



FIRSTNET
Built with AT&T

Press Release

FirstNet, Built with AT&T is Connecting More First Responders Across Illinois

CHICAGO, Ill., March 21, 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 Illinois first responders and the communities they serve – rural and urban.

Today, we cover the entire state with [FirstNet, Built with AT&T](#) – helping to connect public safety agencies and organizations in more than 340 communities across Illinois. That's why we're focused on increasing network capacity for Illinois 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 across Illinois to provide public safety with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it. Areas currently benefitting from Band 14 include Adams County, Alton, Aurora, Bloomington-Normal, Bureau County, Champaign-Urbana, Chicago, Clay County, Decatur, Elgin, Granite City, Jo Daviess County, Joliet, Kankakee, Mason County, Mercer County, Montgomery County, Peoria, Quad Cities, Rockford, Springfield, Vermilion County and Washington County.

And more Illinois first responders are gaining access to a one-of-a-kind 5G experience on FirstNet. Public safety also has access to 5G+ (mmWave) spectrum in Chicago at the United Center, O'Hare Airport and Midway Airport. And we're continuing to roll out additional 5G connectivity for FirstNet in more communities nationwide.

But 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 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 Illinois. And it’s helped to **launch new purpose-built FirstNet sites** in rural, remote areas so far – including areas where emergency responses have been previously challenged. 22 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.



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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 agencies and organizations – accounting for more than 3 million connections nationwide¹ – 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](#). And go [here](#) for more FirstNet news.

What people are saying:

John W. Madden

Chief of Police, Village of Burr Ridge

“Whether it’s this growth of the network or the continuous updates to its resources and tools, FirstNet is always innovating on behalf of law enforcement and the communities we serve. And they’re helping first responders all over Illinois with not just everyday response, but emergency missions, as well.”

Eileen Mitchell

President, AT&T Illinois

“FirstNet, Built with AT&T gives first responders the cutting-edge tools they need to safely and effectively achieve their mission. The FirstNet network built specifically for public safety helps first responders in Illinois and across the country do their jobs safely and effectively.”

Edward Parkinson

CEO, FirstNet Authority

“FirstNet is a dedicated broadband platform for public safety, by public safety. We worked hand-in-hand with the Illinois 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 Illinois first responders’ use of FirstNet to help them save lives and protect our communities.”



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¹As 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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For more information, contact:

Phil Hayes

AT&T Corporate Communications

Phone: 312-241-6085

Email: phil.hayes@att.com