South Carolina to Transform Communications for Public Safety; Governor McMaster 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. 2, 2017 – South Carolina is modernizing communications technology for its first responders. Today, Governor Henry McMaster 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 South Carolina’s first responders save lives and protect communities.

“When an emergency happens, South Carolina’s first responders are there, putting their lives on the line to serve and save others,” said Gov. Henry McMaster. “Our public safety personnel need and deserve resources that will help keep them safe and allow them to deliver the best possible services for our communities, and that’s why I’m proud to work with FirstNet and AT&T to bring this innovative technology to our state.”

AT&T, in a public-private partnership with FirstNet, will build, operate and maintain a highly secure wireless broadband communications network for South 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.

“Reliable communication is a critical component in protecting the public,” said Mark Keel, Chief of the S.C. Law Enforcement Division. “We have been working with FirstNet for some time and are pleased this is coming to fruition for the benefit of those we all serve.”

FirstNet will transform the way South 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 South Carolina State Fair or the recent eclipse event that brought more than 1 million visitors.
- Create an efficient communications experience for public safety personnel in agencies and jurisdictions across the state during natural disasters and severe weather events like the tropical storm that caused catastrophic flooding in 2015.
- Enhance network coverage across South 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 South Carolina’s network solution with direct input from the state’s public safety community. Since 2014, FirstNet has met with South Carolina’s state and 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 South Carolina's coastline.
- Giving first responders access to dedicated network assets that can be deployed for additional coverage and support when needed.

"Governor McMaster’s decision demonstrates his strong commitment to public safety," said FirstNet CEO Mike Poth. "We look forward to delivering a sustainable, cutting-edge network that will connect local, state, tribal and federal first responders across the Palmetto State."

The decision enables FirstNet and AT&T to begin creating an entirely new wireless ecosystem for public safety communications. South 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.

“We appreciate the seriousness and diligence Governor McMaster and his team brought to the question of South Carolina’s opt in,” said Pamela Lackey, president of AT&T South Carolina. “It matches our own commitment to delivering this first-of-its-kind communications tool for first responders. We’re honored to bring FirstNet to South 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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