

Clear Talk Purchases VZW B-block Spectrum

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Verizon today announced Clear Talk as the third buyer of its spectrum in the lower 700 MHz B-block.

According to a press release, Clear Talk, a wireless service provider with operations in multiple states, last week signed an agreement to acquire from Verizon Wireless 10 lower 700 MHz B-block licenses covering five markets in Texas, as well as markets in Maryland, Georgia, Florida, Nevada and New Mexico.

All told, the 10 markets have a population of 2.1 million. The purchase is subject to FCC approval.

The agreement with Clear Talk is the third to be signed in as many weeks as a result of Verizon Wireless' previously announced sale process for its lower 700 MHz spectrum licenses.

Nortex Communications in Texas and Panhandle Telecommunications Systems in Oklahoma were the first two companies to sign agreements.

Verizon said it continues to evaluate bids for its other lower 700 MHz spectrum licenses, which cover numerous major cities and dozens of smaller rural markets across the country.

Verizon acquired its 700 MHz A and B Block spectrum through an FCC auction back in 2008 but never used it. The company moved forward with selling the spectrum after regulators approved Verizon's acquisition of 150 AWS licenses from Cox Communications, Comcast, Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks in August of 2012.

Although these first three transactions are just the first few deals as a result of the announced sale process, Verizon said that it has previously sold 24 of its lower 700 MHz spectrum licenses to seven different telecommunications companies operating in 13 states.

While Verizon is making an effort to sell its unused spectrum, the carrier has made clear that it won't be discounting it. Fran Shammo, Verizon's CFO, said during a third quarter earnings call that the company would find a way to use the spectrum internally if it couldn't get fair market value for it.

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