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While it's still no giant, Atlantic Broadband is getting too big to fly under the radar anymore. The traditional cable overbuilder took another key step in that direction late last week when it swung a deal to scoop up the entire South Florida fiber network of FiberLight for just over \$50 million, fueling its business services drive.

A subsidiary of the large Canadian MSO Cogeco Communications, Atlantic Broadband has expanded rapidly through acquisitions over the last several years to become the ninth largest MSO in the US with more than 400,000 customers spread across 11 states. In its most recent move, it closed a \$1.4 billion deal to buy MetroCast, a smaller cableco with 236,000 customers in five states, earlier this month.

Now, upon the expected closing of the deal with FiberLight LLC in about six months, Atlantic Broadband will add roughly 350 route miles to its existing South Florida fiber footprint, more than doubling its fiber presence in the region. Even more immediately, the cable provider will gain access to an abundance of dark fiber capacity that it can use to start serving more larger enterprises and carriers in the growing commercial corridor running up the Atlantic coast from downtown Miami to North Palm Beach.

In an interview with Broadband World News, Atlantic Broadband President & Chief Revenue Officer David Isenberg said the cableco plans to use the new fiber lines and dark fiber to bulk up its presence in the South Florida business services market. He noted that there are firms and organizations with more than 10 employees collectively spending more than \$30 million a year on data communications located within a mile of the fiber

network it's buying from FiberLight. While that might seem like small potatoes to a giant MSO like Comcast Corp. or Charter Communications Inc., it represents a golden opportunity for a player like Atlantic Broadband, which generated about \$70 million in revenue from business services last year, or about 10% of its overall revenue. "It really is a significant expansion of the [commercial services]

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opportunity for us," Isenberg said. "It's really all about putting more muscle behind the fastest growing part of our business."

In particular, Atlantic Broadband is looking to build up its share of the enterprise market, where it's now seeing the strongest growth. Although enterprises account for less than half of the provider's business services haul today, that market segment is growing twice as fast as the small-to-medium-sized (SMB) segment, according to Isenberg.

Prospective targets include many of the usual suspects -- healthcare companies, government agencies, schools and professional services firms. But the list of prospects also includes some businesses more unique to the Miami market, such as major TV network production facilities and large data centers. Of course, it won't be easy for Atlantic Broadband to make a big impact in a commercial market dominated by such cable and telecom heavyweights as Comcast and AT&T Inc. But Isenberg thinks the new fiber network may give his company a heads-up in the route that it covers. "It's a highly competitive market; all the major telecom brands are there," he acknowledged. "But the [FiberLight] network goes a lot of great locations those other networks may not go." – *Light Reading*

A Trump administration trial balloon on creating a nationalized 5G wireless network landed with a resounding thud in Washington on Monday as Republicans and Democrats as well as the country's telecom giants rushed to condemn it as unworkable.

Reports emerged Sunday night that the administration is weighing a plan to have the government build and run the country's next-generation 5G network, rather than leaving the job to wireless companies, due to fears of Chinese cyberespionage. Axios, which first reported the proposal, said it came from a National Security Council official who said the government could advance 5G just as it built a national highway system in the 1950s. But the concept ran into immediate opposition from Republicans alarmed about the talk of government elbowing aside business. President Donald Trump's own FCC chairman, Ajit Pai, who has spent his tenure rolling back regulation of the telecom industry, called the idea of a nationalized 5G network "a costly and counterproductive distraction." Fellow FCC Republican Mike O'Rielly called it "nonsensical" while another GOP Commissioner Brendan Carr said the idea is a "nonstarter."

GOP lawmakers were just as brutal, with Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), chairman of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, saying, "We're not Venezuela, we don't need to have the government run everything as the only choice." The public rift over the future of the U.S. wireless infrastructure marks another example of the roiling tensions in the Republican Party, between those who want the private sector to operate without government interference and others focused on the national security and economic threats posed by China.

Amid the blowback, the White House on Monday sought to downplay the possibility of nationalization, with press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders saying discussions on the future of 5G are preliminary. "There are a lot of things on the table," Sanders told reporters. "Again, these are the very earliest stages of the discussion period, and there's been absolutely no decision made other than ... the need for a secure network."

Another Trump administration official, who requested anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said the document that became public is not the latest version of the proposal and that the idea has not yet gained traction with other parts of the administration. But Brett Bruen, who served as director of global engagement for the Obama National Security Council, said the nationalization idea is "supported by certain circles within the military and in the Republican Party that believe extreme measures need to be taken in order to defend the future." "It raises some very serious questions about whether the U.S. government should be in the business of building networks," said Bruen, president of Global Situation Room, an international relations consulting firm. "There are some legitimate security concerns, but this is not in the best interest of taxpayers."

Democrats and the telecom industry appear just as troubled by the proposal. Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) warned that building a nationalized 5G network would be both "expensive and duplicative." Democratic FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel said a government-backed network "misses the mark." And CTIA, the trade group for the major wireless carriers, said the feds should pursue the free market policies that helped the industry lead the way in 4G wireless service.

Companies like AT&T and Verizon are already working to deploy 5G in the U.S. The next-generation service is expected to deliver speeds up to 100 times faster than current networks, and will be central to self-driving cars, connected devices and other technologies that will rely on super-fast connections. But unlike traditional wireless networks, which rely on large towers that carry signals

over long distances, 5G service requires a dense network of smaller cellular infrastructure, because the airwaves don't travel as far. The wireless industry expects to invest billions in the buildout, and has been pushing for policies to ease local rules on permitting and constructing in cities.

