Alabama to Transform Communications for Public Safety; Governor Ivey Approves Buildout Plan for First Responder Network

First-of-its-Kind Solution Will Create Jobs, Spur Investment and Modernize Public Safety Communications across Alabama

Montgomery, Ala., Oct. 10, 2017 – Alabama is bringing modernized communications technology to first responders. Today, Governor Kay Ivey announced her decision to accept the FirstNet and AT&T* plan to deliver a wireless broadband network to the state’s public safety community. The FirstNet network will bring advanced tools to help Alabama’s first responders save lives and protect communities.

“Keeping Alabama’s residents, visitors and first responders safe is of the highest concern,” Governor Ivey said. “From volunteer emergency responders in our rural communities to those on the front lines in more populated areas, our public safety community deserves access to the tools they need most. This collaboration with FirstNet and AT&T will allow us to provide our first responders increased capabilities to communicate as effectively and efficiently as possible, while also ensuring that our residents and businesses have the best possible services provided to them in times of emergency."

AT&T, in a public-private partnership with FirstNet, will build, operate and maintain a highly secure wireless broadband communications network for Alabama’s public safety community at no cost to the state. The FirstNet network will drive innovation and create an entire system of modernized devices, apps and tools for first responders.

Following an in-depth evaluation of the proposed AT&T and FirstNet plan, as well as proposals by other potential vendors, Alabama selected the FirstNet and AT&T public-private partnership, bringing public safety the overall best value solution with the least risk.

“Reliable, effective communications systems and networks are most important when lives are on the line,” said Hal Taylor, Secretary of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency. “I am very pleased Alabama is opting in to be part of FirstNet. This network, and the new tools it will provide, will help our first responders do their jobs more safely and effectively, and it will help save lives all across the state.”

FirstNet will transform the way Alabama’s fire, police, EMS and other public safety personnel communicate and share information. Specifically, it will:

• Connect first responder subscribers to the critical information they need in a highly secure manner when handling day-to-day operations, responding to emergencies and supporting large events like Alabama and Auburn college football games, which attract more than 100,000 fans to home games.
• Provide priority access to data communications for public safety personnel in agencies and jurisdictions across the state during natural disasters, such as the 2011 Super Outbreak that produced a record number of tornadoes in the state.
• Enhance and expand network coverage across Alabama’s diverse landscape, benefitting first responders and residents throughout the state’s rural areas, including mountainous and tribal lands.
• Provide first responders with access to dedicated network assets that can be deployed for additional coverage and support when needed.
• Drive infrastructure investments and create jobs across the state.
• Usher in a new wave of dependable innovations for first responders. This will create an ever-evolving set of life-saving tools for public safety, including public safety apps, specialized devices and Internet of Things technologies. It also carries the potential for future integration with NextGen 9-1-1 networks and Smart Cities’ infrastructure.

FirstNet and AT&T designed Alabama’s network solution with direct input from the state and its public safety community, including the Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission (AFRWC) who, on Sept. 21, voted unanimously in a special-called meeting to send an “opt-in” letter of recommendation to Governor Ivey.

The AFRWC is comprised of multiple state, local, and tribal public safety organizations and professional associations. The Commission is chaired by Secretary Hal Taylor of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency. By working closely with the AFRWC, FirstNet and AT&T crafted a plan to meet Alabama’s unique communications needs, including:
• Expanding rural coverage beyond what is currently available from commercial carriers.
• Offering affordable data services to public safety across the state.
• Delivering a network for public safety with increased geographical coverage, redundancy and resiliency.

“Governor Ivey’s decision to join FirstNet comes after the state considered a number of options to bring public safety the best communications solution,” says FirstNet CEO Mike Poth. “FirstNet and AT&T are extremely pleased to have delivered the network plan that best meets Alabama’s unique needs. We look forward to connecting first responders across the state’s diverse landscape, providing them access to the only network purpose-built for public safety’s life-saving mission.”

The decision enables FirstNet and AT&T to begin creating an entirely new wireless ecosystem for public safety communications. Alabama’s first responder subscribers will have immediate access to quality of service and priority access to voice and data across the existing nationwide AT&T LTE network.

Preemption for primary users over the AT&T LTE network is expected by year-end. This means first responder subscribers, including fire and rescue services, law enforcement, emergency medical services, emergency management and 9-1-1 personnel, will have dedicated access to the network when and where they need it – 24/7/365, like their mission.

“We appreciate the seriousness and diligence Governor Ivey and her team brought to the discussion of Alabama’s participation in this nationwide public safety broadband network. It matches our own commitment to delivering this first-of-its-kind communications solution,” said Wayne Hutchens, AT&T Alabama assistant vice president of Legislative and External Affairs. “AT&T is honored to bring the FirstNet network to Alabama and connect its public safety community to the life-saving technologies they, and our citizens, deserve.”

For more information on FirstNet, please visit FirstNet.gov/mediakit and att.com/FirstResponderNews. For more about the value FirstNet will bring to public safety, please visit FirstNet.com.
About FirstNet
The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Chartered in 2012, its mission is to ensure the building, deployment, and operation of the nationwide, broadband network that equips first responders to save lives and protect U.S. communities. Learn more at FirstNet.gov/mediakit and follow FirstNet (@FirstNetGov) on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

*About AT&T
AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) helps millions around the globe connect with leading entertainment, business, mobile and high speed internet services. We offer the nation’s best data network** and the best global coverage of any U.S. wireless provider. We’re one of the world’s largest providers of pay TV. We have TV customers in the U.S. and 11 Latin American countries. Nearly 3.5 million companies, from small to large businesses around the globe, turn to AT&T for our highly secure smart solutions.

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**Claim based on the Nielsen Certified Data Network Score. Score includes data reported by wireless consumers in the Nielsen Mobile Insights survey, network measurements from Nielsen Mobile Performance and Nielsen Drive Test Benchmarks for Q1 + Q2 2017 across 121 markets.

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