

# Regional Wireless Providers:

Closing the Digital Divide  
& Growing Local Economies  
Across the U.S.



rural.  
regional.  
nationwide.



► **In the U.S., there are over 100 mobile providers, resellers, and MVNOs nationwide, and customers can pick from hundreds of handsets and nearly 700 different smartphone plans.** Regional providers are a key piece of this marketplace, providing service to areas that may otherwise remain unserved or underserved. Their contributions and service offerings are vital for local communities and the larger U.S. economy.

As both rivals and collaborators with larger providers, regional operators face a delicate balancing act. Vying to offer the best coverage and service for local customers, they also build strong partnerships with larger providers to give their subscribers the nationwide coverage customers expect when they leave their network footprint. Importantly, they also provide coverage for nationwide operators when their customers enter rural markets.

Regional providers are key to achieving the wireless industry's efforts to fully close the digital divide, offering mobile services, and in some cases, fixed services, in some of the most remote areas of the country—such as Alaska, Eastern Kentucky, Wyoming, and on tribal lands, including those of the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, and White Mountain Apache nations, and more. In many instances, wireless connectivity is the only option available, or the lowest cost, or the most efficient means to reach these customers.

This much-needed connectivity allows kids to get their homework done via mobile Wi-Fi hotspot or smartphone. It connects people in an emergency and in cases where they may not see another person for miles. Strong wireless service is also essential to supporting and attracting the local businesses, educational institutions, hospital systems, and industries that are the bedrocks of rural communities.

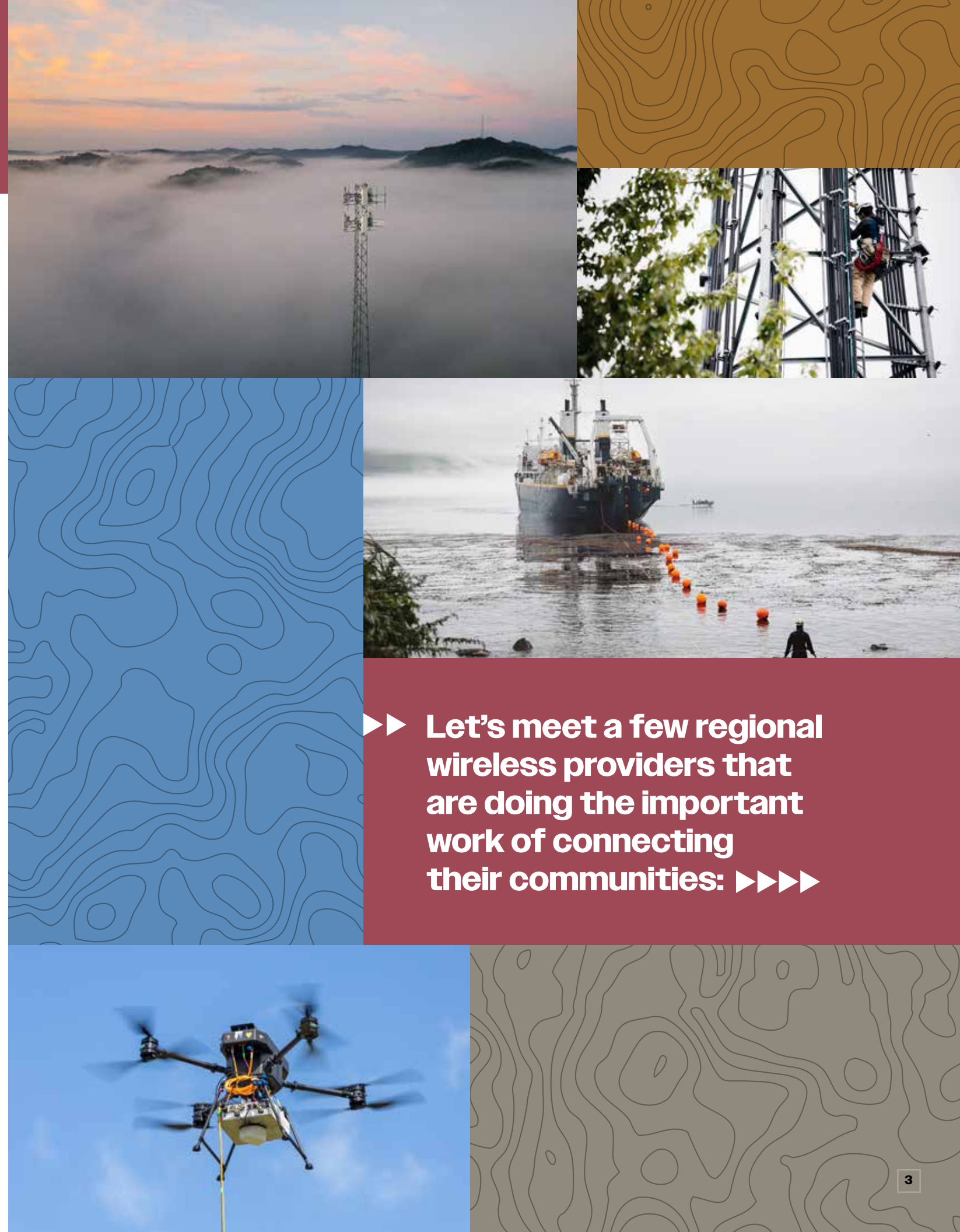
But offering competitive wireless service to sparse populations scattered across challenging terrains and sometimes extreme climates is very difficult. To start, government regulations, while important, can be costly and impair providers' networks if they do not receive the right support and resources. And with a limited customer base, regional providers face

