



March 2019

Alabama FirstNet Begins Outreach Workshops

The FirstNet Program Office kicked off its educational workshops last month with meetings in Hoover and Clanton. The purpose of the workshops is to provide an update on the status of the new, nationwide public safety broadband network initiative known as FirstNet, facilitate discussion about current use of broadband in response scenarios, and discuss interoperability for state, local and federal first responders.

Speakers included Chuck Murph, Senior Public Safety Advisor with FirstNet Authority; Meghan Echols, Alabama FirstNet Director; Wayne Hutchens, AT&T Alabama State President; Jason Bridges, AT&T FirstNet Engineer; Sheriff Larry Amerson, National Sheriff's Association Representative on the National Public Safety Advisory Committee; and Michelle Pilgreen, Principal Consultant AT&T/ FirstNet.

Having AT&T/FirstNet in attendance to speak at these meetings provides first responders and public safety officials with the opportunity to ask specific questions on the FirstNet solution, network security, disaster response, and coverage. These workshops are also providing opportunities for first responders to have conversations about their needs and priorities for the National Public Safety Broadband Network.



Brian Hastings, Director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, speaks to attendees about the importance of communications and utilizing technology in response operations.

FirstNet Spotlight



Larry Amerson, Retired Sheriff and representative on the National Public Safety Advisory Committee

As a former sheriff and 911 Director, I understand the desperate need for a secure, seamless, high capacity broadband network that covers our entire state and nation, especially the most rural areas. I am now honored and excited to travel across our state with other practitioners spreading the word about FirstNet.

FirstNet began as a dream of the nation's public safety leadership, and after many years of hard work culminated in federal legislation. AT&T was awarded the bid to deliver the network. They are energetically constructing the network known as FirstNet.

Today's most advanced public safety technologies can be delivered from the dispatch center or shared between patrol cars, fire trucks, or ambulances.

Don't miss the opportunity to learn how it works and the types of tools you will have.



News

[FirstNet Deployment Should be More than 60% Complete by the End of the Year](#)

More than 60% of the planned buildout of the FirstNet system will be completed by the end of this year—months ahead of the contracted schedule—with a realistic possibility that even more progress will be made on the nationwide public-safety broadband network (NPSBN). That’s according to an executive with AT&T.

John Stephens, AT&T’s chief financial officer, reiterated that AT&T—the contractor for FirstNet—had completed 40% of the buildout by the end of 2018, even though the contract only required about 30% of the deployment to be finished in March 2019. The next buildout target is the 60% threshold, which Stephens said he expects will be reached—ahead of contracted schedule—by the end of this year.

“Remember, when we talk about these percentage buildouts, they include both the rural and urban geographic coverage,” Stephens said at the Morgan Stanley Technology, Media and Telecom Conference. “So, this is a significant piece of the country.

“I’d expect that we’ll get there. I would hope that we would get even farther, and we certainly have it funded in the plans to allow the team to do that. [AT&T’s network] team that’s running this is doing a great job of being efficient and effective. We don’t want to race at all costs; we want to do this efficiently and effectively, yet quickly. And I expect that we’re going to have another significant [FirstNet coverage increase in 2019]—at least to 60% by the end of the year, if not more.”

A significant part of the efficiency realized through the FirstNet deployment is that crews installing equipment to support operation on 700 MHz Band 14 spectrum—the airwaves licensed to the FirstNet Authority—at cell sites also are installing gear to enable AT&T commercial services in the WCS and AWS-3 bands, Stephens said.

These cell sites also are being prepared to support 5G services, as part of AT&T’s 5G Evolution initiative.

National News

[How IoT and FirstNet Can Deliver Emergency Response in Smart Cities](#)

When firefighters are called to a burning building, it’s critical that they understand who might be trapped inside the blaze. To quickly identify victims, IoT sensors, including Bluetooth low energy beacons, can be placed within homes and other structures to provide indoor positioning information.

Using FirstNet, firefighters rescuing victims from inside a building could easily communicate with EMTs outside or share heat map data with other firefighters assisting with the recovery process.

[ADT Enables Professional Security Monitoring over FirstNet](#)

ADT announced it will be offering an enhanced communication experience via FirstNet, public safety’s dedicated, nationwide communications platform built by AT&T along with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority), an independent agency within the federal government.



Upcoming Events

Outreach Workshop (Lauderdale County)

March 18, 2019
Joe Wheeler State Park

Outreach Workshop (Madison County)

March 19, 2019
Monte Sano State Park

Outreach Workshop (Tuscaloosa County)

March 26, 2019
Alabama Fire College
[Register Here](#)

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