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Ex-U S West CEO to Head Firm Backed by the CIA

By a Wall Street Journal Staff Reporter

LA JOLLA, Calif.—Former U S West Inc. Chairman and Chief Executive Solomon D. Trujillo is resurfacing at the helm of a telecommunications-equipment start-up that was among the first companies backed by In-Q-Tel, the Central Intelligence Agency's new venture-capital arm.

Mr. Trujillo left U S West after 26 years this summer, when the Denver Baby Bell was acquired by Qwest Communications International Inc. The tumultuous merger led to open disagreements between Mr. Trujillo and Qwest Chief Executive Joseph Nacchio.

Mr. Trujillo, 48 years old, is being named president, chairman and chief executive of Graviton Inc., a closely held company with 40 employees that is working on wireless technology that helps machines communicate with each other. The wireless sensors it is developing could be used to notify a gas company about a leak, monitor a patient's vital signs or tell a homeowner when an appliance needs repairs. Other backers for Graviton, founded in 1999 by technology entrepreneur Michael Nova, include venture-capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caulfield & Byers, Sun Microsystems Inc., Qualcomm Inc., Siemens AG, Early Bird Ventures, Mitsui USA and Omron Corp.

"In the next decade sensors and sensing technologies are going to be one of the big things," he said. He declined to discuss his compensation package.