funding obstacles when it comes to making major investment decisions, such as how and when to make the transition to 5G and where to densify networks or expand coverage. To offset the costs of reaching hard-to-serve areas, regional providers have long relied on subsidies from the federal government, including the Universal Service Fund. The FCC's 5G Fund can play a key role in helping regional providers continue to build out next-generation networks to ensure all Americans benefit from 5G services.

Another critical policy area for regional providers is spectrum, and they need meaningful opportunities to acquire it at auctions. To maximize the effectiveness of each cell site, particularly in rural and remote locations, full-power operations is essential to the viability of a spectrum band for regional carrier use.

Competitive Carriers Association (CCA) and CTIA – The Wireless Association are proud to represent the regional wireless providers featured in this report—and so many others that share similar company visions and challenges. Regional providers work every day to not only provide connectivity services, but to help lead their communities. They sponsor Little League teams, gift scholarships to students, and donate backpacks and school supplies to kids in need. Their employees live, play, and work in the communities they serve. That's part of why they take a special sense of pride in providing incredible customer service—because their customers are their neighbors, friends, and families.

►► **Let's meet a few regional wireless providers that are doing the important work of connecting their communities: ►►►►**







Founded in 1989, Appalachian Wireless serves 28 counties in the remote, mountainous region of eastern Kentucky and extreme western counties of Virginia, where having reliable wireless service is not merely a convenience but a lifeline. Appalachian's network is pivotal in supporting local schools, connecting hospitals, and building businesses. And the pathway to future innovations will drive new industries forward, promoting economic growth following the decline of coal mining in the area.

As Dan Mosley, Harlan County Judge & Executive says, "The improvement in connectivity in Harlan County and the southeastern Kentucky mountains has been led by Appalachian Wireless, a champion for wireless communication in this region. Over the last 15 years, the investments made by this regional provider have allowed for economic growth, public safety to improve, and tourism to grow. I'm thankful for Appalachian Wireless, and all this company has done to improve the quality of life in my home region through connectivity."

With over 300 towers, Appalachian offers its customers high-quality 4G coverage. As part of its dedication to eastern Kentucky's progress and prosperity, the company turned its attention to 5G and how to deploy it strategically to bring the most potential to a dispersed population base and the new industries the region seeks to attract.

