FIRSTNET®

Newsletter

Deployables – when it matters most

Agencies on FirstNet can request deployables at no additional charge. When evaluating services, Texas City ISD's director of school safety asked a commercial carrier for the cost of a deployable in an emergency. Does your carrier understand your needs? **WATCH VIDEO**

Learn more about apps developed just for you

With reliable access to voice, data and video in the field from FirstNet, public-safety agencies can depend on mobile apps as operational tools. FirstNet apps advance the capabilities of our nation's first responders by automating the administrative and simplifying the complex.

While FirstNet devices work with any commercial app, your needs are unique. So, FirstNet provides a dedicated app store just for you.

Join us for an ongoing webinar series about the apps in the store. On May 16 you'll learn about ways your agency can enable persistence services and enable, set and enforce security and data protection policies. **REGISTER TODAY**

First responders win

Critical information when you need it

When a multi-day sports event drew hundreds of thousands of visitors to San Antonio, first responders on FirstNet found the platform to be just what they needed to send and receive information in a timely manner. **WATCH VIDEO**

Helping San Antonio develop a common operating picture

By James Glass
Deputy Southwest Texas Fusion Center

Putting on a large-scale event brings its share of headaches for a city. That's no different for us here in San Antonio. And hosting the college basketball championship here a year ago was definitely a challenge. The Southwest Texas Fusion Center took on the role of providing intelligence support for the NCAA's championship weekend in 2018. And we couldn't

have done any of that without FirstNet and the tools that Esri was able to provide. Initially, some officers were reluctant to add another tool to their

Helping San Antonio develop a common operating picture

belts. But they were quick to adopt once they saw the benefits of FirstNet. They could take pictures, send text messages back and forth and see that common operating map.

A common operating picture

With a data connection we could depend on with FirstNet – and the Esri applications we deployed – we were able to develop a common operating picture.

We could monitor our live data from police coming in through our computerized systems; the closed-circuit television cameras – and all the different aspects of the event. This included:

- The 911 calls as they came in and around the footprint
- Structures and buildings
- Our ambulances, EMS and specialized units
- All the different law enforcement agents – including our own officers, partners, and the Texas Department of Public Safety
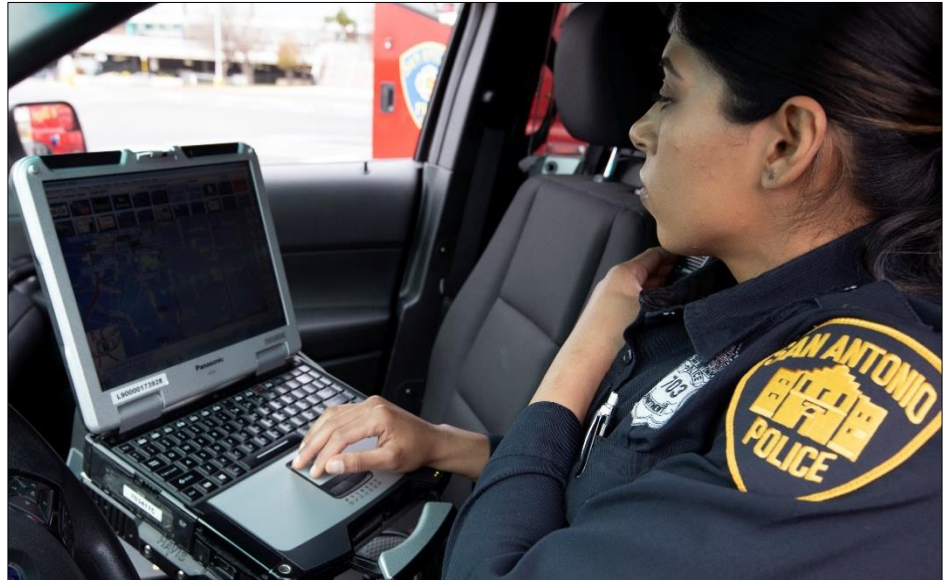
And because it was a web-based environment, we could share that same view with all the command posts – including our mobile units; the command post at the convention center; the Fusion Center and fire command post.

