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Mobitex Gains Independence

BY SUSAN RUSH
MAY 24, 2004
NEWS@2 DIRECT

Ericsson's Mobitex wireless data division is now the property of an unnamed U.K.-based investment firm. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Mobitex and its 100 employees will now operate under the moniker Mobitex Technology AB. Andrew Fitton has been tapped as the new wireless data company's chief executive. Fitton believes Mobitex's independence from Ericsson will help the company extend its presence in the wireless data sector.

As part of the deal, Ericsson, the inventor of Mobitex technology, will share some technology patents with the new company. Mobitex Technology also will become an Ericsson Strategic Business Partner. Mobitex hardware will be manufactured under contract from Ericsson.

The largest Mobitex network, which spans the entire United States, is currently operated by Cingular Wireless. Last month, however, *Wireless Week* reported that although Cingular said it was committed to the continued support of the Mobitex network, it was reportedly considering selling off the network and its related customers. Cingular has been encouraging its Mobitex customers to switch to its GPRS network. Fitton says that since 1999, Mobitex users have increased 500 percent.

Separately, Ericsson inked two deals with MTN Group to supply the South African operator with mobile network equipment and services. Combined, the deals are valued at \$1.5 billion. Ericsson and MTN have been working together to deliver wireless services to the sub-Saharan region for the past decade.

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<u>PCS</u>	9.56	0.00→
<u>AMT</u>	14.46	-0.10↓
<u>NOK</u>	14.20	-0.13↓
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<u>NASDAQ</u>	2,006.38	-17.15↓
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