

THE FIRSTNET AUTHORITY UPDATE | June 14, 2021



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FEATURED ENGAGEMENT

FirstNet maintains emergency managers' communication during natural disasters

Emergency managers play a critical role saving lives, protecting property, and rebuilding communities after natural disasters. With more emergency managers turning to mobile broadband technology to meet these challenges, the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) hosted a webinar discussing how the FirstNet network can help support hurricane and tornado response. **Emergency managers** nationwide are using FirstNet to support response and recovery operations during natural disasters, integrating FirstNet in communications response, and leveraging LMR and FirstNet Push-to-Talk to integrate response groups.

FirstNet optimizes coverage for Louisiana responders. During the 2020 hurricane season, five named storms made landfall across **Louisiana** in 5 months. For Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) **Travis Johnson**, who serves in the Louisiana's Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the storms' widespread flooding, structural damage, and power outages complicated emergency response. Throughout the multi-jurisdictional response, Johnson and his team relied on FirstNet to connect to **mission-ready Push-to-Talk** capabilities to talk with personnel and mapping tools for improved situational awareness. "This is the first time we had this invaluable [mapping] tool," recalled Johnson. "When I looked at my map, I knew where we had P25 LMR coverage and then side-by-side, I could pull up FirstNet's LTE coverage. That was really important to us and helpful during the decision-making process."

FirstNet also extended network coverage in areas hard-hit by storms across southwest Louisiana. Federal, state, and local response partners relied on FirstNet's capabilities and coverage enhancements to stay connected, including through the use of **Emergency Drop Kits** and the deployment of **mobile cell sites**, like Cell on Wheels (COWs), Cell on Light Trucks (COLTs), and FirstNet One – a 55-foot aerostat that provides first responders with wide-scale portable connectivity.

Alabama responders leverage FirstNet during Hurricane Sally. Emergency Management Director **Shawn Rogers** explains that handling tornadoes is a weekly ordeal for the Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency (CCEMA) in **Alabama**. With FirstNet connecting Cherokee County and several nearby counties, CCEMA acquired reliable interoperable communications to connect with partner agencies along its shared Georgia border, with five neighboring counties, and around Weiss Lake's 447-mile shoreline.

When Hurricane Sally hit, Rogers and a five-member team deployed to Baldwin County to assist with a 7-day response operation. With a FirstNet Satellite Cell on Light Truck deployed outside the county's emergency operations center,

response crews experienced extended coverage and capacity to power all FirstNet connected devices (e.g., iPad, iPhone, Mobile Hotspot) and essential online services like mobile chat, document transfers, and video connections. “We had no communications problems, and everything went really well” said Rogers. “[FirstNet] has proven itself over and over throughout the county.”

FirstNet connects Texas City’s essential community partners. When disasters strike, **Texas City’s** Emergency Manager and Homeland Security Director **Thomas Munoz** and Information Director **Robert Turner** rely on a vast number of extended community partners to relay essential information. During emergencies when communication between emergency managers and their partners is critical, the City of Texas uses the **FirstNet Uplift Tool** to provide temporary FirstNet priority to its key partners, including the Red Cross, Salvation Army, the Gulf Coast Transit District, and many others. Using FirstNet prioritized network and services, the City of Texas can send critical information (e.g., weather alerts, power outages, shelter information, road conditions) to their partners, and in turn this information is shared with the wider community. “We have to communicate with our community partners,” explained Munoz. “That’s how FirstNet works with us – getting together all these community partners and providing the same communication.”

Thank you to our FirstNet users for sharing their experience and feedback using the network to support natural disaster response. To learn more about how FirstNet aids emergency managers plan for and minimize the impact of disasters in your state or territory, contact Emergency Management Subject Matter Expert **Bruce Fitzgerald**.

Watch **FirstNet.gov/events** for the next webinar in the Emergency Management series, which will focus on the COVID-19 pandemic response or sign up for the **Emergency Management Take** to receive the announcement via email.



SELECT UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Upcoming Webinars

Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition Summit

New Jersey State EMS Webinar

PSCR Annual Stakeholder Conference

IAFC Virtual HazMat Conference

PSAC Executive Committee Monthly Teleconference

Date

June 15-17

June 16

June 21-24

June 22-24

June 28

For interest in attendance for any of our webinars, please email **Outreach@firstnet.gov**.



FIRSTNET IN ACTION



FirstNet provides reliability and expands opportunities for emergency communications centers

Traditionally, emergency telecommunicators have been limited to operating within the walls of an emergency communications center. As technology evolves, dispatch operations are moving to the field to support first responders and remotely to keep telecommunicators safe. FirstNet provides a secure, reliable network for these operations, and priority and preemption on the network ensures telecommunicators can access all the information they need, when and where they need it most.

