

# AT&T looks to score CenturyTel's 700 MHz, AWS spectrum

While AT&T Mobility ([NYSE:T](#)) awaits FCC approval of its purchase of 2.3 GHz WCS spectrum from NextWave Wireless and other companies, it is busy hunting for a variety of spectrum from CenturyTel.

According to a recent FCC filing, AT&T is seeking agency approval for its purchase of 51 Lower 700 MHz Band B Block licenses, four Lower 700 MHz Band C Block licenses and six AWS licenses. AT&T said it wants the spectrum to boost capacity and spectral efficiency, especially for LTE services. The spectrum covers 54 Cellular Market Areas located in 14 states throughout the country. If the deals are approved, in 25 of the markets involved in the deal AT&T would hold a maximum of 55 MHz of spectrum below 1 GHz. Financial terms were not disclosed.

Petitions to deny the deal are due Sept. 25; oppositions are due Oct. 5 and responses are due Oct. 15.

The fresh deal comes as the FCC prepares to review its rules for how much spectrum a carrier should be able to hold. At its Sept. 28 meeting the FCC will vote on a notice of proposed rulemaking that will look at spectrum transfers between companies and will likely explore whether to treat lower-band spectrum differently than higher-band radio waves. The rules determine the FCC's so-called spectrum-screen, which it uses when reviewing spectrum transactions; if a carrier acquires too much spectrum and violates the screen, the deal is more closely scrutinized. Currently, the screen is different for each proposed transaction.

In addition to its deals for the WCS spectrum, AT&T Mobility [in recent months](#) has sought approval for 700 MHz spectrum licenses from the likes of Cox Communications, Peoples Telephone Cooperative, 700 MHz L.L.C., and others.

Further, AT&T may be a bidder for Verizon Wireless' ([NYSE:VZ](#)) 700 MHz Lower B Block spectrum. Verizon agreed to sell its Lower A and B Block spectrum if the FCC approved its \$3.9 billion deal to buy nationwide AWS spectrum from a group of cable companies. The FCC approved that deal in August along with related spectrum deals with T-Mobile USA and Cricket provider Leap Wireless ([NASDAQ:LEAP](#)).

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