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Novatel Wireless Announces Purchase Order for Large Chinese Wireless Carrier

Company will Meet or Exceed Guidance in Fourth Quarter

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA - December 20, 2002 - Novatel Wireless, Inc. (Nasdaq: NVTL), a provider of wireless data access solutions, today announced that it has received a purchase order for its dual-band Merlin G201™ GSM/GPRS Wireless PC Card Modem from its Asian distributor, Mobiltron China, for a large wireless carrier based in Beijing. The order represents Novatel Wireless' first volume shipments into a major carrier in mainland China. The purchase order is valued at over \$900,000 and shipping has already commenced.

At the end of 2001, the municipality of Beijing had over 13.7 million inhabitants and is one of the fastest growing cities and wireless markets in the world. Countrywide, cellular teledensity in mainland China has surpassed 176 million users, according to statistics from the Ministry of Information Industry.

"We are excited at the prospect of working with a leading Chinese carrier, which has a world-class network in Beijing," stated John Major, CEO and Chairman of Novatel Wireless. "We believe that this agreement will help accelerate our penetration into other carriers in China and believe that this is an important step forward as we grow our business in Asia."

"With this order, we are even more confident that we will meet or exceed guidance for our fourth quarter of 25% to 30% sequential growth," added Mr. Major. "Moving forward, we are hopeful that visibility and demand will continue to improve as consumers and businesses discover the productivity and cost benefits of wireless data. The initial shipments to China were made through multi-tiered distribution and will slightly reduce reported gross margins in the fourth quarter. Looking forward, we expect our tri-band wireless modem to be available in the first quarter and believe the market for GPRS is starting to show positive signs for the future."

Slightly larger than a credit card, the Merlin G201 enables users to connect on the move by offering wireless access to the Internet, email, corporate networks, voice calling and SMS messaging. The dual band (900/1800 MHz) GSM/GPRS PC card is available for the Type II PC Card slot of laptops and Pocket PC devices. It provides extensive and secure wireless data communications at speeds up to 53.6 kbps in General Packet Radio Services (GPRS) coverage areas and 14.4 kbps in Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) coverage areas.

For sales and product information, please visit the corporate web site at www.novatelwireless.com or email us at gprs@novatelwireless.com

ABOUT NOVATEL WIRELESS, INC. Novatel Wireless, Inc. is a leading provider of wireless data modems and software for use with handheld computing devices and portable personal computers. The Company delivers innovative and comprehensive solutions that enable businesses and consumers to access personal, corporate and public information through email, enterprise networks and the Internet. Novatel Wireless also offers wireless data modems and custom engineering services for hardware integration projects in a wide range of vertical applications. The Novatel Wireless product portfolio includes the Merlin™ Family of Wireless PC Card Modems, Expedite™ Family of Wireless Embedded Modems, Minstrel® Family of Wireless Handheld Modems, Lancer 3W™ Family of Ruggedized Modems and Sage® Wireless Serial Modems. Headquartered in San Diego, California, Novatel Wireless is listed on The Nasdaq Stock Market (Nasdaq: NVTL)

For more information, please visit the Novatel Wireless web site: www.novatelwireless.com or call 888-888-9231.

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This release may contain forward-looking statements, which are made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended to date. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties. A number of important factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those in the forward-looking statements contained herein. These factors include risks relating to technological changes, continued acceptance of Novatel Wireless' products and dependence on intellectual property rights. These factors, as well as other factors that could cause actual results to differ materially, are discussed in more detail in Novatel Wireless' filings with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (available at www.sec.gov) and other regulatory agencies.