Washington to Transform Communications for Public Safety; Governor Inslee Approves Buildout Plan for First Responder Network

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

RESTON, Va., Dec. 26, 2017 – Washington is modernizing communications technology for its first responders. Today, Governor Jay Inslee announced his decision to accept the First Responder Network Authority* and AT&T** plan to deliver a wireless broadband network to the state’s public safety community. FirstNet will bring advanced tools that will help Washington’s first responders save lives and protect communities.

"Whether we’re responding to wildfires in eastern Washington or floods in western Washington, our first responders must have a reliable communications network and this process was about ensuring we get them the best service possible," Gov. Inslee said. “Washington’s Interoperability Executive Council and representatives on the RFP team provided critical feedback to us during this process. I am grateful for their work, and look forward to continuing ahead with AT&T to ensure our first responders have the best tools available to them in times of crisis."

AT&T, in a public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority, will build, operate and maintain a highly secure wireless broadband communications network for Washington’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.

FirstNet will transform the way Washington’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 professional football games that attract almost 70,000 fans per game.
- Create an efficient communications experience for public safety personnel in agencies and jurisdictions across the state during natural disasters, such as severe winter weather, wildfires, flooding and landslides.
- Enhance and expand network coverage across Washington’s diverse landscape, benefitting first responders and residents throughout the state’s rural areas.
- 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.

The First Responder Network Authority and AT&T designed Washington’s network solution with direct input from the state and its public safety community. This helped to address the state’s unique communications needs, including:

- Expanding rural and tribal coverage as well as extending coverage to major thoroughfares in the state.
- Making deployable network assets available quickly for emergency and natural disaster incidents in rural areas.

“Governor Inslee’s decision to join FirstNet demonstrates the state’s leadership on technology and public safety,” said First Responder Network Authority CEO Mike Poth. “FirstNet will ensure first responders have the speed, connectivity and coverage they need to access the most advanced technologies and public safety tools. This will lead to a safer, more efficient response for first responders and the communities they serve.”

The decision enables the First Responder Network Authority and AT&T to begin offering an entirely new wireless ecosystem for public safety communications. Washington’s first responder subscribers will have immediate access to quality of service, priority and preemption to voice and data across the FirstNet network.

By opting in to FirstNet, fire, police, EMS and other public safety workers subscribing to the service will have dedicated access to the information they need, when and where they need it – 24/7/365, like their mission.

“Thanks to Governor Inslee’s decision to opt in, first responders in the state of Washington will now have access to the life-saving communications tools made possible by FirstNet,” said Bob Bass, president, AT&T Washington. “It’s an honor to have the opportunity to serve public safety here in the state, today and every day for the next 25 years.”

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 The First Responder Network Authority*

The First Responder Network Authority 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 the First Responder Network Authority (@FirstNetGov) on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

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