

## **Governor McKee, RIEMA join AT&T and FirstNet Authority to Unveil New Disaster Response Technology**

*Equipment will provide urgent connectivity support during hurricane response and beyond*

CRANSTON, August 10, 2021

**What's the news?** Today, Governor Dan McKee, Director Marc Pappas of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) joined AT&T\* at the RIEMA Readiness Center to unveil new FirstNet® equipment and technology for Rhode Island first responders. [FirstNet](#) is the only nationwide network built with and for America's first responders.

As part of the state's plan when [opting into FirstNet](#), AT&T has delivered 2 new Compact Rapid Deployables (CRDs) to RIEMA. Rhode Island is the first state in the country to receive CRDs as a part of the state's decision to advance its public safety broadband communications with FirstNet.

CRDs are trailered mobile units that provide FirstNet cellular and Wi-Fi coverage via satellite connectivity to first responders wherever their mission takes them. These assets are owned and operated by RIEMA and were provided at no cost to the state.

With hurricane season upon us, the CRDs can be utilized in response to natural disasters, or deployed in support of large-scale events or other public safety emergencies. They are ideal for use in rural or remote areas, as well as in areas where communications may temporarily be unavailable. CRDs can be set up by a single person in a matter of minutes.

Additional FirstNet equipment was also on display today, providing public safety officials and agencies in attendance with an opportunity to tour and learn more about what emergency management resources are available to FirstNet customers in Rhode Island.

Also on hand was FirstNet's newest deployable resource, [ROG the Dog, a therapy dog program](#) specifically for first responders. Launched in June 2021, this program has over 30 animals located across the U.S. who can be deployed to support first responders' mental and physical health during crisis events.

**Why is this important?** We consider FirstNet to be the most important wireless network in the country because it serves our first responders and public safety community. Rhode Island is the first state in the country to receive CRDs as a part of the state's decision to advance its public safety broadband communications with FirstNet. And to help ensure AT&T and the FirstNet Authority are putting coverage and capacity where first responders need it most, the FirstNet

build is guided by direct feedback from state and public safety officials. This helps Rhode Island's first responders connect to the critical information they need—every day in every emergency.

These new CRDs are an integral part of the infrastructure improvements being carried out across the state as part of the FirstNet network expansion. In addition to the CRDs, we're building upon AT&T's current and planned investments in Rhode Island to actively extend the reach of FirstNet and give agencies large and small the reliable, unthrottled connectivity and modern communications tools they need. Currently ahead of schedule, the FirstNet build has already brought Rhode Island first responders:

- **Purpose-built network enhancements** – With FirstNet, it's about where first responders need connectivity. That's what is driving our FirstNet build. FirstNet cell sites have launched in 5 counties across Rhode Island – Bristol, Kent, Newport, Providence and Washington. These sites were constructed using Band 14 spectrum, as well as AT&T commercial spectrum. Band 14 is the nationwide, high quality spectrum set aside by the government specifically for FirstNet.
- **Public safety-specific advanced capabilities** – FirstNet is the only nationwide platform that gives first responders entire communication ecosystem of unique benefits including mission-centric devices, certified applications and always-on, 24-hours-a-day priority and preemption across voice and data. This is like giving public safety communications the “lights and sirens” treatment so that they stay connected, no matter the emergency.
- **Unparalleled emergency support** – Rhode Island agencies on FirstNet also have 24/7 access to a [dedicated nationwide fleet](#) of 100+ land-based and airborne deployable network assets. These portable cell sites can either be deployed for planned events or in [emergencies](#) at no additional charge. FirstNet Response Operations – led by a group of former first responders – guides the deployment of the FirstNet deployable assets based on the needs of public safety.

And providing reliable connectivity isn't the only support first responders have with FirstNet. During today's event, a FirstNet [ROG the Dog](#) joined in on the celebration. Building off of the launch of the [FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition](#), ROG the Dog is a fleet of more than 30 trained labradoodles who specialize in therapy for first responders. Compared to the general population, first responders experience higher rates of depression, PTSD, burnout, anxiety and other mental health issues.<sup>1</sup> FirstNet ROG the Dog can be deployed to support the health and well-being of public safety on the front lines.

**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 17,000 public safety agencies and organizations – accounting for more than 2.5 million connections nationwide<sup>2</sup> – the FirstNet network is providing first responders 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 help emergency management, fire, EMS and law enforcement save lives and protect their communities.

### **What people are saying:**

#### **Dan McKee**

*Governor, Rhode Island*

“I am proud that Rhode Island is leading the nation in providing this critical technology to support our first responders in times of emergency. Whether it’s a weather emergency or other large-scale public safety issue, we know how important it is to support our first responders and allow them to do their job efficiently and effectively. Connectivity is part of that, and this technology will ultimately help our statewide emergency response capacity. I want to thank AT&T and FirstNet for their collaboration, as well as RIEMA for their leadership in securing this equipment to keep Rhode Islanders safe.”

#### **Marc Pappas**

*Director, RIEMA*

“Rhode Island is honored to be the first state to have the Compact Rapid Deployables (CRD). The capability to provide a reliable communication service in a moment’s notice is extraordinary. The CRD’s unmatched technology will increase Rhode Island’s position of readiness for response and recovery operations and provide secure and dependable cellular and Wi-Fi service when connectivity is limited.”

#### **Patricia Jacobs**

*President, AT&T Northern Region*

“Rhode Island’s first responders deserve reliable coverage and the best equipment available to help them be safe and successful before, during and after emergencies. That’s exactly what they’re getting with FirstNet and resources like these Compact Rapid Deployables. Our mission is to serve Rhode Island’s public safety heroes by delivering innovative new technologies and impactful features. We have a [responsibility](#) unlike any other network provider to support those who support us. I’m grateful to Governor McKee and Director Pappas for their collaboration and for their commitment to ensuring that Rhode Island’s women and men in uniform are at their best day in and day out.”

#### **Lisa Casias**

*Deputy CEO, FirstNet Authority*

“FirstNet is the only nationwide, high-speed broadband communications platform for public safety, by public safety. To bring this network to Rhode Island, the FirstNet Authority worked hand-in-hand with the state’s first responders to understand their communications needs and develop a buildout plan for the Ocean State. These mobile cell sites are prime examples of how public safety shapes FirstNet - their feedback is now reality. We will continue to ensure that FirstNet provides Rhode Island’s first responders what they need to save lives and protect communities.”

For more about the value FirstNet is bringing to public safety, check out [FirstNet.com](https://www.firstnet.com).

*1 Purvis, M., Fullencamp, L. & Docherty, M. (2020). Animal Assisted Therapy on Law Enforcement Mental Health: A Therapy Dog Implementation Guide. Bowling Green University.*

*2 As of Q2 2021*

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### **About the First Responder Network Authority**

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet 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](https://www.firstnet.gov/mediakit) and follow the FirstNet Authority (@FirstNetGov) on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

### **About AT&T Communications**

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