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Nextel Partners Announces Plans to Expand Customer Care Center

Will Make Nextel the Third Largest Private Sector Employer in Bay County

Panama City, FL- On November 25th, Nextel Partners, Inc., the leading provider of Nextel wireless services to business customers in mid-sized U.S. markets, announced it has signed a letter of intent to expand its customer care center in Panama City Beach, FL. The company plans to build a new 30,000 square foot facility adjacent to its existing 65,000 square-foot building that opened in May 2002.

Florida Governor Jeb Bush participated remotely in the announcement, making a Direct Connect (SM) walkie-talkie call to city, state and company officials at the kick-off event. "What a win for Florida to have a national wireless leader like Nextel Partners again select our great state for its expansion," said Governor Bush. "This is the type of economic development we strive for. We applaud Nextel Partners' commitment to its employees and the community."

The expansion supports Nextel Partners' continued commitment to 100 percent customer satisfaction, which has resulted in one of the highest customer retention rates in the industry since the company's inception in 1998. The company's investment is the largest job creation initiative in Bay County this year.

The company has been planning the new addition due to customer growth that continues to exceed expectations. "The expansion is not only a sign of growth, it's a substantive example of our dedication of Nextel Partners, which has nearly tripled its customer base in the past two years. "Our differentiated product set us apart, but it's our unmatched commitment to the best

customer service possible that has helped us attract some of the most loyal customers in the industry.”

Led by the St. Joe Company, the new construction will begin on Beckrich Road in Panama City Beach right next to the Nextel Partners’ existing customer care center. “Our local community is totally on task for the Nextel Partners expansion,” said Frank Herring, president of St. Joe Commercial. “From idea to occupancy, the first Nextel Partners building was completed in nine short months. You can count on this community rising to the occasion, and we are proud to participate. Like Nextel Partners, our focus is to ‘get it done.’” The new facility is scheduled for completion in third quarter 2004. The company expects to add up to 400 partners (employees) to the 600 already working at the original center. This would make Nextel Partners the third largest private sector employer in Bay County.

After undergoing a national search, Nextel Partners selected Panama City Beach for the expansion due to the city’s strong economic environment, skilled workforce, support from local government, businesses and community leaders, and strength of its current care center partners. Tom Neubauer, Chairman of the Bay County Economic Development Alliance, praised the wireless company: “Nextel has far exceeded every commitment the company made to this community in 2001, has honored its promises as an employer, and has become a strong supporter of civic and charitable causes as well.” Neubauer continued, “Nextel has paid the highest compliment a company can offer to a community and to an economic development organization. Their selection of Bay County and Panama City Beach for its newest service center speaks volumes about the industry-friendly environment of our area and reflects a great deal of confidence in our work force.”

“The success of our Panama City Beach customer care center has exceeded expectations,” said Nextel Partners’ Customer Care Manager Susan Jones. “Back in April 2001 when we announced plans for the original facility, we committed to providing 600 jobs. Our expansion will nearly double that figure. We’re proud to further enhance services for our customers while supporting the economic strength of the community.”

Mayor of Panama City Beach, Lee Sullivan applauded the company’s continued investment in Panama City Beach. “Nextel Partners initial investment was the biggest ever made here by a leading national wireless company and the largest economic development venture outside the tourism industry,” Sullivan stated. “This expansion another huge win for this city and a testament to the strength of our talented labor force and our commitment to helping local businesses succeed.”

State Representative and Speaker Designate Allan Bense thanked the company for its commitment to Bay County. “We’re proud to count Nextel Partners as a major Bay County employer,” said Bense. “We applaud the company’s continued commitment to local economic development and its efforts to make our community a better place to live and work.”

Nextel Partners' customer support expansion facility in Panama City will be built from the ground up, enabling state-of-the-art design, equipment and space planning. The building's functions and layout will closely mirror that of the existing facility. In addition to its Panama City Beach facilities, Nextel Partners also has a customer support center in Las Vegas.

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