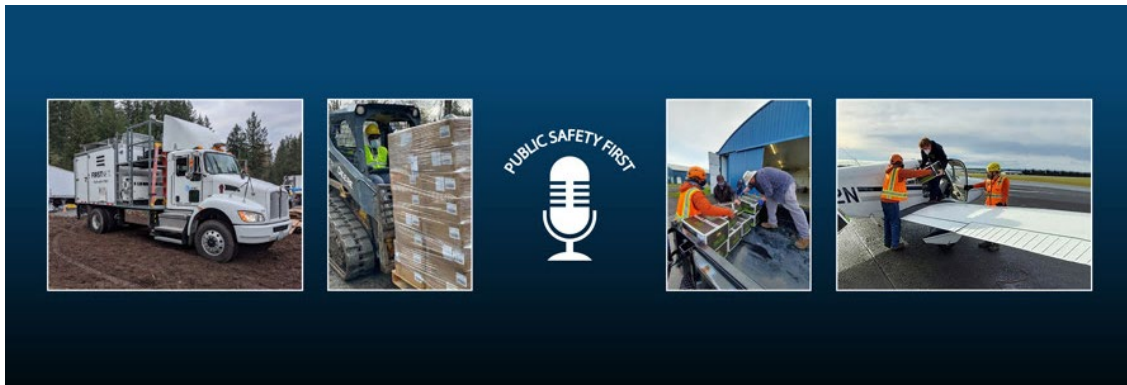
Learn more about how FirstNet is supporting emergency communications centers in this [blog from Karima Holmes](#).



Women in STEM: Breaking barriers and innovating for public safety

Females are statistically underrepresented in public safety and in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) career fields. At the intersection of STEM and public safety, there are women developing innovative solutions to make first responders' jobs easier and more efficient. Working on this technology takes tenacity – but those who rise to the challenge are making an incredible difference.

[Hear from three female innovators](#) as they discuss their careers and how they are making a difference for first responders on this episode of the Public Safety First podcast.



FirstNet keeps tribes connected during the pandemic

Broadband infrastructure can be sparse and inconsistent across many parts of Indian Country. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, this lack of infrastructure complicated efforts to provide tribes with critical food supplies and personal protective equipment. FirstNet deployable assets enabled the National Tribal Emergency Management Council to coordinate logistics and deliver millions of pounds of food and resources to tribes across the nation.

Tune in to this episode of the Public Safety First podcast to [learn how FirstNet supported tribes](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.



FirstNet network advances public safety communications capabilities

First responders across the country are getting a major boost in their wireless communications with the addition of new, purpose-built FirstNet cell sites. This new infrastructure is a part of the FirstNet network expansion that is bringing increased coverage, capacity, and capabilities for public safety.

Read more about the benefits for first responders in [Maine](#) and [North Dakota](#).

FIRSTNET IN THE NEWS

Regional Coverage

[Commission approves 5G cell tower](#)

West Hawaii Today, June 4

[Good Boy! AT&T's FirstNet Sends Labradoodles to the Front Lines for First Responder Support](#)

Dallas Innovates, June 4

National Coverage

AT&T on track with FirstNet build, most challenging sites remain

Fierce Wireless, June 1

FirstNet Launches Animal Therapy Initiative for First Responders

MissionCritical Communications, June 3

New FirstNet Cell Site Powered by Solar Aids Minnesota Firefighters

Inside Towers, June 8

BE SOCIAL WITH FIRSTNET

FirstNet Authority Retweeted

FirstNet, Built with AT&T
@FirstNet

Introducing "ROG the Dog" 30 therapy animals stationed nationwide for emergencies and man-made disasters as a part of the #FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition; reinforcing our commitment to supporting health and well-being of #FirstResponders. Learn more: about.att.com/story/2021/fn...



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An early adopter of @FirstNet, public safety in Harris County, #Texas, have found many innovative ways to use the network. Hear how the county's Radio Services Org used 'LTE lunchboxes' for reliable comms at planned events and mobile testing sites: soundcloud.com/user-472553784...



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#PSCR2021 is just around the corner! The FirstNet Authority is excited to present several on-demand sessions on topics including standards work, innovation in #firstresponder tech, and apps for #publicsafety. Check out these sessions and more June 21-24! nist.gov/ctl/pscr/annua...



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#FirstNetintheNews – #FirstNetAuthority CEO @EdPFirstNet talks to @CritCommsToday about how @FirstNet is serving first responders today and innovating new tech for tomorrow. Check out the full interview: criticalcomms.com/features/missi...



The FirstNet Authority Update comes to your inbox with a quick look at events

and information you need to stay up to date with the First Responder Network Authority.

