FirstNet and Elected Officials

WHAT IS THE FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY (FIRSTNET)?

FirstNet is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration. FirstNet is governed by a 15-member Board consisting of the Attorney General of the United States, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and 12 members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The FirstNet Board is composed of representatives from public safety; local, state and federal government; and the wireless industry.

Signed into law on February 22, 2012, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act created FirstNet. The law gives FirstNet the duty to build, operate and maintain the first high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety entities. FirstNet will provide a single interoperable platform for public safety communications.

WHAT WILL THE FIRSTNET NETWORK DO FOR MY CITY OR COUNTY?

The FirstNet network will improve citizen and responder safety and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response through cutting edge broadband communications. Imagine a day when a single communications network can be used to dispatch EMS personnel, a medical helicopter, police officers, and fire personnel from different jurisdictions all at the same time, utilizing voice, video, and data at broadband speeds. Public safety personnel using the FirstNet network will be able to share applications, access databases, and provide better informed responses to incidents through integrated communications.

FirstNet's goal is to provide public safety-grade reliability and nationwide coverage so all public safety personnel can count on the network when they are on the job. FirstNet is also aiming to provide coverage solutions that let public safety "take the network along" to the destination in certain geographies. FirstNet will create a nationwide standard of service while affording localized customization and control.

WILL THE FIRSTNET NETWORK REPLACE THE LAND MOBILE RADIO (LMR) NETWORKS PUBLIC SAFETY USES TODAY?

When the FirstNet network launches, it will provide mission-critical, high-speed data services to supplement the voice capabilities of today's Land Mobile Radio (LMR) networks. Initially, the FirstNet network will be used for sending data, video, images and text. The FirstNet network will also carry location information and eventually support streaming video. FirstNet also plans to offer cellular voice communications such as Voice over Long Term Evolution (VoLTE) or other alternatives. The FirstNet network will not become a viable replacement for LMR until the availability of mission-critical voice functionality that meets or exceeds the needs of public safety agencies.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING THE NETWORK COMPONENTS?

FirstNet will be responsible for building out the network core. If, after completing the collaborative state consultation process, a state decides to opt-in and accept FirstNet's state plan jointly developed by the state and FirstNet, FirstNet will pay to build out the state's radio access network (RAN) that will connect to the core. FirstNet will also be financially responsible for the network's operations and maintenance.

WILL ALL MY PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES HAVE TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE NETWORK?

Use of the FirstNet network is voluntary, and any public safety agency is not required to participate. However, a network built for and dedicated to public safety agencies should provide a dependable and affordable user experience making FirstNet network an attractive choice for first responders.

HOW MUCH IS THE SUBSCRIPTION COST AND WILL IT BE PER USER OR PER DEVICE?

FirstNet intends to offer services at a compelling and competitive cost to attract millions of public safety users and make the FirstNet network self-sustaining. The costs for FirstNet's services and devices have not yet been set.

WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OPERATING AND MANAGING THE NETWORK IN MY CITY OR COUNTY?

FirstNet will be responsible for managing core operations and RAN operations for opt-in states. FirstNet also will enable robust identity management and authentication practices at the local level.

WHEN WILL THE NETWORK BE AVAILABLE IN MY CITY OR COUNTY?

Each state/territory will participate in a series of meetings with FirstNet as part of the required consultation process. Once the consultation is completed, the state plan is finalized, and a governor opts into the network, the RAN will be built to the plan specifications. FirstNet cannot determine at this time when its services will be available to cities and counties.

HOW CAN MY CITY OR COUNTY PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRSTNET NETWORK?

FirstNet is responsible for working through the designated state Single Points of Contact (SPOC) to consult with states, local communities, tribal governments, and first responders to gather requirements for developing its network deployment plans. Elected officials may provide input to FirstNet via the outreach efforts being coordinated by the SPOC in each state and through the notice of proposed rulemaking process that will take place in 2014.

Elected officials may also want to contact members of the FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC). PSAC members represent associations whose memberships are comprised of local, state, and tribal entities. More information regarding the PSAC and its membership is available at http://firstnet.gov/about/public-safety-advisory-committee.

FirstNet often participates in professional association meetings and conferences. To request FirstNet's participation at a meeting or conference, please contact us at info@firstnet.gov.

To stay up-to-date on FirstNet activities, elected officials can track progress at www.firstnet.gov and @FirstNetGov on Twitter

WHAT AGENCIES BESIDES LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE, EMS, AND 911 CAN USE THE NETWORK? WHAT OTHER CITY/COUNTY OFFICIALS WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE NETWORK DURING AN EMERGENCY?

FirstNet will be issuing a public comment notice regarding eligible public safety entities under the law in 2014 to solicit input from stakeholders on this topic. State and territory specific discussions regarding eligible users will occur during the consultation process.

WHO IS MY STATE SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR FURTHE

To identify the SPOC for a state, visit http://firstnet.gov/consultation.

FirstNet

Questions? Contact FirstNet at info@firstnet.gov or (703)

Questions in Massachusetts? Contact:

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