**"Rural America is more connected than ever before, thanks to the work of regional leaders, like Appalachian Wireless, that are making bold investments to ensure people in the farthest reaches of our country have access to wireless service."**

**– Rep Hal Rogers  
(KY-05)**

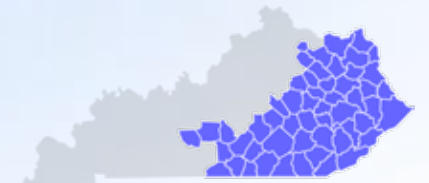
Appalachian started with deploying a standalone core for 5G, which means the network will be built new, from the ground up, to support 5G's faster speeds, greater capacity, and real-time information-sharing capabilities.

Appalachian is betting that a standalone 5G core—and hundreds of 5G cell sites—will help better serve existing enterprise customers, like the University of Pikeville, with customized 5G features. It will also help attract new industries and grow others, including in the healthcare and energy sectors, to strengthen eastern Kentucky's economic backbone so it can grow and flourish.

To realize this future, additional spectrum, the lifeblood of wireless networks, will be needed. "What you thought was fine two years ago from a spectrum perspective isn't enough anymore," Mike Johnson, CEO of Appalachian Wireless, explains. He elaborates that mid-band spectrum is essential for a small provider with terrain challenges. It provides a nice blend of capacity and coverage, making it an efficient workhorse for a network that will need to support more and more demand and devices in the coming years.

The company actively participated in every FCC auction since its inception. Over the last few years, it invested nearly \$30 million in spectrum and an initial \$30 million on the first phase of necessary network equipment to begin building its 5G network. With the FCC's auction authority lapsed and the U.S. needing a plan for what's next regarding licensed spectrum, planning for the future is proving to be a challenge.

Johnson says more spectrum can help the local provider expand its 5G capabilities and provide consumers and industries with the capacity to support more innovative products and services. More spectrum will ensure the region remains connected to the future and can attract more jobs and opportunities for the people of Appalachia.



## SOAR

Appalachian Wireless is a committed partner and sponsor of Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR), a nonprofit dedicated to developing a prosperous path forward for the 54 Appalachian Regional Commission counties of eastern Kentucky after the economic fallout of the coal industry.

**"SOAR believes its job isn't done until every household in Appalachian Kentucky has access to high-speed internet and reliable cellphone coverage. With Appalachian Wireless and its parent companies working by our side, it's not 'if' this job gets done; it's 'when.'"**

**– Colby Hall  
Executive Director  
SOAR**





For 32 years, Carolina West Wireless, in partnership with owners and telephone cooperatives Skyline Telephone and Surry Telephone, has brought wireless service to 11 counties in mountainous and mostly rural northwestern North Carolina, including towns like Mount Airy, Boone, and Hickory. As part of a cooperative, its mission is to deliver the best products and services possible for customers. Carolina West works toward this goal every day, making sure its rural customers have access to the same quality of wireless as neighbors in nearby cities like Charlotte, Winston-Salem, and Asheville.

During the height of the pandemic, that became a bigger and bigger task, as wireless usage swelled with people working and going to school from home. Remote work has remained a fixture of many workplaces, and the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains are a big draw for employees with more flexibility in their schedules.

Today, Carolina West’s network demand is growing 30-50% a year, an increase it is taking in stride thanks to smart network planning and management. That demand is not limited to

mobile—fixed wireless access is an exciting offering that customers are taking advantage of as a home broadband connection.

“The first place that we see the biggest benefit with fixed wireless is those unserved or underserved areas and pockets in our service area,” said Slayton Stewart, CEO of Carolina West Wireless. “We’re seeing a lot of customers that are really excited when we bring them faster speeds. A lot of times these folks have a satellite connection for internet, but it’s high latency. Providing a high-speed internet connection with low latency is something that these customers are craving.”

Carolina West sees the growth of demand as a welcome challenge—it knows strong service is key for the growth of the local economy. 5G is a big piece of its plan to help the region stay competitive, customers stay connected to the outside world, and young people to stay and invest in the future of their community.

