Sprint Lights Up 70 New LTE Markets

Andrew Berg

Amid rumors that it is testing the regulatory waters for a possible bid for T-Mobile, Sprint Monday announced that it had turned on LTE in 70 new markets.

The new markets, which include, among others, Green Bay, Wis, Orlando, Fla and San Diego. The new additions bring the carrier's total LTE markets to 300.

Sprint, which has been relatively quite this year due to Softbank's recently approved purchase of a 70 percent stake in Sprint, includes the new markets as part of its Network Vision initiative. The project includes a complete upgrade of Sprint's 3G network and deployment of 4G LTE. As part of that program, Sprint is redeploying its 800MHz spectrum for LTE and 3G with the goal of delivering improved in-building coverage for voice and data.

Network chief Bob Azzi said in a statement that customers are noticing in areas where Sprint has completed its network upgrades.

"Re-engineering our entire network has been a big undertaking, but now it's delivering tangible benefits to our customers," Azzi said. "With the announcement of Sprint Spark, the increasing availability of 4G LTE and the improvements we have made to our voice network, we're full speed ahead for 2014."

While Sprint has picked up the pace of its LTE rollout, the company still lags behind Verizon and AT&T. AT&T now has LTE service in 471 markets, covering more than 250 million people. But it's Verizon that takes the cake. Big Red has completed its nationwide LTE rollout and is now focusing its efforts on increasing capacity.

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