

Mobile network 3 announces plans to open 28 new stores nationwide

90 new jobs to be created

€5 million investment to support 3's rapid growth

Dublin, 10 February 2010: 3, Ireland's fastest growing mobile network, today announced that it is opening 28 new 3Stores and creating 90 new retail jobs nationwide this year. 3 will invest nearly €5 million increasing its retail footprint with eight "own stores" and 20 independently-owned operations under the 3 brand.

The new retail outlets will significantly extend 3's reach across the country and will complement the existing 22 3Stores and 200 independent retailers which serve 3's growing customer base of over 470,000 users. The retail expansion programme has been designed to increase 3's retail footprint to maximum effect in the most cost effective way. This commitment by 3 underlines its position as Ireland's fastest growing mobile operator, market leader in mobile broadband and Ireland's largest high speed network.

Welcoming the announcement by 3, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mary Coughlan TD said: "90 new jobs and this major retail investment by 3 is welcome news for consumers and for the locations benefitting from more choice on their shopping streets. 3 has a significant role to play in terms of the quality service and competition it offers to the Irish consumer in the retail mobile market."

"The Government remains fully committed to the rollout of the National Broadband Scheme (NBS) to which it has committed almost €80million to facilitate much greater access to this vital tool for domestic and commercial users alike," concluded Minister Coughlan.

Speaking at the announcement, Robert Finnegan, CEO, 3 said: "We're delighted to announce our major retail expansion following another successful year for 3. In 2009, we saw 40% growth in our customer base and our expansion plans reflect our ambition to further strengthen our position in the Irish market over the next few years."

Robert continued: "Being close to our customers is a key focus for 3. At a time when the old networks are pulling back support for independent retailers this announcement illustrates 3's commitment to the Irish market. When completed, 3 will have 50 3Stores up and down the country, having invested millions of euros in the market and created over three hundred new jobs. Since entering the market in 2005, 3 has worked very closely with local independent retailers and we already have an existing presence in every county in Ireland. This is a sure sign that 3 is continuing to challenge the old networks by offering better value price plans and first-class customer service".

Elaine Carey, Sales and Marketing Director, 3 commented: “In tough economic times, 3 is backing local independent retailers by providing access to the strength of 3’s global brand and all the economies of scale that come from joining a major retail network. At a time when many local independent retailers are seeing their partnerships disappear, 3’s expansion plans will bring a welcome boost to independent businesses with the ambition to join the fastest growing mobile network in Ireland. It’s a unique opportunity for local retailers to grow with us and be part of a success story during difficult times. For 3, today’s announcement enables us to offer unrivalled benefits to customers looking to shop locally.”

The 28 stores will consist of eight 3Stores and 20 independently-owned operations. The majority of the independently-owned stores will be opened with existing retail partners but 3 is also looking for interested applicants with a strong track record in the telecommunications retail sector. The 20 selected locations are all close to the National Broadband Scheme (NBS) areas which 3 is currently rolling out. Interested independent retailers can apply to sales@three.ie or see www.three.ie/3partners.

3 has invested over €600 million in rolling out its high speed and high capacity network in Ireland to date, with ongoing investment as part of the National Broadband Scheme which 3 was awarded in December 2008.

For more information see three.ie.

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About 3

- 3, which launched on the Irish mobile services market in 2005, operates one of Ireland's 3G mobile phone licences under the '3' brand. With over 25 million customers worldwide, 3 is Europe's leading 3G operator and was the first to offer 3G services to European customers.
- 3 is Ireland's fastest growing mobile network with over 470,000 customers.
- 3 was first to launch mobile broadband in Ireland with a datacard modem in 2006 and the most advanced high-speed network with technology to support speeds of up to 3.6 mb per second.
- 3 is the leading provider of mobile broadband services in Ireland, with 175,000 high speed mobile broadband subscribers.
- In Dec 2008 3 was awarded the Government contract to roll-out broadband services to rural Ireland under the National Broadband Scheme.

- 3 has invested €600 million to date in building the Irish network.
- 3 was the first operator to offer a pre-paid mobile broadband service in Ireland.
- 3 is 100 per cent owned by Hutchison Whampoa Group which also holds 3G licenses in Australia, Austria, Denmark, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Macau, Norway, Sweden and the UK.

For more information about 3's products and services, see www.three.ie