Verizon Wireless boosts Upstate

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Can you hear me now?

Verizon Wireless is betting you can — or at least better than you could.

The nation's largest wireless carrier said its network in Greenville, Spartanburg and Pickens counties now has fewer dead zones, better building penetration and faster Internet service — thanks to 58 cell towers acquired through its purchase of Alltel Corp.

What Verizon Wireless didn't say is whether it will bring the next generation of wireless service, called 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE), to Greenville this year.

The company says it will roll out 4G LTE in 25 to 30 markets this year but won't say which ones.

The new service should be in Greenville by the end of 2013 because that's the deadline Verizon Wireless has set to have it in all markets.



Fountain

"Whether Greenville makes it this year or not, it'll happen pretty fast," said Jerry Fountain, president at the Verizon Wireless regional headquarters in Greenville.

He said 4G LTE is ten times faster than 3G, with Internet download speeds between five and 12 megabits per second and upload speeds between two and five megabits per second.

"You're basically talking cable modem speeds wirelessly across our footprint," Fountain said.

A ceremony to announce the network upgrade included a cake in the form of a cell tower and a giant light switch that Fountain flipped.

About 1,100 people work at the Verizon Wireless regional headquarters, most of them in a call center. The 200,000-square-foot facility in the Brookfield office park in Mauldin oversees the company's operations in the Carolinas and Tennessee.

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