a fiber cut, it impacts not only consumers in our towns, but cellphone carriers, public safety centers, schools, hospitals and other critical services," said Nate Walowitz, regional broadband director for NWCCOG. "By leveraging the fantastic technical and engineering support, we can offer carrier-grade services, have a real-time view into our network, as well as the ability to reroute traffic in the event of an outage."

The stated goals of Project THOR are to lower the costs of broadband access and improve the reliability of the network, which is currently prone to mass failures when a fiber line is cut. Roughly 85 percent of the needed fiber for the project is already in place, taking advantage of existing fiber networks, such as those built by the Colorado Department of Transportation.

"Mammoth is working closely with project partners to create a robust and flexible network architecture that brings open, secure and redundant broadband at a lower cost to NWCCOG members," said Evan Biagi, vice president of business development at Mammoth Networks "A lack of reliable broadband limits economic development. We hope that this brings new applications and services to Colorado." ❒

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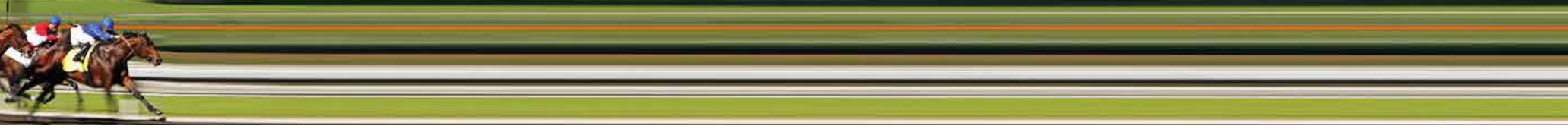

# Tuesday's Schedule At-a-Glance

| | |
|---|---|
| **7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.** | **Registration Open**<br>Sponsored by Google<br>*Commonwealth Ballroom Lobby* |
| **7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.** | **Deal Center, Expo Hall and Meeting Spaces Open**<br>*Commonwealth Ballroom* |
| **7:30 a.m. – 8:55 a.m.** | **C-Suite Networking Breakfast Program: Achieving Successful Network Technology Migration**<br>*(Open to senior level executives only)*<br>Sponsored by Axcent Networks<br>*Olmsted Ballroom* |
| **8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.** | **Breakfast & Coffee Bar in the Expo Hall**<br>Breakfast sponsored by Bandwidth<br>*Expo Hall, Commonwealth Ballroom* |
| **9:00 a.m. – 9:10 a.m.** | **Opening Remarks: Chip Pickering, CEO, INCOMPAS**<br>*Olmsted Ballroom* |
| **9:10 a.m. – 9:40 a.m.** | **Keynote Address: Charlie Ergen, Co-founder and Chairman of the Board, DISH and EchoStar**<br>*Olmsted Ballroom* |
| **9:40 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.** | **The Race to 5G**<br>*Olmsted Ballroom* |
| **10:20 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.** | **Industry Insights on 5G**<br>• **Driving Innovation Using 5G Millimeter Wave Technology:** Craig Sparks, Chief Innovation Officer, C Spire<br>• **Reshaping the Broadband Industry and Consumer Experience with Fixed Wireless Technology:** Chaitanya "Chet" Kanojia, Co-Founder & CEO, Starry Inc.<br>*Olmsted Ballroom* |
| **10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.** | **Dedicated Exhibitor Hours**<br>*Expo Hall, Commonwealth Ballroom* |
| **11:00 a.m. – Noon** | **DISH Retail Partner Program Informational Session**<br>*Hikes Point Meeting Room* |
| **11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** | **Lunch in the Expo Hall**<br>*Expo Hall, Commonwealth Ballroom* |
| **11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** | **INCOMPAS Board Elections**<br>*Wheat Room* |
| **1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.** | **Buyers Forum Open Meeting Time in the Expo Hall**<br>*Expo Hall, Commonwealth Ballroom* |
| **2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.** | **DISH Retail Partner Program Informational Session**<br>*Hikes Point Meeting Room* |
| **4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.** | **Dedicated Exhibitor Hours: Slugger Social Networking Reception**<br>*Expo Hall, Commonwealth Ballroom* |
| **5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.** | **PAC Reception** *(Invitation Only)* |
| **6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.** | **Executive Networking Reception** *(Invitation Only)*<br>*Pin + Proof Speakeasy (at the Omni)* |
| **7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.** | **Executive Dinner** *(Invitation Only)*<br>Sponsored by Bank Street Group LLC<br>*610 Magnolia* |

# netElastic Wins Highest Honor in Intel Network Builders Program

netElastic Systems has been recognized for its Virtual BNG as a "Leaders Board" partner in the Intel Network Builders Winners' Circle Program for 2019. netElastic's vBNG, optimized on Intel Xeon processors and Intel Ethernet Controller X710 10/40 Gbps network interface cards, is designed to deliver unmatched performance and scalability with a highly optimized data plane and patented packet processing techniques.

The Intel Network Builders Winner's Circle program is designed to recognize industry leaders working with Intel to develop the next generation of network solutions. Intel considered more than 320 Intel Network Builder Partners for recognition across three award levels: Leader's Board, Solution Partner and Partner. netElastic achieved Winner's Circle status, the highest recognition level.

