FIRSTNET®

Newsletter

Del Oro Water and a wildfire crisis

When California's Camp Fire wiped out Del Oro Water Company's connectivity, it forced employees into manual operation — and into potential danger. Hear how FirstNet was able to restore the company's connectivity and help keep employees safe. **WATCH VIDEO**

"When I think of FirstNet now, I think of endless opportunities."

By Bryan M. Fortino
Chief Financial Officer, Del Oro Water Company

Del Oro Water Company serves 20 districts throughout the State of California. This accounts for 9,000 service connections from Bakersfield to Fresno serving about 23,000 customers, including schools, fire departments and local businesses.

We depend on technology to help us do our job and keep our field staff safe. Our Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system allows us to remote control our assets in the field in a catastrophic event. This helps us make sure firefighters have adequate water and pressure and keeps our field staff out of danger. Without it, it's manual control. It's losing the ability to view our SCADA

FirstNet passes 750,000 connections

Performs faster than any commercial network for second consecutive quarter

Nearly 9,000 public safety agencies and organizations are now subscribed to FirstNet, accounting for over 750,000 connections in service. And the numbers are growing daily.

For the second consecutive quarter, FirstNet brings its subscribers the fastest overall network experience. According to the results of tests taken with Speedtest as analyzed by AT&T, FirstNet once again performed faster than any commercial network.[1]

These results come as the number of markets with the FirstNet Band 14 spectrum nears 650.[2] We're moving quickly with about 65% of our nationwide coverage targets completed well ahead of schedule. The more we roll out Band 14 across the country, the more we're able to provide first responders with truly dedicated coverage and capacity

Midwest flooding assistance

Learn how FirstNet brought first responders in the Midwest the communication capabilities they needed during record flooding. **WATCH VIDEO**

"When I think of FirstNet now, I think of endless opportunities."

and it's potentially putting lives at risk.

That's why we're glad we're on FirstNet now. And thanks to the support we received from the FirstNet team when our systems went down, we are customers for life!

The Camp Fire

On Nov. 8, 2018, when the Camp Fire broke out, we got word from our regional superintendent, John O'Farrell, that it was spreading rapidly. Cell service went down around 9 a.m. and I knew instantly that it was not going to come back up quickly. I knew that we had to have a backup plan for communication.

John had already deployed the staff using manual methods of turning pumps on and off, making sure that the firefighters had adequate water and water pressure for the fire hydrants. The staff was operating in emergency mode. They knew where they had to be and what they had to do.

We began trying to locate our field staff to make sure they were safe. They're equipped with cell phones and tablets and we use the various "find me" applications to locate them. But we quickly realized we could see a few of the staff members, but not all. We knew our internet and phone system had started to go down.

Total Chaos

This was the first experience where total chaos broke out throughout the town; throughout our service areas. There were mass evacuations. And we had no communication with our staff.

Without internet, we couldn't view our SCADA systems, or control those devices in remote locations throughout our districts. The SCADA systems allows us to see flow rates, which pumps are on, which pumps have stopped, whether there is a power or internet outage.

We plan for emergencies and have meet-up places and communication, but without that communication in

"Without internet, we couldn't view our SCADA systems, or control those devices in remote locations throughout our districts."

place, we went to Post-It notes. The only way to communicate with the Post-It notes was to **physically be** at the various pumping sites where we were posting notes. We had to let other staff know when we had been there, and what we had done.

Even though the fire had destroyed entire neighborhoods, water service was still on at those homes. Our field staff had to deal with turning off valves in the street and at the residential homes that were drawing water firefighters could use to fight the fire instead.

Calling for help

Starting Nov. 8 – and throughout the weekend – I made at least 40 phone calls to our service providers; to multiple agencies and various water utilities in the California Water Association. We were trying to find other means of communication for our field staff to coordinate their locations and assist them with their needs.

Then we received a call from Kristi Mercado. She said, "I'm with FirstNet. What do you need?"