The best thing about it is that *everybody* under the common operating platform could see their own assets moving around. And they could see what was impacting that asset.

Mitigating issues

This helped us mitigate issues as they came up. Lost children, gate crashers, ticket scalpers.

We dealt with about 280 different suspicious packages. Because of the clear bag policy, you couldn't drag your big purse or backpack into the event. So, people were discarding these or hiding them behind dumpsters or planters. And we had to deal with those bags because they were a potential threat, as we've seen across the country. Especially

The Southwest Texas Fusion Center is one of 79 in the country. Thanks to the dependable connection from FirstNet, all the different law enforcement agencies had a common operating picture.

within the context of the Boston Marathon bombing, in which the bomber used a backpack to hide a bomb.

The technology gave us a little bit of an edge – and the situational awareness and assurance that if something bad were to happen, we were prepared for it.

For example, we had a gate crasher trying to come through the back hall of the concert event because it was full. We could track the officer's movement on the map as he was addressing that gatecrasher. And once he found that gatecrasher we could broadcast his picture out to everybody.

Putting the tools to use

Going into our event, we couldn't help but think about Las Vegas. In fact, the thing that brought the most terror to the collective was the outside concert event with high-rise buildings in the perimeter. This was just months after the shooting in Las Vegas at the Mandalay Bay and the open-air concert they had there. So, putting information in the hands of the folks in that environment was paramount for us.

All public safety agencies should be on FirstNet.

I can't see us doing the events we do and managing those events in the future without FirstNet. The throughput and the ability to communicate through that cellular device has become the standard now for San Antonio.

We're going to be deploying this over and over again in as many events that we have.

James Glass is the Deputy Director of the Southwest Texas Fusion Center which operates under the San Antonio Police Department. The Southwest Texas Fusion Center is a State of Texas and U.S. Department of Homeland Security recognized center, one of 79 throughout the country. He has 28 years of experience, the first eight with the Illinois State Police and the past 20 with SAPD.

Director Glass holds a bachelor's degree from University of Illinois at Springfield and a master's in justice police from the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is also an adjunct professor with Texas A&M San Antonio.

A lifetime commitment to public safety and to improving technology

Editor's Note: This article is part of an ongoing series of profiles on the people and faces behind the FirstNet Program at AT&T and what motivates them every day.

For more than three decades, Ryan Burchnell has dedicated his life to public service – and to improving technology for first responders.

The native Floridian grew up in Tallahassee. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps right out of high school. Then he put himself through college on the G.I. Bill. While attending Florida State University, he got interested in law enforcement after talking with a cousin who was a deputy with the Leon County Sheriff's Office, he says.

"I did an internship there and I was hooked," says Burchnell, now a director for policy and strategy with the FirstNet Program at AT&T.

From Leon County Sheriff's Office, Burchnell moved on to the Florida Highway Patrol, where he served in a variety of executive staff roles, including as a troop commander and chief investigator. As the chief intelligence officer, he worked to create an intelligence program from the ground up – along with all the technology related to intelligence collection.

He later took on the job of Chief Technology Officer for the Department of Public Safety. And he led Florida's early FirstNet efforts, supervising the data collection from agencies across the state. Those responses served as part of the basis for the First Responder Network Authority's Request for Proposal to build the first nationwide network for first responders.

Closing technology gaps

"The lack of technology and ability to communicate with other agencies and disciplines was a big driver for me," says Burchnell. "So, I want to make sure that what we're delivering is closing those gaps. I want us focused on helping first responders do their jobs and properly supporting the

SPOTLIGHT PROFILE

Ryan Burchnell

"FirstNet is about keeping people safe…in the public safety community. The further we go with FirstNet, the more people we can keep alive – and the fewer names we have to put on a memorial wall."

community I came from."