"netElastic has been focused from the beginning on helping service providers transform their networks with innovative, next-generation virtual Broadband Network Gateway (vBNG) solutions," said Weixiao Liu, CEO of netElastic. "And our close collaboration with Intel has been critical in developing open and flexible solutions on the cutting edge of technical innovation to meet service provider's transformational needs." ❐

*Visit netElastic Systems at Table Top 3 in the Expo Hall.*

# Executives Offer Insights on 5G

Today's keynote address by Charlie Ergen, co-founder and chairman of DISH and EchoStar, will kick off a morning of sessions focusing on 5G in the Olmsted Ballroom. Following opening remarks by INCOMPAS Chairman Kurt Van Wagenen, president and CEO of FirstLight Fiber, and INCOMPAS CEO Chip Pickering, Ergen will share his insights on what's required to build out a 5G network, as well as the critical role of fiber network partners in enabling 5G deployment.

Then at 9:40 a.m., *Wall Street Journal* reporter Drew FitzGerald will moderate a panel discussing "The Race to 5G," which focuses on how the next-generation of wireless technology is nothing short of a broadband game changer. The panel of experts, including James H. Henry, senior managing director at Bank Street Group; ZenFi Networks CEO Ray LaChance; Christopher Levendos, vice president of network engineering and operations at Crown Castle; and Milo Medin, vice president of access service for Google, will discuss how wireless technologies, and in particular 5G, is driving broadband fiber deployment.

Directly following at 10:20 a.m., Craig Sparks, chief innovation officer at C Spire, will share his insights and the lessons learned from C Spire's Rural Broadband Consortium. Sparks will speak to 5G millimeter wave's counterintuitive and coming role in bringing gigabit broadband hybrid fiber/wireless connectivity to rural communities.

Craig Sparks
C Spire

Sparks will be followed by Chaitanya "Chet" Kanojia, CEO and co-founder of Starry, and INCOMPAS CEO Chip Pickering for a thoughtful conversation on how new, high-capacity fixed wireless access networks, such as Starry, are reshaping the broadband industry nationwide. Kanojia will discuss Starry's nationwide expansion and how Starry's unique wireless technology is enabling low-cost, high-quality broadband access in communities across the United States. He'll also touch upon Starry's customer-first philosophy and the company's commitment to digital equity in the communities it serves. ❐

Chet Kanojia
Starry

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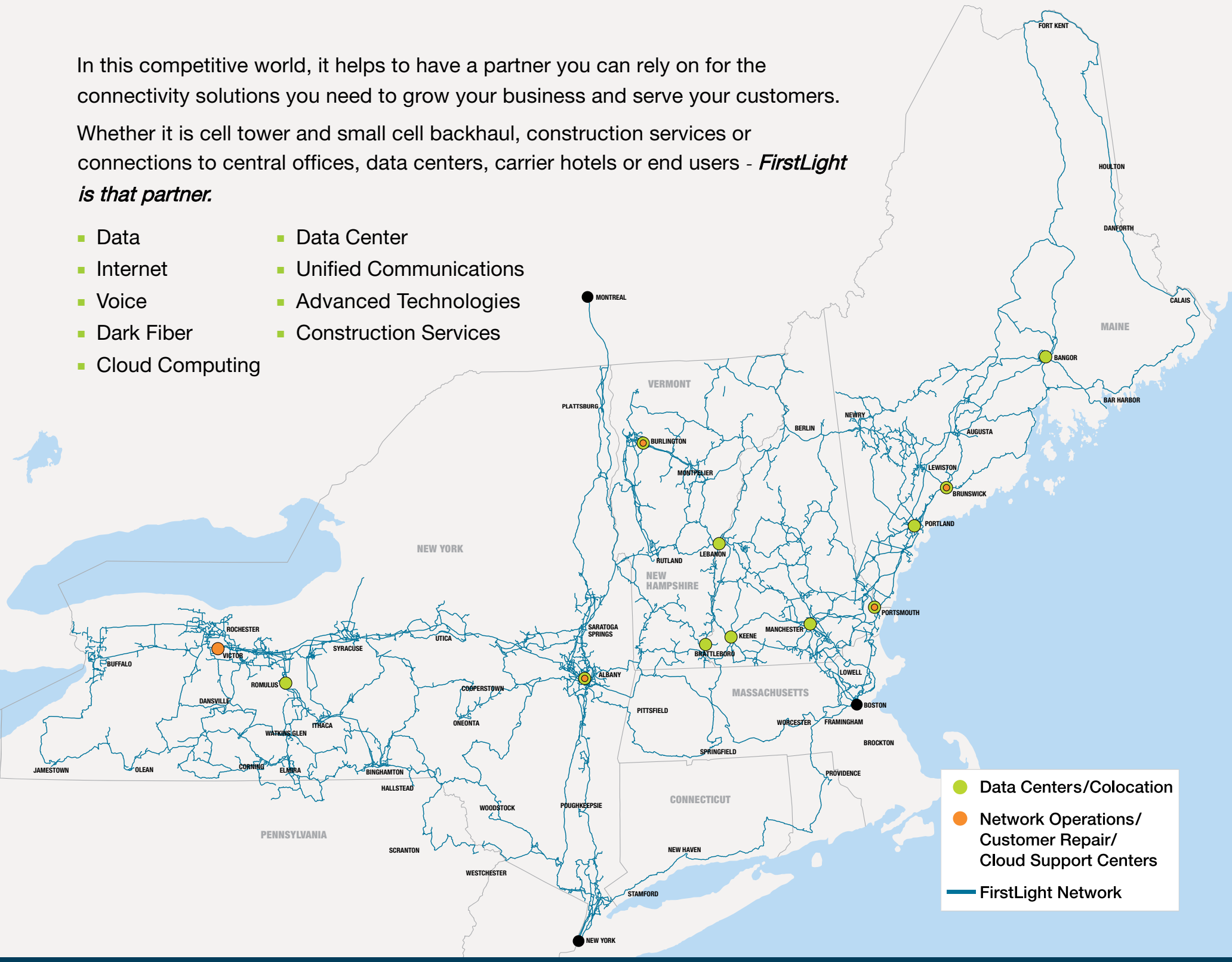


