

# Stephen Fortmann

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## **Telecom Professional | RF & Network Design Specialist | Rural Broadband Advocate**

Telecommunications professional with 10+ years of experience designing, building and operating wireless and fiber-backed networks in rural markets. Hands-on with Nokia 4G/5G RAN systems, RF planning, and broadband deployments. Managed network operations across infrastructure and customer teams, led vendor coordination, and analyzed network performance to ensure uptime and SLA compliance. Veteran of the U.S. Air Force, bringing a mission-driven approach to leadership, technology, and rural digital equity.

## **Experience**

04/2015 – 04/2025

Founder / CEO, Paladin Wireless

- Spearheaded end-to-end planning and deployment of fixed wireless broadband networks across rural Georgia using Nokia RAN (4G/5G) equipment
- Managed RF planning, EPC configuration, and compliance with 3GPP standards to optimize coverage and performance
- Led strategic grant-writing efforts, securing over \$500K in ARPA funding and multiple rural spectrum licenses
- Executed a 30-year lease for B41 spectrum to ensure long-term service availability across 20+ counties
- Provided subject matter expertise to lawmakers and public agencies on rural broadband initiatives
- Directed network expansion efforts with a focus on digital equity and infrastructure sustainability
- Developed advanced Excel-based financial models to forecast revenue, generate proformas, and evaluate business viability for broadband expansion projects

06/2006 – 2022

CEO / President, Pure WD LLC

- Founded a custom web and application development firm that grew to 15 employees
- Pioneered one of the first WYSIWYG website editors, pre-dating modern platforms like WordPress

- Designed and maintained enterprise-grade backend systems for major real estate firms including Century 21 and RE/MAX
- Led development of the first 3D MMORPG children's game using Unity and SmartFox
- Created sustainable revenue streams through custom applications that addressed niche market needs
- Partnered with the Art Institute of Atlanta to develop a robust internship-to-hire pipeline

06/1994 – 06/2002

Personnel Systems Specialist, United States Air Force

- Served in Military Personnel Flight during Gulf War; received National Defense Service Medal
- Managed digital personnel records via DOD SPERRY Database
- Briefed incoming personnel during base orientation and processed temporary duty (TDY) members
- Supervised issuance of military ID cards and DEERS enrollment for dependents

## Education & Professional Training

- Computer Information Systems, Middle Georgia Technical College (2005)
- Personnel Systems Maintenance, Community College of the Air Force (1995)
- High School Diploma, Dunwoody High School (1993)
- Certified Professional Installer (CPI), WISPA
- Ubiquiti Broadband Wireless Admin (UBWA)
- Microsoft Office Specialist Certification
- Tower Climbing and Safety Certification (Fall Protection, Rescue Procedures, Climber Endorsement)

## Skills

Network & Telecom Infrastructure:

- Nokia RAN (4G/5G), RF Planning & Design (3GPP), EPC Management, Fixed Wireless
- Broadband Deployment, Spectrum Licensing, ARCGIS, Google Earth

Technical & Development:

- Amazon AWS (EC2, Lightsail, S3), MySQL/SQL, HTML/CSS, Visual Basic
- UI/UX Design, Graphic Design

Business & Operations:

- Financial Forecasting, Proforma Creation, Revenue Modeling
- Project Management, Grant Writing, Microsoft Office, QuickBooks
- Leadership, Public Speaking, Strategic Visioning

## **Activities**

Outside of work, I enjoy time with my large and loving family. I love to preach and lead Bible study and sing in church with my wife. Being a husband and father is my greatest joy, and I strive to be present in my family's life and support them in every way.