Part of Burchnell's job is to provide the perspective of the first responder. As a member of the FirstNet Response Operations Group at AT&T, he wants to ensure FirstNet is deploying assets "based on how public safety operates."

"Coordinating the response with the public safety entities and working with the emergency operations centers in each state is critical," he adds. "And people are noticing. They get the fact that this is something different – that it's not the typical wireless carrier response."

He also wants public safety to understand the difference between a typical wireless carrier and a public safety carrier.

"My number one mission in life is to make sure first responders understand this nationwide public safety network is just for them," he says, "developed over several years. It's truly something built the way they want it built; delivered the way they wanted it delivered.

"We're contractually obligated to do this over 25 years," he adds. "You can say you have a commitment to public safety all day long. But if you're not contractually obligated, then it doesn't really mean a thing."

A personal stake

Burchnell is deeply committed on a personal level, as well. He lost a classmate and a family member

because of "communications issues. They didn't have the situational awareness they needed."

"And FirstNet is about keeping people safe and alive in the public safety community," he says. "The further we go with FirstNet, the more people we can keep alive – and the fewer names we have to put on a memorial wall. That's what drives me every day to continue to fight the good fight and make sure people adopt FirstNet."

In a word, FirstNet is "transformational," Burchnell says.

"When people understand what it is, it's a game changer," he says. "It truly gets to the heart of the previous problems. All they have to do is sign up."

Ryan Burchnell remains a reserve deputy sheriff in Walton County, Fla., directly engaged with the law enforcement community. He's also a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police Homeland Security Committee and part of the steering committee for the Department of Homeland Security's First Responder Resource Group. The group meets once a year to brainstorm ideas for closing technology gaps. After retiring from the Florida Highway Patrol, Ryan served as executive director of the Alabama State Police, where he was appointed the state's FirstNet Single Point of Contact (SPOC) by the governor of Alabama.

CUSTOMER NEWS

Anchorage Police joins FirstNet to better serve city

The Anchorage Police Department is connecting its officers to FirstNet – the communications platform built for public safety. The tech upgrade equips personnel with new capabilities and reliable access to critical information in the field, so it can better serve those who live, work and visit Anchorage.

Joining FirstNet was already in the works prior to a Nov. 30 earthquake. The event highlighted the significance of the new technology. While our officers never lost communication over their radios during the earthquake response, there's no guarantee that it can't happen in the future.

FirstNet smartphones give police, fire and paramedics one more tool that helps them stay connected both when the radios are working and when they are not. "When the shaking stopped, one of the first things I started doing was using my FirstNet phone to call members of our APD team to begin our response to the disaster," said Justin Doll, Anchorage Police Chief. **READ MORE**

Riviera Beach Police, Fire Rescue join FirstNet

RIVIERA BEACH, Fla. — Riviera Beach Police and Fire Rescue in Florida provided first responders with a communications upgrade by transitioning to FirstNet. This move lets both departments take advantage of the early benefits of FirstNet.

"The FirstNet priority and preemption feature creates an environment of clear and constant communications. This new capability will prove to be essential during times of hyper telecommunication activities which would otherwise limit access to the network," said Fire Chief John Curd. **READ MORE**

Medxcel Joins FirstNet communications platform

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Medxcel is connecting its emergency management teams to FirstNet – public safety's dedicated communications platform. This tech upgrade allows Medxcel to equip eligible hospital personnel with new capabilities and reliable wireless access to critical information, so they can better serve patients at its facilities across the country.

"Providing emergency management to 161 hospitals across 21 states requires us to make sure we have the best communication systems available," said Scott Cormier, vice president of Emergency Management, Environment of Care and Safety, Medxcel. "FirstNet gives us the reliability to help maintain communications during disasters, so our teams can coordinate patient needs while also staying in close contact with our first responder partners to prep for in-bound care."