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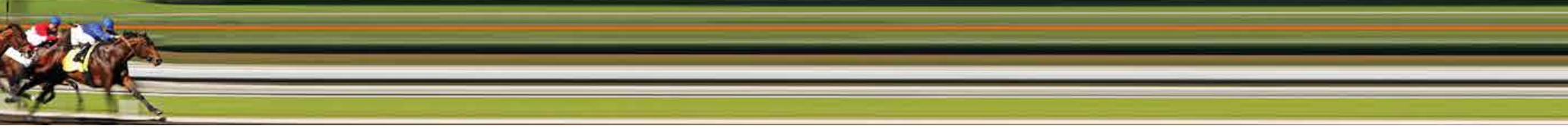


# INDATEL Continues to Shine Light on Unique Fiber Networks in Rural America

INDATEL Services continues to transform how providers connect to client locations in rural America. An acronym for Independent Alliance of Telephone Companies, INDATEL was formed 14 years ago as a non-profit with a membership comprised of rural ILECs and statewide and independent regional networks that are the backbone of small-town America. When INDATEL initially formed, there were no INDATEL employees. It was simply an all-volunteer organization run by members sharing best practices and collectively marketing their unique fiber networks. In 2012, INDATEL became a member-owned, for-profit company with Max Huffman as CEO of the newly formed company.

During the early years, the focus was getting contracts in place for members to provide cell-site backhaul to large carriers, as well as aggregating member services, primarily peering and IP transit. The members invested in equipment and space at 350 Cermak in Chicago, and it effectively became the newly formed company's first point of presence (PoP). The model worked well, and INDATEL expanded into additional national PoPs.

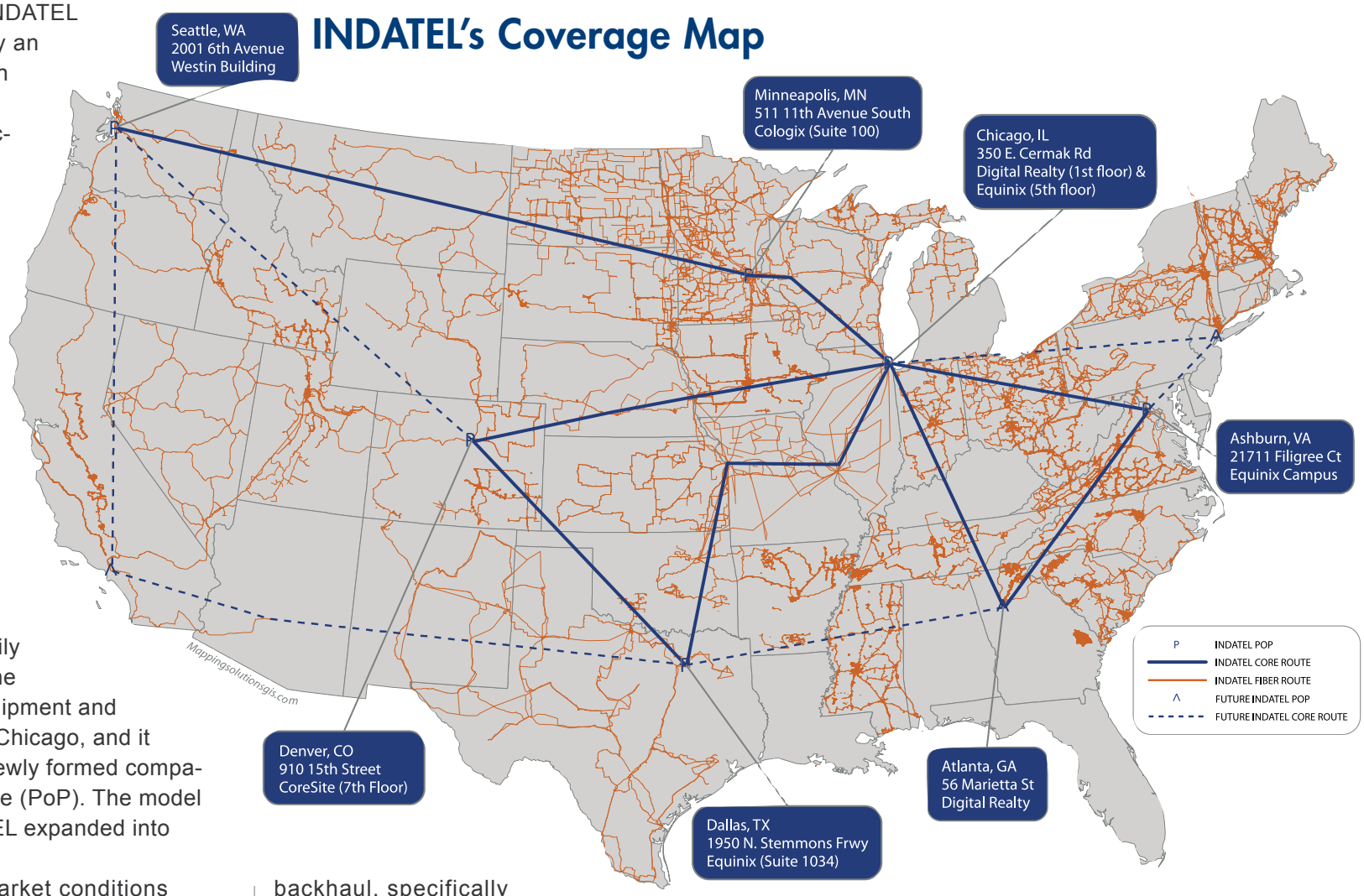
By 2016, however, market conditions started to change. The consumption of bandwidth had dramatically increased during those four years. Many of the original members simply outgrew the aggregation model for transit. Furthermore, peering and caching services were being offered at the edge and did not require going to large PoPs in "NFL cities" to obtain. After Huffman retired in 2016, Mel Wagner Jr. was promoted from vice president of operations into the role of CEO. His rich experience provided unique perspective on the operational pieces involved with running INDATEL. As Eric Davis, director of engineering and operations at INDATEL, explained, "Mel was close to the members and understood INDATEL; where INDATEL had been and where we needed to grow."