I'd heard about FirstNet before. But I always assumed FirstNet was for first responders only. I didn't know it was available to agencies that support first responders.

We received a Cradlepoint IBR900

the next morning – provisioned for what our IT department said we needed. It had the FirstNet SIM card. Once we connected it, everything fired right up.

Immediate relief

Instantly, SCADA was working. The alarms stopped. And we were able to see what pumps were off, what pumps were stuck in manual mode, what pumps were still running and most importantly, our tank levels.

We knew we had a long road ahead of us. But we also knew that in the future we had a reliable team and partner in FirstNet.

When I think of FirstNet now, I think of endless opportunities. I think the biggest benefit that Del Oro has received is the support staff, the knowledge, the teams that FirstNet has either partnered with or deploys. They are all first class, they're quick and knowledgeable.

In a word, FirstNet is a lifesaver.

Bryan M. Fortino is the Chief Financial Officer for Del Oro Water Company, founded in 1963 under jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission and serving 20 districts throughout the State of California. Fortino holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Arizona State University.

On hand, on call to help ensure public safety has what it needs

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.

Kristi Mercado is not an 8 to 5 person. She's an "up early in the morning, watching the news, checking social media" kind of person. And her focus is always on public safety.

"I want to know if there was an earthquake or a fire or some other incident where I need to be reaching out to my customers," says Kristi, an account sales executive for the FirstNet Program at AT&T. "This is about public safety. And that's not an 8-5 job."

The job is about being on hand – and on call – to help ensure the public safety agencies she serves in California have the tools they need to communicate and do their jobs.

"FirstNet can encompass a lot of technologies that public safety will need to communicate clearly and concisely in an emergency," Kristi says. "So, part of my job is to work with the counties and address their needs."

That's exactly what she did last November during the California Camp Fire -- when she got the call to help out a company in crisis.

Del Oro Water wildfire crisis

Kristi has witnessed her share of disasters in more than 20 years in the business of supporting public safety. But the Camp Fire was a testament to her commitment to first responders and those who support their vital functions.

Kristi had received word that Del Oro Water Company had lost the terrestrial internet connection to its Magalia Service Center and its ability to monitor critical water resources.

She reached out to Del Oro's chief financial officer, Bryan Fortino, and offered to help – even though the company was not yet a FirstNet customer.

Bryan noted that the company's Magalia center supports all

SPOTLIGHT PROFILE

Kristi Mercado

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"I've been through a lot of emergencies before, but this one was really different.... I felt horrible for the people who were doing everything they could and stood strong during that time. They did their jobs above and beyond – some even knowing that they didn't have houses anymore."

– Kristi Mercado
FirstNet Consultant for California

Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems, which control pumps, valves, boosters and provide water levels in the tanks. Without an internet connection, Del Oro's field staff couldn't get the information provided by the SCADA interface – critical in managing the water systems.

"He told me they were having to send people into dangerous zones," Kristi

says. "They needed the technology to monitor resources and help the firefighters who were pulling water down to put out the fires."

Identifying the solution

Kristi and her team identified the solution to reestablish the internet connection – a Cradlepoint IBR900 router. And she set out on the 2-hour drive to deliver it, knowing that the California Highway Patrol and National Guard had closed many roads because of the fires.

When she arrived at the checkpoint, she explained the situation.

"Everyone was saying: 'You can't go through. This road isn't open to the,'" she says.

There was still heavy emergency response and it was unsafe. But CHP officers recognized her. And once she explained the situation, they drove her in so she could deliver the technology to Del Oro.