As Stewart says, “5G is going to change people’s lives. 5G will facilitate advances that will allow businesses to be more effective and more efficient. It will allow for newer business models and creative business plans. 5G is the gateway for the future.”

With this mindset, Carolina West has moved quickly to bring 5G to its five largest cities 18 months faster than it was able to roll out 4G. But it hasn’t been easy. The region has a spread-out, small population and mountainous terrain, which makes the costs of placing more cell sites and installing new equipment hard to reconcile, especially if working with limited, low-power spectrum, like that found in the Citizen’s Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) band.

Stewart recently explained, “We see five to seven times farther coverage with full-power C-Band compared to the lower power CBRS.” Operators like Carolina West sometimes have customer homes that are visible from already-built towers that low-power CBRS spectrum can’t reach.

Government programs like the Mobility Fund and the 5G Fund were designed to help smaller providers bring enhanced connectivity, including 5G and fixed wireless access, to more of their community.

In fact, Carolina West added new towers to improve connectivity on the promise of these programs. Government delays and a lack of sufficient program funding mean Carolina West may need to decommission the new cell sites as they don’t make financial sense without government support.

But through it all, Carolina West remains steadfast in their goal of bringing quality 5G coverage to its corner of rural America. Doing its part to bridge the digital divide will help improve access to jobs, better education, and better healthcare for the people of northwestern North Carolina.

**“I think in a community like Boone in the high country, people tend to do business with the businesses they see supporting the community overall. Carolina West is everywhere and they blanket the community very similar to the way that their coverage blankets the community.”**

**– David Jackson**  
*President and CEO*  
Boone Area Chamber of Commerce

Carolina West Wireless’s Communication 4 Education program lets customers direct 3% of their wireless bill to a local school of their choice to support their resource needs—at no additional cost to customers. Through the program, Carolina West has donated more than \$1 million for local schools.



Carolina West sponsors the Carolina West Wireless Community Commons in the town of Wilkesboro that supports community events like concerts, movies, and more.







Cellcom is the sixth largest wireless operator in the country, serving northeastern Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan. With the area around Green Bay, Wisconsin, as its home base, the company provides wireless service to rural customers when they are at home, working, and going to school—and when those customers head into the northwoods and out on the lakes to hike, swim, hunt, fish, and enjoy recreational time with their families.

Knowing local customers is key to providing the service they need and want. Cellcom designs its network to support the highly seasonal cycles of summer days at lakeside cabins, fall weekends in the deer blinds, and long winters cozy at home—and importantly in this part of the country, strong signal for streaming Green Bay Packer football games.

New products and services will only enhance its customers' experiences. Cellcom's invested a lot of capital in 5G-ready spectrum in the past several years, and 5G already stretches across a significant portion of its coverage area. The provider plans to use some of this spectrum to enable unique services in the downtown Green Bay area, such as payment processing at the farmer's market. And Cellcom is deploying fixed wireless in unserved communities, bringing speeds up to 100 Mbps to residences and businesses in rural areas.

"Cellcom is committed to connecting communities of all sizes. Despite larger obstacles to overcome, regional carriers drive innovation in rural pockets of the country and prioritize areas that are often overlooked otherwise. In much of our 5G deployment area, we are the only provider bringing that option to customers," said Brigid Riordan, CEO of Cellcom.

The hallmark of Cellcom's customer service experience is the lack of an automated answering system. When customers call, they always get a real person. This level of customer service is especially appreciated by the aging population in Cellcom's service area—the number of residents 65 and older in Brown County, which includes Green Bay, grew over 50% since the 2010 census.

The provider also partners with leaders in the community to deploy connectivity in new ways that support the needs and resources of the region. The Bay of Green Bay is home to the largest freshwater estuary in the world. Cellcom worked with UW-Green Bay researchers in Summer 2022 to launch a custom-built network to support environmental research. Scientists deployed buoys armed with connected sensors to collect and share environmental data on the health of local waterways. The sensors allow researchers to collect near real-time data to help assess water clarity, identify pockets of low oxygen, and provide further insights into the negative effects of dead zones.