With the market changes, INDATEL continued to evolve and create value for its members. In 2015, INDATEL began focusing on wholesale services outside of cell site backhaul, specifically helping carriers with large regional and national opportunities that needed help reaching critical sites in rural America. In March of 2016, INDATEL brought in Justin Forte, who had experience working for start-ups and an entrepreneurial spirit, to help develop a sales and marketing strategy around these efforts. Forte had daunting tasks: creating a new marketing message, developing a sales strategy, refining processes and getting members' and owners' buy-in to the changes to get the wholesale operation off the ground.

"The INDATEL family is interfacing with more than 700 rural and independent providers through its member/owners," said Forte. "Any changes made have ripple effects and require a large amount of teamwork with our members.

"Thankfully, our members are wonderful," he continued. "They understand the importance of what we are building and how we are helping shine a light on these incredible fiber assets that have gone overlooked for far too long on many national opportunities."

Forte's first sales hire was Diana Dreyer. "Diana had extensive experience in the industry and specifically wholesale, having worked for a member/owner in the past and other regional operators," said Forte. "Diana helped create the foundation that we are building on today. She continues to help us grow by managing several large clients



and leveraging market data to help further develop and refine our wholesale rate card."

"Our customers asked for the 'easy button,' and we quickly complied with a robust building list and a simplified rate card," said Dreyer. "When I started with INDATEL in the early stages of our new wholesale model, I was committed to prove the INDATEL value to both members and customers. Patience has paid off, as INDATEL has evolved into a well-known company with requests coming daily on how to become a member of our family. Our member and partner family has grown extensively, and I am proud to have played a major role in this growth."

In January 2019, Forte brought Riley Mueller to INDATEL. "Riley was another great fit for our team," said Forte. "Riley has extensive enterprise sales experience and expertise in cloud services. Riley brought tremendous attitude, willingness to learn, and helped change the way wholesale is approached."

"It is all about simplicity for our clients," Mueller added. "Our rate card includes roughly 700 rural independent providers, and we make it simple. The speed of business demands an Amazon experience: quick, fair and efficient, but with a team that truly cares behind every service we provide."

Davis, for his part, has been with INDATEL since the beginning. He remembers when service delivery was simply a spreadsheet and a shared drive and has overseen many functions move to Salesforce.com that were painfully manual in the past.

