

China to deploy wireless along rail lines

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China has launched development of wireless communications and signaling along passenger rail lines in 20 provinces.

Nortel confirmed Friday it had signed an agreement with the Ministry of Railways to provide GSM Railway switching centers to accommodate the planned system.

Seven switching centers will be deployed around China to handle secure communications for engineers, signal crews and operations staff. Two such centers were set up last year.

Nortel's GSM-R is a flexible circuit and package switching platform that includes a base transceiver station customized for railroad needs that provides trackside coverage regardless of weather conditions.

For Nortel, the deal could open the door for additional orders as China upgrades its overall railway communications capabilities.

"A comprehensive and advanced communications network will help China power the rapid growth of its railway network and, in particular, its migration to 200-300 km per hour (125-186 miles per hour) fast trains," said Robert Mao, president of Greater China Nortel.

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