



GCI cuts the ribbon on Alaska's first 5G service

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GCI's Anchorage 5G project represents tens of millions of dollars of investment in the state's economy

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, April 20, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- It's official: 5G has arrived in Alaska! In partnership with industry leader Ericsson, GCI turned up its first 5G cell sites in Anchorage on April 17, becoming the northernmost 5G wireless carrier in the nation.

"In June of 2019, we committed to launching 5G service in the spring of 2020. I am proud to announce today we have delivered on that commitment," said GCI CEO and Co-Founder Ron Duncan. "We have upgraded our wireless core, and we intend to upgrade the vast majority of cell sites in Anchorage, Eagle River and Girdwood to our 5-band 5G NR (New Radio) solution by the end of the year. At that point, we will have created essentially a brand-new wireless network in Anchorage, comparable in quality and performance to GCI's industry-leading cable modem network."

"Our Hometown 5G project is introducing standards-based 5G NR technology to Alaska," continued Duncan. "5G is a fundamental enabling technology. As it matures, 5G will support innovative consumer and business applications, including IoT (internet of things), smart cities, connected vehicles, and eHealth."

Hometown 5G will combine GCI's unique radio spectrum and metro fiber assets to create a vastly more capable network, five times faster than before. Every sector of every cell site will be outfitted with five radios to utilize GCI's low-band and mid-band radio spectrum, driving massive improvements in speed and coverage, particularly in-building coverage. GCI's metro fiber network will deliver the broadband connectivity needed to support these upgraded cell sites.

"This increase in wireless speeds and coverage comes at a time when data connectivity is more important than ever," said Duncan. "I want to emphasize that this increase will also benefit our LTE customers, not just users of 5G handsets. This is a win for all GCI wireless customers and for all of Anchorage."

GCI currently sells devices that will support 5G service after a software update is released in the coming weeks. Additional 5G handsets will become available later this year.

Having met the 5G service launch commitment, GCI is directing all its efforts to completing its 2020 cell site upgrade plan. It is working closely with Ericsson to drive the cell site upgrades throughout Anchorage.

"We're proud to partner with GCI to deploy 5G in Anchorage to give Alaskans the network quality and speed they want and need," said Rob Johnson, Head of Customer Unit Regional Carriers for Ericsson North America. "Ericsson and GCI have had a long-standing partnership to connect customers in some of the most remote communities in Alaska, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with GCI to turn the Last Frontier into the First Frontier with 5G."

The Hometown 5G project represents an investment of tens of millions of dollars in Anchorage's economy. It will provide a powerful platform for innovation as the Municipality strives to transform itself into the nation's northernmost smart city.

"Anchorage has always aspired to be on the cutting edge of communication and the extension of 5G service in our community helps us get there," said Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz. "The COVID-19 pandemic brings home how critical high-quality, high-speed communication is for our businesses and our families."

"GCI was the first to bring 1 GIG internet to Alaska and now we are the first to bring 5G to the state," said Duncan. "And the launch of the Hometown 5G project is only the beginning. GCI is working to reinvent wireless service in Alaska by integrating its wireless and wireline networks to support microcells, managed Wi-Fi, and other technologies to provide a superior data connectivity experience to Alaskans. Hometown 5G will inform our wireless/wireline network modernization efforts in other Alaska cities."

Over the past 40 years, GCI has invested more than \$3 billion to deliver communications services throughout Alaska. GCI employs 2,000 Alaskans and serves more than 200 communities.

For more information about GCI's Hometown 5G project, visit <https://www.gci.com/mobile/5g>.

About GCI

GCI provides data, mobile, video, voice and managed services to consumer and business customers throughout Alaska. GCI has delivered services for more than 40 years to some of the most remote communities and in some of the most challenging conditions in North America. Learn more about GCI at www.gci.com. GCI is a wholly owned subsidiary of GCI Liberty, Inc. (Nasdaq: GLIBA, GLIBP). Learn more about GCI Liberty at www.gciliberty.com.

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