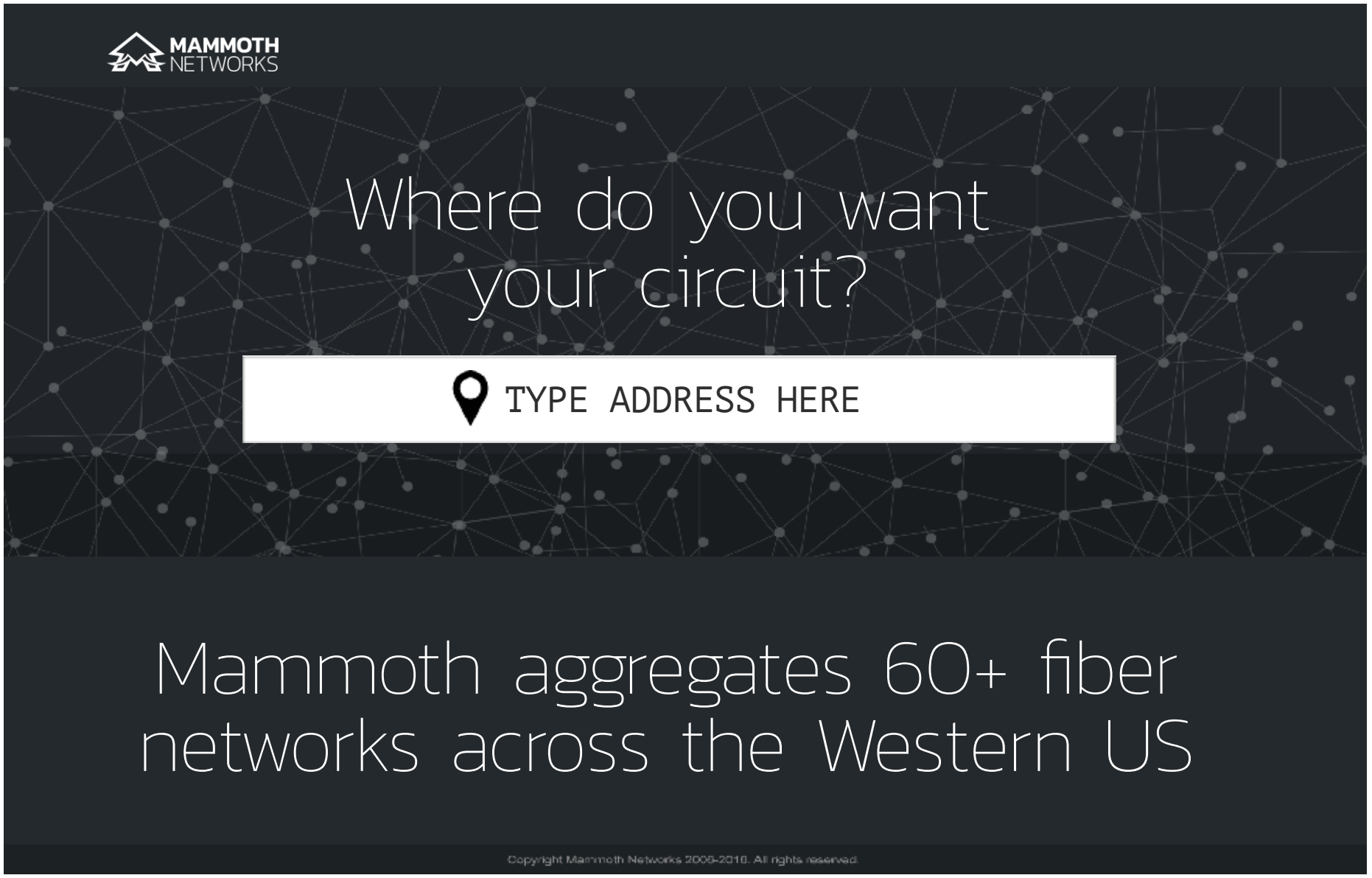
"I now have a service delivery and engineering team that I oversee," said Davis. "Without the automation, we would have never been able to scale so quickly. We will continue to grow and invest in software that meets not only today's needs but the more demanding future needs."

Jake Nielson, service delivery administrator, musingly remarked, "INDATEL – if you've heard of the town, we probably aren't there." That remark recently was turned into a tagline for INDATEL's T-shirts that are shared with customers. As Forte said, "That simple tagline provides a clear differentiator on our value and how we can help carriers and MSPs serve their clients. The only way we serve is in the wholesale space – focused on helping our clients grow."

INDATEL has grown exponentially by providing simple flat-rate pricing to hundreds of thousands of locations in rural, underserved and suburban areas.

"INDATEL continues to increase its sophistication without sacrificing its personality, simplicity or small-business-minded approach," said Wagner. Through its member owners, INDATEL has reach and visibility into more than 700 rural independent providers' networks, more than 400,000 miles of fiber, seven national aggregation POPs, more than 1,100 regional PoPs and more than 5,000 serviceable communities. It is the first call for many carriers and managed service providers when faced with opportunities outside of the "NFL cities." ❐

*Visit INDATEL in the Cherokee meeting room or Booth 4 in the Expo Hall.*



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# Connected2Fiber Secures $1.5 Million in Financing to Expand into New Markets

Connected2Fiber, a provider of solutions that automate the identification and communication of a network operator's total addressable market, has entered into a growth capital term loan agreement with Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) that provides up to $1.5 million of new capital to Connected2Fiber. The funding reportedly will be used for continued company growth, enhanced product offerings and expansion into new markets.

This news comes just three months after Connected2Fiber announced a $5.3 million round of funding from Ascent Venture Partners, Osage Venture Partners, Nauta Capital and NXT Ventures earmarked for further investment in product development and go-to-market activities.