"I've been through a lot of emergencies before," Krisi says, "but this one was really different. The devastation that I saw and the destruction was unbelievable. The houses, the melted glass and twisted metal. You couldn't even recognize

FirstNet passes 750,000 connections; performs faster than any commercial network for 2nd consecutive quarter

when they need it. This helps them connect to critical information, communicate and coordinate. "FirstNet is designed to be different because that's what public safety specifically asked for. This is the only platform that has been built from the ground up just for this community, and we believe FirstNet is the most important network in the country because it serves public safety across the country," said Chris Sambar, senior vice president, FirstNet Program at AT&T. "As we grow and evolve FirstNet, we're proud to connect more members of the public safety community and further empower the men and women we rely on to keep us safe with the advanced communications capabilities needed to help strengthen their mission delivery."

Increased reliability

In addition, public safety agencies have been able to rely on the FirstNet Response Operations Program – created a year ago – for planned and emergency events. This year alone, FirstNet has helped first responders stay connected during nearly 75 emergency events. From wildfires and floods, to a tropical storm turned hurricane and tornadoes, to search and rescue missions in remote locations and more, FirstNet has been there.

"The support we received from FirstNet during the record rainfall and flooding earlier this year was second to none," said Keenan Campbell, Situation Unit Leader – Illinois Incident Management Team. "Having a FirstNet SatCOLT rapidly deployed and onsite to keep our command post connected to our broader team was an invaluable asset to our mission, and it gives me peace of mind knowing that I have a network that will be there when and where I need it."

"FirstNet is the real deal," said John Rockwell, Statewide 9-1-1 Coordinator, FirstNet SPOC, Acting SWIC, Department of Public Safety, Alaska State Troopers. "We helped organize deployment to fight a fire in northern Alaska last month, and we needed

FirstNet has supported agencies at more than 100 planned events this year, including coast-to-coast 4th of July celebrations.

communications. A FirstNet SatCOLT was there in 5 hours. It was the furthest north we've ever had unified communications, making our ability to respond that much easier and more efficient."

First responders have also relied on FirstNet during music festivals, sporting events and speaker rallies for public officials. We've supported agencies at more than 100 planned events this year, including coast-to-coast 4th of July celebrations.

When emergencies strike, it's also critical that 911 call centers have the tools they need to maintain operations. FirstNet can help 911 communicators stay connected during potential service-impacting situations, serving as a wireless backup solution to AT&T ESInet™ – a modernized 911 call-routing service.

This backup capability is enabled by AT&T Private Mobile Connection, which connects AT&T ESInet to FirstNet for added redundancy. If AT&T ESInet detects a failure in the primary connection to the PSAP, emergency calls will be automatically routed over FirstNet. Keeping PSAPs connected during critical times helps improve emergency response and enables 911 communicators to provide seamless service to the community until the primary connection is restored.

Situational awareness

FirstNet goes beyond delivering reliable and redundant connectivity. It builds on that connectivity with innovative apps that can cost-effectively transform capabilities, drive efficiencies, enhance situational awareness and increase security. New apps launched in and coming to the FirstNet App Catalog – created specifically for public safety – include:

- **FirstNet Assist** – Now FirstNet Certified™ and included in the FirstNet App Catalog, this solution allows public safety support personnel in the field to see active events and incidents within a 50-mile radius and request device uplift. This app also provides all users with direct access to dedicated FirstNet Care specialists specially trained to help first responders and performs device diagnostics.

- **Response for FirstNet** – This low-cost, simple-to-use situational awareness platform now provides new features to FirstNet subscribers, like live location, media sharing and team mobilization, to support day-to-day and emergency operations.

- **FirstNet Cybersecurity Awareness** – When it comes to

OTHER NEWS

New features for FirstNet users

Network Status Map Enhancements

- The basic map shows network coverage, network alerts, vehicular traffic and weather, including fire, flash flood and high winds. Among the improvements in the user experience and navigation within Local Control:
  - o Show/hide legend – replacing the static legend
  - o User does not need to scroll down to manage filters

FirstNet leader-led Training available

- To help you use and manage features of FirstNet Local Control, leader led training is currently available. These courses are intended for FirstNet administrators, operations and Uplift managers and are available at no additional charge.
- Instructor-led courses help you learn to manage your administrative needs for FirstNet wireless services. Plus, you'll have an opportunity to ask questions and get answers from the instructor in real time. Each 1-hour course is designed to efficiently and effectively manage your FirstNet service and get answers to your questions in real time! These courses will enable you to:
  - o Effectively use Uplift Management
  - o Manage user profiles, services, and mobile devices
  - o Shop for/customize: rate plans, wireless devices, and mobile solutions
  - o View wireless-account reports and information.