Data and monitoring of water quality can help manage, restore, and protect the Bay. "The environment needs us more than ever, this can really take it to the next level in helping scientists monitor and preserve our Great Lakes and freshwater ecosystems, and toward Green Bay's goal of being the most technologically advanced National Estuarine Research Reserve in the system," said Riordan.

#### **\$25,000 Grant Given for Use of Wireless Technology to Address Climate Change**

Through a partnership with Cellcom, UW-Green Bay researchers are tracking water clarity and oxygen levels in the bay through wireless high-tech sensors deployed on buoys. Researchers believe the data will yield important insights to help protect the region's freshwater ecosystem.

 **Click to watch the video**



**"Our size allows us to innovate and remain agile to the changes in the industry, but keeping customers at the center of everything we do is what truly sets us apart from our competitor."**

**– Brigid Riordan**  
CEO  
Cellcom



Based in the Four Corners region, Cellular One of Northeastern Arizona serves the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, and White Mountain Apache tribal nations as well as many rural communities throughout northern Arizona and New Mexico and southern Utah.

“For over 30 years we have been a genuine stakeholder in the tribal and rural communities we serve,” said Judd Hinkle, CEO of Smith Bagley, Inc., the company that owns and operates Cellular One. “We were championing digital equity before it became such a popular buzzword. Simply put, we believe that everybody has a right to quality, affordable voice and data services.”

But when Cellular One launched three decades ago, much of its present-day coverage area had no wireless service—fewer than 30% of households had a phone connection of any kind. It happens to be a vast, remote region with unique challenges. The Navajo Nation alone—a large part of the Four Corners region—is the size of West Virginia. But while West Virginia has a population density of more than 107 people per square mile, this area has only 6 people per square mile. And the terrain itself, with its empty expanses and mountains and valleys, makes building and maintaining a network there quite difficult.

Not everyone in the area has running water or electricity. And if there are challenges to get those services to each home, it’s hard to imagine running fiber to every home to provide wired, high-speed internet service. That’s where Cellular One bridges the digital divide, offering needed connectivity today via smartphones and mobile broadband service—as well as through fixed wireless access in some communities.

This connectivity helps kids do their homework at home and even on long bus commutes. It also provides a link to community and commerce in an area where people are separated by miles of open terrain. In fact, the Cellular One team recently provided service to a woman on tribal land that said her wireless connection was going to allow her to sell her handmade jewelry and sustain a business from home.

Thanks to Cellular One’s commitment—as well as assistance for customers from government initiatives like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)—90% of households in the coverage region now have a phone connection.

ACP and like programs are helping people who may need financial assistance get and stay connected. Over 40,000 of Cellular One’s customers are benefiting from the ACP federal subsidy. But these government programs go beyond that—they also provide a stable customer base that the Cellular One team can rely on. This means that they can feel confident investing in the latest technologies to upgrade and evolve their network.

As Hinkle says, “Funding from government programs like ACP allows us to increase our capacity and build out for the future. It makes it possible to continually invest in building new towers, expand coverage, and prep the network for 5G roll out.”

Cellular One’s dedication to the communities it serves is remarkable. In one of the most emotional and successful campaigns in Cellular One history, the carrier partnered with the iconic textile company, Pendleton, to raise awareness of and contribute to nonprofits working toward solutions that address the disproportionately high rates of missing and murdered

Indigenous persons. Together, the two companies commissioned “The Healing Blanket,” designed by talented Navajo artist Leandra Yazzie from Blue Gap on the Navajo Nation. The blanket became the fastest sellout in company history and, during a special ceremony held in Window Rock, Arizona,



30 families of victims were wrapped in blankets—a gift from Cellular One and Pendleton, intended to bring recipients comfort and hope. From the sale of every blanket, 100% of the proceeds are donated to support Missing & Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) and National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center.

