AT&T, Dish, and T-Mobile spend billions on more 5G spectrum

AT&T, Dish, and T-Mobile dropped billions of dollars in a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) auction to acquire more 5G spectrum licenses in the midrange 3.45GHz to 3.55GHz band, according to a report by the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*).

While AT&T was the biggest spender at $9 billion, Dish spent $7.3 billion, and T-Mobile followed behind at $2.9 billion. Verizon was notably absent from the auction. A number of smaller players also made the list, like Three Forty-Five Spectrum, which you can view on Light Reading's site.

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The auction officially ended in November, but the FCC hasn't publicly disclosed the winning bidders until now (PDF). Total bids reached about $22.5 billion, making it the third-largest FCC spectrum auction yet. Only last year's $80 billion C-band auction (over half of which was contributed by Verizon), and 2015's $44.9 billion AWS-3 auction top this amount of spending, as pointed out by *Next TV* (via *Light Reading*).

When it comes to using the 3.45GHz band, however, *Light Reading* says that companies will have to deploy new radios on cell towers that have the ability to broadcast signals across it. Smartphones that support C-band may already be capable of using the band, *Light Reading* also notes, as they both fall under the 3rd Generation Partnership Project's (3GPP) n77 technical standards that cover 3.3GHz to 4.2GHz, which existing 5G smartphones already use.

Although the 3.45GHz band operates closely to C-band, the *WSJ* notes that it’s not as likely to interfere with aircraft equipment. Verizon and AT&T are set to deploy their expanded 5G C-band services on January 19th after the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) delayed the rollout twice due to aircraft safety concerns.

https://www.theverge.com/2022/1/15/22885320/att-dish-tmobile-5g-spectrum-billions-auction