Helping agencies access the latest tools with IoT Video Intelligence solution

To further help law enforcement agencies access the latest tools empowering cities, AT&T has teamed with Hitachi to deliver a comprehensive, intelligent end-to-end solution built specifically for public safety.

As a result, FirstNet customers now have the means to use near real-time data and predictive analytics to help make their cities, venues, campuses, and events safer and responses to emergencies more efficient.

The Video Intelligence solution contains a suite of offerings that provide law enforcement with near real-time data analysis, insights and alerts to help improve situational awareness, incident management and event workflow automation. Plus, it can use existing cameras and integrates with 3rd party systems like 9-1-1, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), weather monitoring, GPS tracking and records management systems, among other systems.

Video Intelligence also includes Command/Control Center Data Visualization and Monitoring Suite, deployed on-premise and/or in a cloud environment, and provides law enforcement and first responders with a single unified map-based dashboard that enables them to view, search and analyze public and private city-wide data, video analytics and surveillance and to then assemble the disparate data and video through new or existing cameras and other IoT devices.

FirstNet passes 750,000 connections

(Continued from previous page)
cybersecurity, it's no secret that people are considered the first line of defense. This holds true for public safety. So, this app,

coming soon to the FirstNet App Catalog, will provide public safety agencies with easy-to-use educational materials that help keep cybersecurity top of mind.

The app will also include training videos that simply break down cybersecurity concerns like social engineering, phishing and spoofing, so first responders have the tools they need to stay cyber-aware and cyber-safe.

"As we planned for FirstNet, we worked hand-in-hand with public safety across the nation to help us design a network to meet their critical communications needs," said Jeff Bratcher, Chief Technology and Operations Officer, FirstNet Authority. "We are pleased with the progress AT&T continues to make to fulfill the promise of FirstNet – delivering the tools public safety asked for to help with their lifesaving mission. This is public safety's network, and we will continue to engage with them to advance their network, FirstNet, for years to come."

[1]*Based on AT&T analysis of Ookla® Speedtest Intelligence® data average download speeds for Q2 2019. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.*
[2]*Markets defined by FCC CMAs.*

On hand and on call to ensure public safety has what it needs

some of the cars."

"I felt horrible for the people who were doing everything they could and stood strong during that time. They did their jobs above and beyond – some even knowing that they didn't have houses anymore."

A passion for public safety

Kristi says helping public safety is something she's always wanted to do – both in her current role as a sales executive for the FirstNet Program at AT&T and as a Ski Patrol volunteer.

"When I was young, I thought I wanted to be an FBI agent," says Kristi. She also serves on the California Board for FirstNet and is the voice of FirstNet at public hearings in the state. "I wanted to make a difference way back then."

But then she got a job at a mobile communications company right out of school working on public safety solutions. And she knew she'd found her calling. When the chance came up to take a job with the FirstNet Program at AT&T, she jumped at it.

"One of the people who had a real impact in my life is Stacy Schwartz," Kristi says. "Not only does she do FirstNet, but she runs all federal, plus 911. She supports her team. I like that."

Choosing FirstNet

Kristi wants agencies to view FirstNet as a partner.

"It's a choice," she says. "But public safety requested this from the federal government. And they chose the partner that they wanted to do this.

"We have a contract for 25 years. It's in our DNA," she says. "This goes all the way back to the switchboard operators, connecting people who needed help. We're not going to walk away from that.

"We truly care about public safety."

FirstNet is essential, she adds. "It's critical. It's lifesaving."