“Honoring the unique needs and cultures of our customers is very important to us. Our team gets involved in the community in so many ways. We participate in youth fishing derbies and Earth Day clean up initiatives organized by Tribal communities. This year we gave skateboards and helmets to an entire elementary school near where a new skatepark opened on the Navajo Nation,” says Hinkle. “And we’ve put our Cellular One team, 40% of whom are Native American, right in our communities—running 14 stores in locations convenient to our customers.”

And Cellular One really knows their customers because they are family, friends, and neighbors. This enables and empowers the company to best serve its local communities in the 5G future and beyond.



A recent blessing ceremony at a tower site in New Mexico to celebrate the expansion of LTE voice and mobile broadband coverage.





**“Our 5G connectivity is a long-term bet on Alaska. This will allow the homes and businesses in those areas to access broader remote health and education options, and open the door to innovation that previously would only have been possible at great expense.”**

– Josh Lonn  
Vice President  
GCI Connectivity Products

Beautiful Alaska is the U.S.’s largest state by far—California, Montana, and Texas could fit inside it with plenty of room to spare. About half of Alaskans live in and around Anchorage and the adjoining Matanuska-Susitna Valley, but after that, a very, very long tail of the population is scattered across smaller towns and on islands—and in many cases are not accessible through the limited statewide road system. Remarkably, GCI, Alaska’s largest provider of connectivity, provides facilities-based wireless service to 98% of people across the state.

GCI is an example of the competitive spirit of the wireless industry. In the past few years, the company invested heavily in network upgrades to deliver a mobility service on par with its world-class consumer broadband product. GCI won the race to be first to launch 5G in the state. It was also the world’s first 5G roaming partner, delivering a national 5G footprint in collaboration with T-Mobile in fall 2020.

“At GCI, we are proud Alaskans who live, work and play in the communities we serve. Our sole focus is making sure our friends, family and neighbors can enjoy a world-class connectivity experience. That’s why we were first to launch 5G in Alaska and continue to bring LTE and 5G connectivity to the furthest reaches of our state,” said Josh Lonn, Vice President, GCI Connectivity Products.

GCI goes above and beyond to provide Alaskans with the best service possible—often providing the only wireless service in Alaska’s most rural communities. GCI recently invested \$5 million to bring 5G to Nome (pop 3,600) and Kotezebue (pop 3,100) on Alaska’s west coast. It also brought 5G to Unalaska, a small community located in the Aleutian Islands. Unalaska is a strategic component of the U.S. fishing industry, made famous in the reality show “Deadliest Catch.” GCI also recently upgraded regional centers, like Dillingham and Bethel, to better support the needs of these strategic hubs.

These are real examples of GCI’s commitment to closing the digital divide and keeping Alaskans, including the 15% of the population that identify as a member of a native tribe or culture, connected to the rest of the world. GCI is extending fiber to 27 additional rural communities, including the AIRRAQ project serving Bethel and surrounding communities, laying the foundation for future wireless upgrades. These projects are job creators in Alaska’s rural communities, with over 200 technicians and site agents living in nearly every community GCI serves. GCI’s workforce development program keeps field teams trained for well-paying jobs to meet the company’s rural workforce needs.

GCI is also bringing 5G to Alaska’s North Slope, home of some of the country’s most strategic oil reserves. This will provide businesses on the Slope with wireless service that allows them to work more efficiently and sustainably. These oil fields support 16% of Alaska’s jobs and provide nearly half of state government revenue (*McKinley Research Group*), making GCI’s work essential to the state’s economic health and shoring up America’s energy independence.

