

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sprint Enables Sweden-based GCE to Run its Entire Business Operations from Server in Czech Republic

Sprint fully managed IP VPN delivers cost efficiencies and single, secure WAN environment

STOCKHOLM, Sweden – Sept. 18, 2003 – Sprint (NYSE: FON, PCS) announced today that it has installed a fully managed IP VPN (Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network) for The GCE Group, a multinational company leading in the field of gas control equipment. The four-year, three million dollar contract followed a competitive bid.

Although GCE's headquarters are in Malmö, Sweden, the Sprint-managed IP VPN has created a secure WAN (Wide Area Network) for GCE to run its business operations remotely from its hub site in the Czech Republic. In addition, the consolidation of network services across GCE's internal organizations on to a single managed IP VPN is expected to deliver network efficiencies as well as higher levels of speed and quality of service.

"Sprint has exceeded our expectations in the management and implementation of our global IP VPN, which is tantamount to the excellent support that we have received from the global service provider," said Jan Zetterberg, vice president, Group Supply, GCE. "Now we have a shared and secure communications infrastructure that helps us to control our IT&T (Information Technology and Telecoms) costs, streamline reporting, and share applications and corporate information. In addition, it is so secure that we can run our entire business operations across it."

Sprint is building the IP VPN across Western, Eastern Europe and the US, with firewall and remote access services. GCE's server in the Czech Republic hosts all its business-critical systems, such as its ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning), with all related functions for the group.

"GCE has shown its belief in us by signing a four-year contract, a rarity in today's market and a commendation of the Sprint global strategy. We have proved to GCE that we are able to meet its global requirements by building a stable and reliable global WAN environment that provides class of service for its mission-critical traffic," said Claus Nikolajsen, country manager, the Nordics and Baltics, Sprint.

GCE develops and manufactures all types of equipment for pressure and flow control of high-pressure gases and has a considerable worldwide export market. Previously, GCE had a decentralized approach to its communications infrastructure without WAN capabilities, largely due to a series of mergers and acquisitions by the company that resulted in a complex and costly patchwork of networks.

The IP VPN connects GCE's local sales and supply companies across Benelux, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Rumania, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US as well as its manufacturing units in Czech Republic, France and Germany GCE will experience the same high level of service and reliability across its IP VPN because of the globally homogenous characteristic of the Sprint IP network, and globally consistent SLAs (Service Level Agreements).

Sprint provides class of service and traffic prioritization across all of GCE's IP VPN, including the prioritization of business-critical traffic at the local access level. This is particularly important since local access environments vary from country-to-country around the world, both in terms of price, technology and availability of bandwidth.

Sprint provides globally consistent IP and data WAN solutions to enterprises and service providers. The Sprint homogenous global IP network ensures Sprint can provide the same global SLAs with the same suite of products from each location. This uniformity of service is enhanced by Sprint's global operations centers, based in Atlanta and Reston in the US, which enable Sprint to keep a global, end-to-end view of all its customers' network needs. And because Sprint global network is based on IP, it can interconnect with any networks and technologies including DSL, WiFi, 3G, GPRS, MPLS, Frame Relay and ATM.

About GCE

The origins of GCE go back as far as the beginning of the twentieth century when oxy-acetylene cutting and welding methods were first invented. GCE itself was formed in 1987 through the merging of gas equipment activities by two of the worlds leading industrial gas companies into one entity.

Today, the GCE Group is Europe's leading company in the field of gas controls and is involved in the development and manufacturing of all types of equipment for pressure and flow control of high-pressure gases.

GCE's main business originally concentrated in the oxy-acetylene cutting and welding market, but with almost 100 years of experience in the handling of high pressure gases, the product range has grown. Today's product portfolio fits a large variety of applications, from simple pressure regulators and blowpipes for welding and cutting to sophisticated gas supply systems for medical and electronics industry applications.

The GCE Group has grown rapidly since its foundation and leads the restructuring of the European gas equipment industry through mergers and acquisitions. Its headquarters are based in Malmö, Sweden with the Group having activities in all European markets and a considerable worldwide export market. In excess of 1000 people are employed within the group today.

About Sprint

Sprint is a global integrated communications provider serving more than 26 million business and residential customers in over 100 countries. With approximately 70,000 employees worldwide and nearly \$27 billion in annual revenues, Sprint is widely recognized for developing, engineering and deploying state-of-the-art network technologies, including the United States' first nationwide all-digital, fiber-optic network and an award-winning Tier 1 Internet backbone. Sprint provides local voice and data services in 18 states and operates the largest 100-percent digital, nationwide PCS wireless network in the United States. For more information, visit www.sprint.com.