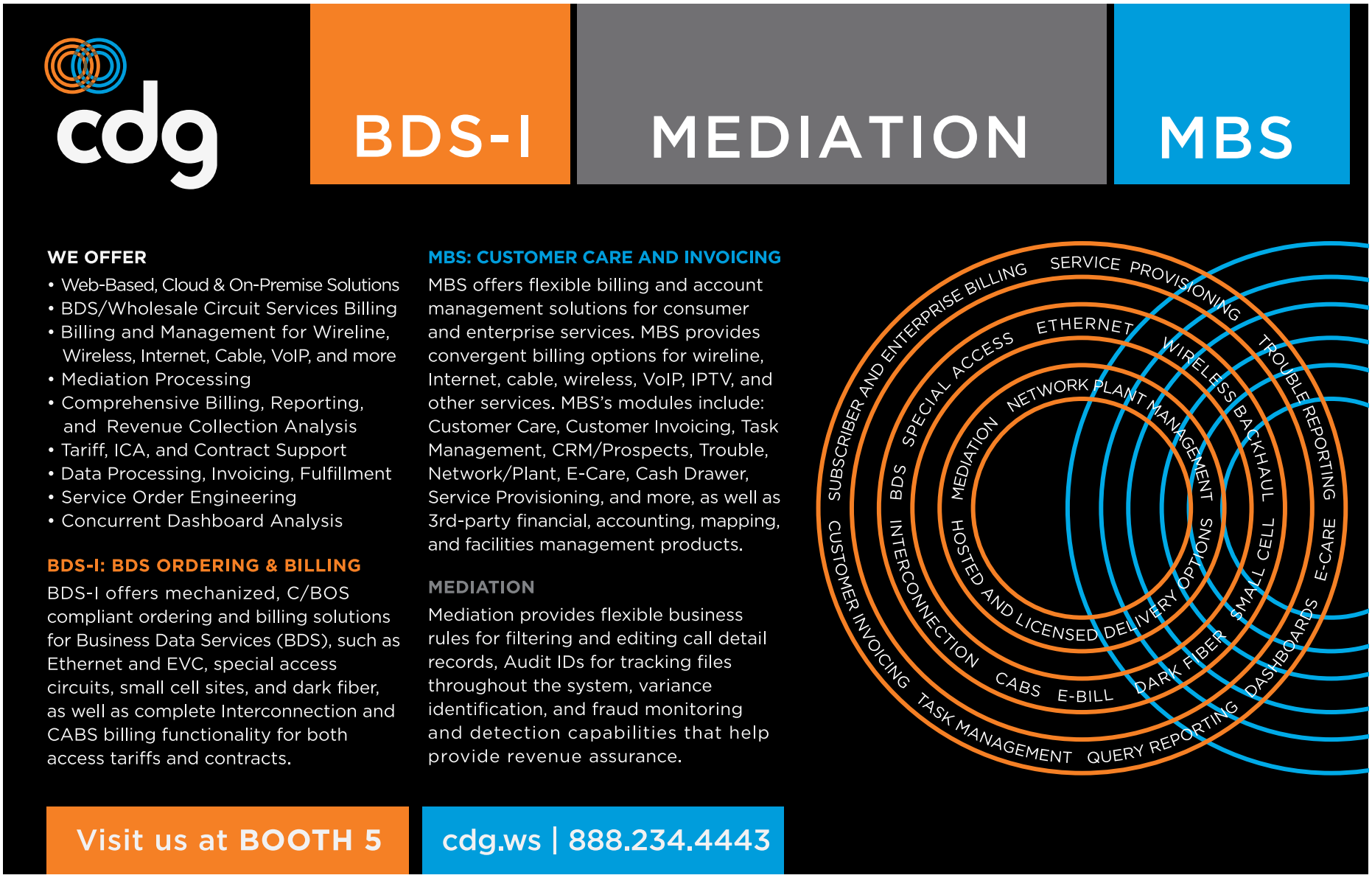
"Connected2Fiber is more than doubling our revenue year over year, as network operators and managed service providers realize our platform's ability to drive revenue and automate complex processes," said Yossi Hazan, chief financial officer of Connected2Fiber. "This loan will allow us to keep pace with the incredible demand for location intelligence, further support the economy through additional hiring and partnerships and continue investing in our growing product suite. We're proud to partner with Silicon Valley Bank, which makes our financing easier through its comprehensive, connected platform and stellar customer support."

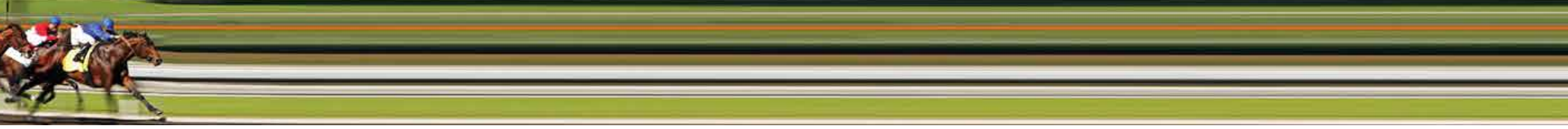
Connected2Fiber's core platform, The Connected World, provides location-based insight and applications to network sellers and buyers. The SaaS platform automates many sales and marketing processes for network operators and managed service providers, from plan to price, with trusted location insight serving as the foundation. With more than 2,100 active users, The Connected World contains more than 500 million unique locations actively tracked worldwide, providing unparalleled visibility and insight into global networks, said the company.

