



Big expectations for Cleveland-area tech startup now making 4G modules here instead of China

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GLENWILLOW, Ohio – Just nine months after its creation, a small company outside of Cleveland is primed to be a big player in the future of electronics, churning out what it boasts are the first 4G modules ever made in the United States.

The modules are used to connect cellular phone towers to anything from cars and medical devices to alarm systems and more.

FCC and other necessary certifications have been received from government agencies and some cellular networks, with a signoff from Verizon expected soon, company officials said Thursday during a launch celebration attended by customers, Gov. Mike DeWine, Sen. Jon Husted, U.S. Rep. Max Miller and others.

Eagle Electronics co-founder and CEO TJ Dembinski said thousands of sample modules are now being shipped to some of the approximately 10 customers lined up so far, with full production beginning around July 1, when he envisions 200,000 modules a month rolling off the assembly line in Glenwillow.

“We delivered on what we said we would do,” said Joel Young, Eagle’s chief technology officer, noting the ramp up to production in less than a year.

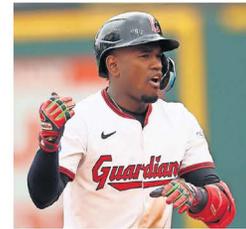
“So many times in this world, there are false promises. We are not about false promises.”

Long-term plans call for annual production of up to 3 million of the often inch-square modules – being made in a section of electronics manufacturer CO-AX Technologies’ building roughly 15 miles southeast of downtown Cleveland.

Among the customers on hand were Geotab, a fleet tracking device maker that counts Amazon among its users, and Cherish, a Boston company that makes remote health monitoring devices for home use.

Cherish founder and CEO Sumit Nagpal said it carried importance to have American-made technology in its devices, which are capable of tracking vital health data and location in real time.

“We’re being invited into people’s homes because they trust us,” Nagpal said. Husted noted that “what Eagle is doing is part of the vision” to bring technology production back to the U.S., especially when it involves transmitting secure information.



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President Joe Biden, citing national security risks, earlier this year finalized rules long in the making to prohibit remotely connected vehicle hardware and software systems made by Chinese or Russian companies, starting with software in auto model year 2027 and hardware in model year 2030.

Separately, Quectel had long been on the radar of federal officials concerned about national security. The Defense Department included it on a list of Chinese military companies, an allegation Quectel “vigorously” denied.

Eagle partnered with CO-AX for both space in an industrial park building and staffing support. CO-AX has been in business for about 30 years, making circuit boards and other products.

The O.H.I.O. Fund invested \$14 million in creating Eagle and is the company’s biggest investor. Dembinski said the equipment, which forms a 265-foot, U-shaped production line, cost \$4.5 million.

“This is just the beginning,” said O.H.I.O. Fund CEO and Eagle Electronics Chair Mark Kvamme, promising 5G modules will soon follow.

