

Business

T. Boone's power table heading north

T. Boone Pickens' massive conference table has found a stately new home in Oklahoma's state capitol. **4B**

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

AT&T selling \$2B in Latin American assets

Sale of Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico operations to affect 1,300 workers

By **DOM DIFURIO**
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AT&T, under pressure from an activist investor to divest assets, is selling its wired and wireless network operations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to Latin American telecom company Liberty Latin America in a \$1.95 billion deal.

In a statement Wednesday, Dallas-based AT&T said the transaction includes more than 1.1 million subscribers as well as

spectrum, real estate and leases. AT&T will retain DirecTV and FirstNet responsibilities under the deal.

The transaction is expected to close in six to nine months and will affect 1,300 AT&T employees, who will move to Liberty Latin America.

"Our experienced and committed team members will continue to support these operations as we join Liberty Latin America," AT&T regional vice president Jose J. Davila said in a statement. "Liberty Latin America has expressed its commitment to provide high-quality communications services to the people of Puerto Rico and

the U.S. Virgin Islands. And we're confident that it is equally committed to supporting these communities."

In early September, activist investor Elliott Management revealed its \$3.2 billion investment in AT&T and called for a series of changes aimed at boosting the company's stock price. It suggested selling portions of AT&T's business, including DirecTV and wireless operations in Latin America, and making management changes to guide the company for the next decade.

AT&T has since said it doesn't intend to sell DirecTV, which started its strategic shift

toward becoming a content company.

As early as July, the company was looking at selling its Puerto Rican operations, according to Bloomberg. AT&T also sold its stake in Hulu in April. The company said it has monetized more than \$11 billion in assets this year, freeing up cash flow and helping pay down debt it incurred in a series of acquisitions in recent years.

AT&T CFO John Stephens described the sale of the Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands operations as an outgrowth of "our ongoing strategic review of our

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Ashley Landis/Staff Photographer

CFO John Stephens described the sale of AT&T's Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands operations as an outgrowth of efforts "to identify opportunities for monetization."

Hammering technology home



Robert W. Hart/Special Contributor

U.S. Rep. Michael Burgess (center) watched as Denton city and county officials and Ericsson executives used sledgehammers to break a slab during a groundbreaking Wednesday for its 5G Smart Factory in Lewisville. The factory will be the Swedish telecom company's first in the U.S. Ericsson, which has its North American headquarters in Plano, plans to open the facility in early 2020.

FOREIGN TRADE

Stocks jump on reports China open to deal

Hopes of breakthrough rise as talks resume in Washington this week

By **THOMAS HEATH**
The Washington Post

Stock markets climbed Wednesday amid new optimism that high-level trade talks set to resume this week might usher in a breakthrough in the yearlong U.S.-China conflict.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 182 points, or 0.7%, after Bloomberg News reported that a Chinese official "with direct knowl-

edge of the talks" said that Beijing was open to a partial deal to limit the economic damage that tit-for-tat tariffs have wrought.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 0.9% while the tech-laden Nasdaq composite rose 1%.

White House and Chinese officials plan to meet Thursday and Friday to try and narrow their differences in the trade discussions. Although some investors hoped that a breakthrough was within reach, there have been growing signs in recent days that relations between the two countries had only worsened.

President Donald Trump has insisted on nailing down a broad trade agreement that includes intellectual property protections for American companies doing business in China. But he also has said he would consider a smaller-scale deal.

Chinese Vice Premier Liu He is scheduled to meet this week with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and other officials in Washington. The two have been holding stop-and-go negotiations for nearly a year. To try to force Chinese officials to negotiate, Trump has slapped tariffs — or import

penalties — on close to \$300 billion in Chinese goods. Tariff rates are set to move higher on Oct. 15, and then even more goods will face import penalties in December.

Trump contends that China must change its trade practices if it wants to make a deal. He has accused the government of stealing intellectual property from U.S. companies, unfairly subsidizing domestic firms, and manipulating its currency to create a trading imbalance. He also has demanded that Beijing boost imports of U.S. agriculture products, such as soybeans and pork.

AIRLINES

American delays 737 Max return until 2020

Carrier takes jet off schedule until January, doesn't plan cancellations

By **KYLE ARNOLD**
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American Airlines doesn't expect the Boeing 737 Max to return to service this year, taking the plane off its schedule until Jan. 16.

But this time, the company won't have to cancel any flights as the 737 Max continues to wait to be cleared by the Federal Aviation Administration to fly again. The Fort Worth-based airline said flights scheduled to be flown on 737 Max planes will be switched to other 737 models.

In an interview last week, American Airlines CEO Doug Parker said the carrier built upcoming flight schedules with flexibility in the event that Boeing's 737 Max wouldn't be recertified in time for December flying.

"American Airlines anticipates that the impending software updates to the Boeing 737 MAX will lead to recertification of the aircraft later this year and resumption of commercial service in January 2020," the company said in a statement. "We are in continuous contact with the Federal Aviation Administration and Department of Transportation."

In the third quarter alone, American canceled 9,475 flights, costing the company about \$140 million.

Boeing said it expects the plane back early in the fourth quarter, which started last week.

Allied Pilots Association President Eric Ferguson, who represents American pilots, said there is no new information on the 737 Max that would indicate when it will be certified to fly.

The union for flight attendants at American said it's awaiting more information from the airline, Boeing and the FAA before it can determine the 737 Max is safe to fly again.

"Our airline crews and passengers deserve to have the highest level of assurances prior to re-entry into the air space," said a statement from Lori Bassani, president of the Association of Profes-

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INSIDE: Southwest Airlines finds cracked parts on two Boeing 737 NG jets. **4B**

TECHNOLOGY

Uber touts future with self-driving cars

Ride-sharing firm fields queries about plans to put them on road here

By **MELISSA REPKO**
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Uber Technologies fielded questions Tuesday night from curious members of the public about its plans to put self-driving cars on the road in Dallas.

And it sought answers to a big question of its own: Do people want them here?

Starting in November, the San Francisco-based ride-hailing company plans to map and collect data about downtown Dallas streets. Uber employees will manually drive in white Volvo SUVs equipped with self-driving technology. The company will run computer simulations of those routes and test

them on a track in Pittsburgh, where its Advanced Technologies Group is based.

As early as 2020, Uber's SUVs could drive themselves around parts of Dallas — albeit with humans on board for backup, said Eric Meyhofer, CEO of Uber's Advanced Technologies Group. He also said Uber could bring self-driving cars to the market in 2021 or 2022.

Meyhofer took the stage in front of about 200 people at Uber's new office in Deep Ellum. He gave a presentation about the company's self-driving technology, and answered questions submitted online and asked by the audience about safety, customer service and timetable.

Uber plans to hire or relo-

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Lynda M. Gonzalez/Staff Photographer

Eric Meyhofer, CEO of Uber's Advanced Technologies Group, spoke to about 200 people in Deep Ellum. He said the firm could have self-driving SUVs in Dallas by 2020.