



**FIRSTNET**  
Built with AT&T

# Press Release

## FirstNet, Built with AT&T is Connecting More First Responders Across South Carolina

COLUMBIA, S.C., March 14, 2022

**What's the news?** [AT&T](#)\* is America's public safety communications partner. In the nearly 5 years since we were selected by the First Responder Network Authority ([FirstNet Authority](#)) to build and operate FirstNet®, we have [moved quickly](#) to bring more coverage, boost capacity and drive new capabilities for South Carolina first responders and the communities they serve – rural or urban.

Today, we cover nearly all of the state with [FirstNet, Built with AT&T](#) – helping to connect public safety agencies and organizations in more than 150 communities across South Carolina. That's why we're focused on increasing network capacity for South Carolina public safety by deploying Band 14 spectrum – nationwide, high-quality spectrum set aside by the federal government specifically for FirstNet. We've rolled out Band 14 on over 1,000 sites across the state to provide public safety with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it.

In addition, more South Carolina first responders are gaining access to a one-of-a-kind 5G experience on FirstNet. 5G connectivity on FirstNet is now available in Charleston and Hilton Head.

And we aren't stopping there. The FCC estimates that over 10,000 lives could be saved each year if public safety were able to reach callers just 1 minute faster. And since 80% of wireless calls take place indoors, in-building dedicated public safety connectivity is essential to public safety operations and overall safety. That's why we are collaborating with Safer Building Coalition, the nation's leading industry advocacy group focused on advancing policies, ideas, and technologies that ensure effective in-building communications capabilities for public safety personnel and the people they serve.

**Why is this important?** No connection is more important than one that could help save a life. Today, FirstNet is solving for common and long-standing communications challenges that first responders face – things like [interoperability](#), network congestion and commercial network providers slowing public safety's data connection. It's giving them superior coverage for day-to-day response and life-saving missions. While commercial wireless offerings remain available to public safety, FirstNet continues to grow because it offers distinct advantages from those



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commercial offerings. FirstNet comes with unique features, functionality and dedicated spectrum when needed for the public safety community. That's why public safety fought for their own, separate, dedicated platform, championing the vision that led to the creation of FirstNet.

**How does this help bridge the digital divide?** The FirstNet network expansion is one way we are helping ensure all of public safety – and the communities they serve – have access to critical connectivity to help meet the urgent challenges of today and tomorrow. We already **cover more than 99% of the U.S. population** today, but FirstNet is built for all public safety. That means every first responder – career or volunteer; federal, tribal, state or local; urban, suburban or rural.

And with FirstNet, it's about where first responders need connectivity. That's why the build is being done with direct feedback from public safety and local stakeholders. This feedback has been instrumental in deploying Band 14 spectrum across South Carolina. And it's helped to **launch new purpose-built FirstNet sites** in rural and remote areas so far – including areas where emergency responses have been previously challenged. 5 counties are currently benefitting from this new infrastructure, which will help improve the overall coverage and network capacity experience for public safety on FirstNet and AT&T wireless customers in the area. Residents, visitors and businesses can take advantage of the AT&T commercial spectrum bands, as well as Band 14 when additional capacity is available.

**What makes 5G on FirstNet “one of a kind?”** FirstNet is not a commercial network. And that means our approach to 5G for public safety must be different from the way your friends and family experience 5G. With FirstNet, we're taking the right steps for public safety in a way that meets their unique mission needs. While 5G connectivity will ultimately bring a combination of benefits like ultra-low latency and ultra-high speeds to support all kinds of users, it's essential we approach 5G in a different way for first responders. That's why first responders maintain voice communications with priority and preemption on LTE, while the FirstNet network determines the best route for data traffic, whether that's 5G or LTE spectrum.

**What is FirstNet?** FirstNet is the *only* nationwide, high-speed broadband communications platform dedicated to and purpose-built for America's first responders and the extended public safety community. Shaped by the vision of Congress and the first responder community following the [9/11 terrorist attacks](#), FirstNet stands above commercial offerings. It is built with AT&T in public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) – an independent agency within the federal government. With more than 19,500



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agencies and organizations – accounting for more than 3 million connections nationwide<sup>1</sup> – the FirstNet network is providing public safety with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it, unique benefits like *always-on* priority and preemption, and high-quality Band 14 spectrum. These advanced capabilities enable FirstNet to help fire, EMS, law enforcement and more save lives and protect their communities.

**Where can I find more information?** For more about the value FirstNet is bringing to public safety, check out [FirstNet.com](https://www.firstnet.com). And go [here](#) for more FirstNet news.

## What people are saying:

**Jane Sosebee**

*President, AT&T South Carolina*

“At AT&T, we have long been committed to serving the public safety community. We see it as both our obligation and our honor. We are excited to be delivering, through FirstNet, the dedicated connectivity which can help South Carolina first responders do their jobs more effectively, efficiently and safely.”

**Stephen Benjamin**

*Chair, FirstNet Authority Board*

“FirstNet is a dedicated broadband platform for public safety, by public safety. We worked hand-in-hand with the South Carolina public safety community to understand their needs for the network. And this new infrastructure is a prime example of how that input and feedback is becoming reality. We look forward to supporting South Carolina first responders’ use of FirstNet to help them save lives and protect our communities.”

<sup>1</sup>As of EOY 2021

## \*About AT&T Communications

We help family, friends and neighbors connect in meaningful ways every day. From the first phone call 140+ years ago to mobile video streaming, we @ATT innovate to improve lives.

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