"We're pleased to announce this new banking relationship with Connected2Fiber, a fast-growing company that's successfully filling a gap in the connectivity market," said Russell Follansbee, director of Silicon Valley Bank's enterprise software team in New England. "Since Silicon Valley Bank is the bank of the innovation economy, Connected2Fiber is a natural fit for us. The Connected2Fiber team has created a forward-thinking, intelligent platform that's helping to advance the connectivity space."

In related news, Ben Edmond, founder and CEO of Connected2Fiber, will join the three-part "Mapping a Better Broadband Future" session that starts at 9:10 a.m. on Wednesday in the Olmsted Ballroom. In part two of the panel discussion, "Serving the Gap," Edmond and fellow panelists will discuss how the industry is leveraging wireline and wireless broadband to connect underserved and rural communities. ❐

*Visit Connected2Fiber at Networking Table 5 in the Expo Hall.*



# The Evolving State of the Toll-Free Industry

*Submitted by Somos*

As the digital economy continues to transform and diversify, one thing remains true: authentic, clear communication is at the heart of a successful business strategy. At Somos Inc., a leading registry management and data solutions company, we work tirelessly to develop new features and services that promote and enhance toll-free numbers as a powerful communications tool for businesses.

Today, toll-free numbers do more than facilitate communications; they are multi-functional sales and marketing tools built to do everything from improving customer satisfaction to increasing revenue. Toll-free numbers continue to be a premier platform for customers and businesses to connect, innovate and grow with confidence. The data speaks for itself: as of May 2019, more than 42 million toll-free numbers have been reserved in Somos' registry for use throughout the United States, Canada and parts of the Caribbean. With a 40 percent increase in toll-free number reservations in the past decade alone, companies and organizations of all sizes and from all industries continue to recognize the wide range of benefits that having a toll-free number provides.

At Somos, we continue to innovate around toll-free to empower businesses. One of our latest developments is Toll-Free Number (TFN) Identity. To strengthen trust between consumers, brands and voice communications, Somos has developed the first centralized repository for toll-free caller ID information. TFN Identity allows Responsible Organizations (Resp Orgs) to store caller name information (also known as CNAM) in a single, authoritative database that can be accessed to display a brand's name when a consumer receives a call from a participating company's toll-free number. Now available to beta test, TFN Identity is a powerful solution positioned to build trust and drive customer engagement.

Another significant evolution in toll-free will take place December 17, 2019, when the first-ever auction of toll-free numbers occurs. The auction experiment is the result of an effort by the Federal Communications Commission to assign future toll-free numbers equitably and efficiently. The 833 Toll Free Number Auction will provide a bold, innovative way for the FCC to use a market-based approach to modernize a legacy system. Learn more about the auction at auction.somos.com.

The ability to exchange text messages with a toll-free number continues to be one of the most significant developments in toll-fee communications. Unlike short codes, text-enabled toll-free numbers allow companies to turn a monologue into a dialogue – a two-way conversation that can help better serve customer needs. With so many capabilities available – such as providing payment notifications, sending appointment reminders and making a direct connection with support agents – business texting clearly benefits both consumers and companies. In fact, up to 85 percent of consumers say they prefer to text a customer support agent over calling or emailing. This is likely due to the fact that a total 75 percent of consumers say they think texting can help prevent miscommunications.

From texting to TFN Identity to the first-ever toll-free auction, 2019 has no doubt proven to be a very busy year for the industry – and 2020 is poised to see a similar rush of innovation and change. Join us on our 2020 roadmap as we continue to develop future-proof products and solutions that empower business communications and ensure the lasting vitality of toll-free. ❒

# GTT Upgrades Key European Network Routes

GTT Communications Inc., a leading global cloud networking provider to multinational clients, has completed the upgrade of its fiber network across several of its European routes. The network upgrades took place to enhance the capacity and performance capability of GTT's tier 1 global IP network footprint for its enterprise and carrier clients.

GTT has upgraded routes that connect network points of presence in London, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Paris, including the subsea link between the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, along with an additional route in southern Europe that connects Madrid and Marseille. GTT also has deployed more fiber capacity on its metro networks in Paris and Marseille, with the upgrade to the Marseille metro network extending to multiple subsea cable landing stations. Additionally, GTT has expanded its European network footprint by deploying a new point of presence in Belgrade, Serbia

GTT utilized Infinera's FlexILS line system and high-performance ICE4 optical engine with instant bandwidth to complete the upgrades. These technologies work together to double network capacity, enhance the network's software-defined capabilities and provide clients with faster service delivery, explained the company.

"Europe is a major market for GTT, and we are continuing to invest in our advanced network infrastructure to support clients' ever-increasing bandwidth requirements," stated Rick Calder, GTT president and CEO. "This is a further demonstration of GTT's commitment to deliver on its purpose to connect people across organizations, around the world and to every application in the cloud." ❒

*Visit GTT Communications in the Olmsted 5 meeting room.*

# Zayo Signs Its Largest Ever Capacity Wavelength Deal

Zayo Group Holdings has signed a deal for the largest amount of capacity sold on any route in a single deal in the company's history. The deal will provide the customer with approximately 5 terabits (Tb) of capacity to connect key data centers.

