North Carolina to Transform Communications for Public Safety; Governor Cooper Approves Buildout Plan for First Responder Network

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

RESTON, Va., Nov. 15 – North Carolina is modernizing communications technology for its first responders. Today, Governor Roy Cooper announced his decision to accept the FirstNet and AT&T* plan to deliver a wireless broadband network to the state’s public safety community. FirstNet will bring advanced technologies to the state that will help North Carolina’s first responders save lives and protect communities.

“We must do all we can to make sure North Carolina is ready to respond to emergencies and keep the public safe,” Governor Cooper said. “Communication is key in times of crisis and this technology can help strengthen public safety by keeping our first responders connected.”

AT&T, in a public-private partnership with FirstNet, will build, operate and maintain a highly secure wireless broadband communications network for North Carolina’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.

“First responders deserve a state of the art communications system, and we believe this is the first step toward building that system,” said Eric Boyette, Secretary of the Department of Information Technology and State Chief Information Officer. “DIT has worked with public safety and IT professionals since 2014 to make sure that the people of North Carolina get the service they deserve. Ultimately, we will all be safer once this network is in place.”

“Rapid emergency response relies on the efficiency of communication among federal, state and local partners,” said Col. Glenn McNeill Jr., commander of the State Highway Patrol. "This new technology provides state-of-the-art resources for responding to future disaster situations."

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

FirstNet will transform the way North Carolina’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-scale events, like the North Carolina State Fair.
- Create an efficient communications experience for public safety personnel in agencies and jurisdictions across the state during natural disasters and severe weather events like Hurricane Matthew, which brought catastrophic flooding to the state.
• Enhance network coverage across North Carolina’s diverse landscape, benefitting first responders and residents throughout the state’s rural and tribal areas.
• 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 North Carolina’s network solution with direct input from the state’s public safety community. Since 2014, FirstNet has met with North Carolina’s state and local public safety officials more than 20 times to address their unique communications needs. This includes:
• Bringing the state’s first responders the coverage they need when and where emergencies happen, including along North Carolina’s coastline.
• Giving first responders access to dedicated network assets that can be deployed for additional coverage and support when needed.

"Governor Cooper’s decision to make FirstNet services available in his state demonstrates his strong commitment to public safety," said FirstNet CEO Mike Poth. "We look forward to continuing to work with North Carolina’s first responders to help ensure they receive access to the sustainable, cutting-edge network they need to connect local, state, tribal and federal first responders across the Tarheel State."

The decision enables FirstNet and AT&T to begin creating an entirely new wireless ecosystem for public safety communications. North Carolina’s first responder subscribers will have immediate access to quality of service and priority 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 fire, police, EMS and other public safety workers will have dedicated access to the network when and where they need it – 24/7/365, like their mission.

“Gov. Cooper and his staff have been extremely thorough and thoughtful in evaluating North Carolina’s participation in this nationwide public safety broadband network,” said Venessa Harrison, president of AT&T North Carolina. “We appreciate and understand their diligence, for it matches our commitment to delivering this first-of-its-kind communications solution. We are honored to bring the FirstNet network to North Carolina and connect its public safety community to the life-saving technologies they, and our residents, deserve.”

For more information on FirstNet, please go to FirstNet.gov/mediakit and att.com/FirstResponderNews. For more about the value FirstNet will bring to public safety, please go to 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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