

West Virginia to Transform Communications for Public Safety; Governor Justice 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., July 27, 2017 – Governor Jim Justice is helping transform first responder communications in West Virginia by “opting in” to FirstNet. With his decision, [FirstNet](#) and [AT&T](#)* will deliver a specialized wireless broadband network to West Virginia’s public safety community. This will make West Virginia the 7th state in the country to bring first responders advanced technologies that will help them save lives and protect communities.

“FirstNet and AT&T are really stepping up to help West Virginia and we are all grateful for their efforts to expand coverage for our first responders and our communities,” said Governor Jim Justice. “Our people will be safer because of this incredible initiative and it gives our state a launch pad for new jobs. I applaud AT&T for their commitment to a service area footprint that enhances coverage in West Virginia. Competitive pricing and the opportunities this will bring for future investment are limitless. The FirstNet network is a step toward putting West Virginia’s first responders on the leading edge.”

AT&T, in a public-private partnership with FirstNet, will build, operate and maintain a highly secure wireless broadband communications network for West Virginia’s public safety community at no cost to the State for the next 25 years. The FirstNet network will drive innovation and create an entire system of modernized devices, apps and tools for first responders.

This is one of the most economical and technologically advanced decisions Governor Justice will make for the State’s first responders and the residents they serve. The FirstNet network will transform the way West Virginia’s fire, police, EMS and other public safety personnel communicate and share information. Specifically, FirstNet and AT&T 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 the State Fair of West Virginia.
- Create an efficient communications experience for public safety personnel in agencies and jurisdictions across the State during natural disasters. This includes severe weather like the flooding in 2016.
- Enhance network coverage in rural areas. This will benefit first responders and residents throughout West Virginia’s topographically diverse landscape. First responders will also have access to dedicated network deployables for additional coverage and support when needed.
- Drive infrastructure investments and create jobs across the State.
- Usher in a new wave of innovation that first responders can depend on. 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.



“Mobile broadband access is a critical, life-saving technology that needs to be in the hands of every first responder in West Virginia and across the country,” Senator Joe Manchin said. “I commend Governor Justice’s decision to expand mobile broadband coverage for our public safety community through FirstNet and I applaud AT&T’s efforts to help modernize our public safety communications infrastructure. I look forward to continuing to work with Governor Justice and AT&T to expand mobile broadband access for both our first responders and all West Virginians.”

The FirstNet solution that will be built in West Virginia was designed with direct input from the State’s public safety community. FirstNet has been meeting with West Virginia’s officials and public safety personnel for several years to address their unique communication needs. This includes:

- Extending coverage to first responders in rural areas – particularly those prone to emergencies like the many coal mines throughout the State
- Understanding how to handle the sensitive interference issues surrounding the National Radio Quiet Zone in Green Bank

“Governor Justice’s decision to join FirstNet will enhance public safety communications throughout the state,” said FirstNet CEO Mike Poth. “This network will connect first responders operating across West Virginia’s diverse landscape – including its rural, mountainous and remote areas as well as federal lands. FirstNet and AT&T are pleased to have delivered a plan that meets West Virginia’s unique needs, and we look forward to bringing the network to public safety across the Mountain State.”

The decision enables FirstNet and AT&T to begin creating an entirely new wireless ecosystem for public safety communications. West Virginia’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.

“First responders put their lives on the line every day,” said Chris Sambar, senior vice president, AT&T – FirstNet. “They deserve access to modern communications tools that will help them keep themselves and those they protect safe. And that’s exactly what we’ll deliver with Governor Justice’s decision to opt-in to FirstNet.”

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, overseen by a 15 member Board. 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](https://www.firstnet.gov/mediakit) and follow FirstNet (@FirstNetGov) on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

***About AT&T**

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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 Q4 2016 + Q1 2017 across 121 markets.**

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