- GCI donates \$2 million per year in cash, services, products, scholarships, and grants to nonprofit organizations across Alaska
  - ↳ Alaska struggles with a suicide rate that’s over twice the national average, and higher in rural areas. GCI started a Suicide Prevention Fund that provides grants to organizations that promote and improve mental health and wellbeing
- GCI employees donate 5300+ hours per year giving back—GCI offers 16 hours per year of paid time off to volunteer
- Over the past 20 years, GCI gave \$6 million in scholarships to Alaskans



Work to bring connectivity to the Aleutian Islands



GCI gives back





# Southern Linc

Southern Linc, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southern Company, the leading energy provider across the Southeast, offers wireless service to utilities, emergency response teams, and related businesses and agencies in Alabama, Georgia, and southeastern Mississippi. Southern Linc's wireless roots reach back to the early 1990's, taking off in earnest in 2015 when Southern Company became the first utility in the United States to deploy an LTE network. Southern Linc has a unique perspective among regional and rural providers with a focus on serving enterprise and public safety customers with private networks that can support mission-critical work.

The provider's CriticalLinc™ 4G Advanced LTE network is designed to offer heightened security and reliability features that support the unique needs of enterprise customers, especially those in the emergency and energy fields where timeliness is essential and where many of the assets they oversee are pieces of critical infrastructure. While its service territory includes major cities like Atlanta and Birmingham, Southern Linc also covers large, sparsely populated rural areas. A highly secure and reliable network ensures utilities throughout Alabama, Georgia, and southeastern Mississippi can consistently provide power to customers and businesses, and emergency response teams can reach a crisis quickly, even in a remote area, and with the right tools, supporting the health, safety, and economy of the region they service.

For example, a key security feature of CriticalLinc™ is the enhanced level of encryption it provides to further protect data as it travels around the network. Because of this feature, Southern Linc customers benefit from an extra layer of security for critical communications, utility assets, and networks.

As the provider develops their network with an eye toward the future, Southern Linc is excited about the potential of smart grid technology and the power of the Internet of Things (IoT) for their utility-sector users. It is building its network to support a huge number of connected devices, sensors, and applications, as well as enable rapid response times so information and analysis

Adding to Southern Linc's signature network reliability, the company is rolling out a new drone offering, called Spirit, that provides cellular network coverage to Southern Linc's enterprise customers in case of a storm or disaster where cell towers may be knocked out or where service may need to be enhanced in certain locations.

about utility performance or a natural disaster can be shared quickly and efficiently with the teams who need to respond. IoT devices are proving to be key tools for utilities to monitor their equipment, improve safety through maintenance alerts and real-time information sharing, provide computing power on the go, and offer consumers and businesses smart meter capabilities.

In fact, the LTE network has become a platform for Southern Linc to continually support new applications and solutions for its customers. On the horizon are tools like vibration monitoring for transmission towers to make sure things like high winds do not cause network issues. Location-based capabilities will help network users streamline the dispatching of work orders. And automated lighting controls will provide necessary illumination, while saving power and resources when the lights are not needed. Southern Linc Senior Product Engineer Brian Lee says, "The possibilities are endless, and we look forward to working with our customers as we expand application availability to help them better manage their operations."

Southern Linc's commitment to service in an emergency is part of its DNA. Before a weather emergency, storm response teams proactively mobilize assets and team members, so they can be there for first responders and critical utilities. Southern Linc's mobile network response portfolio continues to expand to better serve customers and communities. Most recently, the company added an LTE-equipped drone—"Spirit"—that can be piloted to quickly restore service. The provider also places representatives onsite at emergency staging areas to ensure that they can respond to the communication needs of the moment. In times of need, the provider is proud to work closely with those who serve its local communities.

But to continue to offer these critical services, Southern Linc has to navigate spectrum needs and regulatory burdens. To start, Southern Linc offers service on an LTE network using a very narrow slice of 800 MHz spectrum, less than 10 megahertz. The provider has been creative and innovative in maximizing the use of this spectrum to meet customer needs, but more licensed, exclusive-use spectrum is key.

Then there is an ever-growing list of regulatory requirements—many of which are technically complex. Disaster roaming obligations, multi-layered 911 call requirements, broadband nutrition label dissemination, robocall and text mitigation responsibilities, wireless emergency alert updates, outage reporting directives for 911 and 988 calls—they all add up in terms of time, personnel, and resources. The individual and cumulative expenses of regulatory compliance are very challenging for a regional provider like Southern Linc to absorb, given its smaller customer base.