The document published by Axios envisions a three-year timeline for the national 5G network, and contemplates the government building the infrastructure and renting access to wireless carriers. Telecom experts expressed skepticism on the feasibility of the plan. "It's somewhere between naive and uneducated," Roger Entner, a wireless analyst with Recon Analytics, said of the proposal. "Who wrote this? From what planet are they from? The practical obstacles to this are mind blowing. The whole idea flies in the face of reality."

U.S. officials have long been concerned about the potential for Chinese spying on U.S. networks, particularly by Chinese telecom giant Huawei, a supplier of network equipment. Huawei's "threat to the supply chain constitutes a rising national security concern of the highest priority," the House Intelligence Committee [warned](#) in October 2012. The proposal floated by the NSC official envisions a U.S. government-operated wireless network as more difficult for foreign intelligence services to access. But Republicans are adamant that a national network is not the right approach.

Former GOP FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell, now policy adviser to wireless group Mobile Future, predicted the concept will have a very short life. "Every single Republican thinks it's a supremely bad idea to have a taxpayer-owned and -run 5G network," he said. – **Politico**

Amazon.com Inc. plans to hire thousands of people in the area it picks as a second home from a shortlist of 20 locations. That's worrying other companies because it could become more difficult to attract talent if the behemoth moves into their backyard. Amazon has said it expects to create as many as 50,000 jobs paying an average of \$100,000 at its new site. Supplying that many employees is a feat for any area, and is likely to result in greater competition for workers and wage increases at a time when unemployment already stands at a low 4.1% nationally, some economists say. "We're nervous," says Steven Kosakow, director of talent acquisition at Lionbridge, a Boston-based company that helps firms with translation and globalization services. Lionbridge is building out its sales team, and recruiters there worry that hiring salespeople will become nearly impossible if Amazon moves in. Boston is among the cities on the shortlist.

Employers are concerned in part because there's little known about Amazon's hiring plans. "No one knows who they're moving," says Andrew Gadowski, a consultant who helps large employers execute recruiting campaigns. Amazon's effect on local employment would depend partly on the kinds of jobs it plans to fill, he said. Still, more competition for the same workers in general could mean that hiring decisions become protracted and firms have difficulty filling slots.

Amazon is already known for poaching talent from companies, including United Parcel Service Inc. and General Electric Co. , and that would become even easier if the tech giant were also located in the neighborhood. Both Atlanta, where UPS is based, and Boston, where GE is building its new headquarters, are on Amazon's shortlist. Some executives at companies in the Atlanta area, including UPS and Home Depot Inc., are voicing concerns about the impact on the local job markets, according to people familiar with the matter.

A UPS spokesman said the company isn't throwing its support behind any specific city where it operates because of its wide reach as a company. Where it competes for workers, "we are committed to being a preferred employer," he said. A Home Depot spokesman said the company is primarily concerned about whether Amazon will receive higher tax incentives than the norm. Amazon's search for a second headquarters has set off a beauty contest, with local governments offering incentives or working to fix local problems. Georgia legislators, for instance, are considering [providing substantial state funding](#) for Atlanta's mass-transit system, partly to address concerns that traffic congestion might hurt its chances to land Amazon.

Audrey Russo, president and CEO of the Pittsburgh Technology Council, which helped formulate the city's proposal and represents about 1,200 employers, says many of her group's members simply want more details at this point, including what kinds of workers Amazon will want. "Our members are data-focused and they want facts and at this point we can't articulate the facts," she said.

In Seattle, where Amazon has expanded its original headquarters to more than 40,000 people from just a few thousand a decade ago, its presence there has been both positive and negative. Labor competition has intensified and living costs have risen, but local tech employers have benefited from the online retail juggernaut's being there. The city, also home to Microsoft Corp. , has seen a boom in startups, many led by former Amazon employees. Tech giants, including Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Apple Inc., have also set up big offices in the area. "I think we have a very competitive job market in

Seattle, in part because of Amazon,” said Tom Alberg, managing director of venture-capital firm Madrona Venture Group and an Amazon board member. Amazon has created jobs, new opportunities for people to move to the area and become better educated, “so we’re actually producing more people to fill these jobs,” he said.

Amazon’s impact on local labor markets could be a net positive if its arrival draws workers from other areas and expands the overall pool of educated, ambitious workers, says Mark Muro, senior fellow in the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. “A regional ecosystem becoming more dense with added talent can bring significant returns.”

Officials in Toronto, the only city outside the U.S. to make Amazon’s shortlist, played up the region’s access to affordable engineering talent in its proposal. But some local executives have opposed the idea, citing an existing shortage of engineers as well as a soaring housing market. Instead, Amazon could suck Canadian workers to the company’s Seattle base rather than improve Canada’s economy, says Toronto-based venture capitalist Anthony Lacavera, who launched the country’s fourth wireless company a decade ago.

Even in a city as big as Chicago, another finalist, the scale of hiring could be unprecedented. Motorola Solutions recently put its headquarters there, and Kraft Heinz set up a second main office. But even the relocation of McDonald’s Corp. , which will [move its headquarters](#) downtown from a Chicago suburb this year, is expected to bring only around 2,000 jobs. Best Buy Co. and Target Corp. both expressed concerns to Minnesota’s governor regarding a bid by Minneapolis-Saint Paul to woo Amazon, one of their biggest rivals. At a media briefing in October, Target Chief Executive Brian Cornell told reporters that while he wants to see continued prosperity for the area, “on behalf of our shareholders, I want to make sure we get the same benefits as any other company.”

The final proposal from the region to Amazon included just \$3 million in incentives. It didn’t land on Amazon’s shortlist earlier this month. “There’s no way to get into a spending contest with Amazon and win,” says Rob Daley, a tech entrepreneur in Pittsburgh. “Salaries will go up whether you’re competing directly with them or not.” – **Wall Street Journal**

