

Bexar County to Address Digital Divide in Education through a Private LTE Network

A collaborative group joins forces to initiate a pilot wireless broadband solution to remedy the effects of the COVID-19 shutdown on underserved students.

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Wytec International, Inc. →

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SAN ANTONIO, Oct. 13, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- On September 15, 2020, Bexar County approved the BiblioTech Connect project to develop a private wireless network in support of rural and underserved students. Amid the nationwide shutdown due to COVID-19 the lack of digital network access was highlighted. Southwest Independent School District (SWISD) realized 11% of its students had inadequate broadband access to support its digital learning efforts. In a 2019 study by UTSA, 21% of Bexar County students lack adequate internet access. Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) was awarded the contract to implement a pilot program to seek a solution to serve areas of the SWISD and that could later expand to other Bexar County school districts.



A collaborative effort in San Antonio will bridge the homework gap for Texas students

As part of this program, Wytec International, Inc., a Texas-based wireless technology firm with significant school district experience, will provide the design for the private LTE network and has chosen Nokia as its technology partner. Nokia will provide its Nokia Digital Automation Cloud platform that provides a reliable, secure, high-performance private wireless connectivity and the ability to efficiently process data on site.

"The recent COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school shutdowns have both weakened the existing educational infrastructure and widely exposed the necessity for a universal improvement in future learning resources," said Wytec President and CEO, William Gray. "A private LTE network will provide students and administrators much more than connectivity alone."

Recent FCC rulings have further encouraged the use of private networks with the commercialization of Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) spectrum. Wytec and Nokia are embracing this new spectrum technology for use in the SWISD.

Scalable according to needs, the Nokia DAC to be utilized in this program, is a compact, plug-and-play platform that comprises network equipment and a cloud-based operation monitoring system. With Nokia DAC, users can securely collect, process, and host all generated proprietary data on-site.

"Working with Wytec International for Bexar County, Nokia is energized to play our part in helping address the digital divide - an issue that has become particularly evident during the Covid pandemic. Nokia Digital Automation Cloud platform will provide a versatile connectivity solution that is fast to deploy and that performs well in many different markets and industry segments," said Matt Young, Vice President Nokia Enterprise.

Private networks on the CBRS band allow for deployment at a fraction of the cost and support multiple features such as bandwidth control, content filtering, and safety issues like gun-shot detection and video monitoring on and off campus.

Cities and Independent School Districts (ISDs) are further motivated to explore private networks with more than \$13.8 Billion in federal funding allocations for assisting underserved neighborhoods connected to their school districts. Wytec, with its experience with school

district funding, has multiple funding options to expand private networks beyond federal funding.

About Wytec International, Inc.

Wytec is a telecommunications company based in San Antonio, Texas, holding a patent for its LPN-16 Neutral Host Small Cell, capable of supporting city-wide 5G services when fully integrated. Wytec was voted a "Best Tech Startup in San Antonio" for three years by The Tech Tribune. Find additional information at www.wytecintl.com, on Facebook, and LinkedIn.

About Nokia

We create the technology to connect the world. Only Nokia offers a comprehensive portfolio of network equipment, software, services and licensing opportunities across the globe. With our commitment to innovation, driven by the award-winning Nokia Bell Labs, we are a leader in the development and deployment of 5G networks.

Our communications service provider customers support more than 6.4 billion subscriptions with our radio networks, and our enterprise customers have deployed over 1,300 industrial networks worldwide. Adhering to the highest ethical standards, we transform how people live, work and communicate. For our latest updates, please visit us online www.nokia.com and follow us on Twitter @nokia.

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