While Southern Linc's story may be different than the other regional providers featured, its commitment to its communities is the same. Supporting emergency responders, essential power and gas service providers, and other business customers in its service territory is critical to making sure local communities and residents are safe, healthy, and thriving.



Spirit can operate at heights of up to 300 feet above ground level, surpassing traditional Cells on Wheels (COWs).





**“Union stands as a beacon of connectivity, and unwavering commitment. We invest not just in infrastructure, but in the connections that bind communities together, ensuring that no one is left in the shadows of digital isolation.”**

**– Eric Woody**  
CEO  
Union Telephone Company

Union Telephone (Union) is a telephone company founded by John D. Woody in 1914 that today provides 122,000 square miles of wireless coverage throughout an unforgiving stretch of the mountains, valleys, and plains of Wyoming, parts of Utah, Idaho, Montana, and Colorado.

Union invests in its network to expand coverage and provide increased capacity to users. In a region with varied and rocky topography, a good portion of this CAPEX spending is devoted to expanding Union’s cell site portfolio. Union owns over 400 cell sites, including 11 new sites built last year alone.

Beyond mobile service, Union invests in expanding fixed wireless access services throughout its footprint to bring new options for fast home broadband to the people of rural Wyoming. Union has 16 fixed wireless sites covering 3,095 structures.

Union supports roughly 40,000 customers across its landline, wireless, and fiber broadband businesses. Through four generations, Union has expanded and strengthened its footprint in and around Wyoming—an extraordinarily rural state of approximately 500,000 people—and maintained its deep commitment to its customers and the Rocky Mountain region.



**Union’s Authentic Wyoming campaign that originated in 2021 highlights incredible local business, organizations, and community influencers that serve and elevate Wyoming, generating over 9 million impressions. In a strategic move to amplify the Authentic Wyoming campaign, Union translated the essence of local connection into an engaging podcast series. By bringing the stories of local businesses, organizations, and influential figures to life through the power of audio, Union transformed the campaign into an immersive experience. The podcast serves as a dynamic platform, allowing the voices of Wyoming’s vibrant community to resonate beyond traditional mediums. It not only captures the campaign’s authenticity, but also invites listeners to explore the rich tapestry of Wyoming’s culture, showcasing the diverse narratives that make the state truly exceptional.**

Union is also a provider significantly impacted by the federal mandate to remove equipment from networks that the government decided poses a national security threat—mainly equipment from Chinese manufacturers Huawei and ZTE.

Congress created the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program to help regional and rural providers like Union remove and replace this banned equipment. However, federal funding has fallen far short of eradicating the national security threat, putting Union’s network, and others like it, at risk of breaking, leaving its customers without quality service, or even service at all.

For a company that has existed and provided high-quality service to its customers for over a century, these challenges are short chapters in a much longer story—challenges that Union will do all in its power to solve in order to keep serving the people of Wyoming, the Rocky Mountains, and anyone roaming there, with quality wireless service and excellent customer care.

While speaking about the future, Eric Woody, CEO of Union Telephone Company, observed, “As Union charts its course into the future, the horizon is filled with exciting possibilities. Our company is embracing innovation, community collaboration, and a commitment to connectivity. The journey ahead holds the promise of transformative partnerships and a continued dedication to empowering communities. Union has embarked on a thrilling expedition into the digital frontier, where the company remains not just a service provider, but a pioneer in shaping the vibrant essence of a connected future.”



- Union was named the 2023 Large Business of the Year by the Bridger Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- Union is the largest employer in Unita County, Wyoming. Overall, the company employs over 280 people.
- Union is passionate about employing U.S. military veterans, who make up 10% of the company’s workforce.





1400 16th St NW Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036



601 New Jersey Ave NW, Suite 820  
Washington, DC 20001