"Our customers are no longer talking gigabits – they're talking terabits on multiple diverse routes," said Julia Robin, senior vice president of transport at Zayo. "Zayo's owned infrastructure, scalable capacity on unique routes and ability to turn up services quickly positions us to be the provider of choice for high-capacity infrastructure."

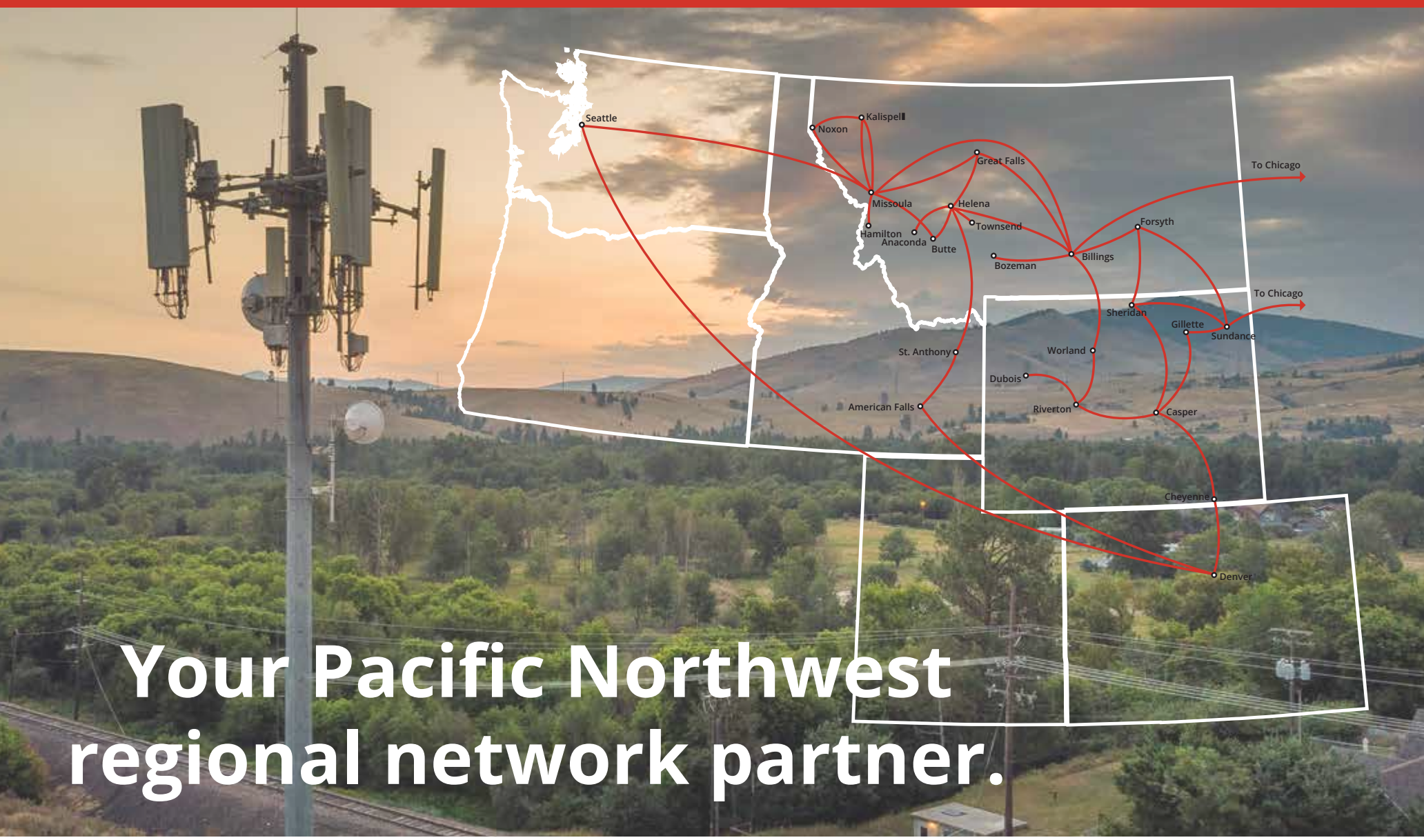
With the world's data consumption expected to grow to 175 zettabytes by 2025, according to IDC, demand for infrastructure capacity continues to accelerate. This trend is especially apparent among webscale, content and cloud providers that need diverse, high-capacity, highly reliable connectivity between their data centers. As a result, more are turning to dedicated, high-capacity wavelength solutions, said Zayo executives.

In addition to Zayo's long-haul network, the company leverages its dense fiber assets in almost all North American and Western European metro markets to deliver a premier metro wavelength offering. Increasingly, enterprises across multiple sectors, including finance, retail, pharma and others, are leveraging this network for dedicated connectivity as they seek ways to have more control over their growing bandwidth needs.

Zayo continues to invest in the network, adding new routes and optronics to eliminate local stops, reduce the distance between essential markets and minimize regeneration points. Options include express, ultra-low and low-latency routes and private dedicated networks. ❒

*Visit Zayo Group at Networking Table 4 in the Expo Hall.*

# Blackfoot Carrier Services

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