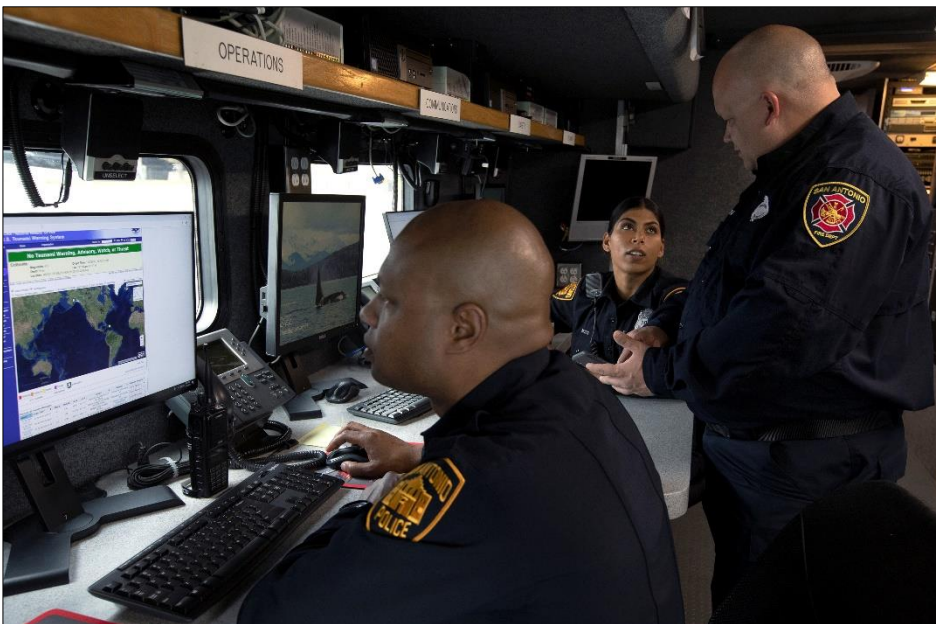


Newsletter

March 2019

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Field-tested winner



Building a common operating picture

When San Antonio public safety agencies managed a large, multi-day sports event, they relied on FirstNet for the bandwidth needed to create a common operating picture for first responders. See how they did it. [WATCH VIDEO](#)

“Communication is the tip of the spear in any emergency situation”

By Charles Hood
San Antonio Fire Chief

Communication is the tip of the spear in any type of emergency response. And for a city like ours, it's absolutely critical.

We have a lot of large-scale events, whether it's the college basketball finals, fiestas, parades –where we have hundreds of thousands of people. But while the size and scope of the incidents change, the one constant has always been the need for reliable communication. In the past, we carried additional radios and phones – and satellite phones – because we didn't know what the communication challenges were going to be in a particular



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FirstNet turns 1, celebrates with heightened security, control and capabilities

By Stacy Schwartz
Vice President, AT&T – Public Safety & FirstNet Program

A year ago, Public Safety's specialized communications platform came to life with the launch of the [FirstNet](#) network core. It was a milestone moment for Public Safety – marking a significant communications advancement for first responders.

We built the FirstNet evolved packet core from the ground up to meet your specific needs. The physically separate infrastructure on which it was architected is completely dedicated to FirstNet subscribers. Why?

Because that's what you expressly asked for. This was also critical to creating the highly secure communications environment you demand.

To further enhance security, we applied our leadership in software-defined networking to the design of the FirstNet core. By using next-generation, virtualized security functions, we can more rapidly and flexibly respond to your security needs.

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Communication is the tip of the spear in any emergency

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area. Then we would have to hand out radios to the different agencies so we could communicate with them.

It was a huge challenge.

A game changer

Having FirstNet is a game changer. This is a dedicated system that we can use throughout this country. And we can interact with other agencies and systems that may not be as sophisticated as the ones we're bringing in.

As a fire chief, there are certain things that keep me awake at night: a multiple shooter or mass casualty event like that or a coordinated complex attack on the city of San Antonio or this region.

What FirstNet has done for our Southwest Texas Fusion Center – which is in the same building as our police and fire departments – is that it has allowed us to have confidence in our partners' ability to communicate with us. It's reassuring for us to have that strong communication capability. To have access to near real-time information and better situational awareness.

Mitigating risk

The biggest risk is always the safety of the personnel assigned to an incident. If something critical happens and you need help, you need additional resources at a moment's notice, you don't want to miss that call. You don't want to have to figure out some alternate way to communicate in an emergency.

Another thing that's really critical for first responders when you're deployed, is to be able to communicate with your family. I was in Hemphill, Texas, for 14 days after the Space Shuttle Columbia explosion in 2003. We were in the middle of a swamp. And I had four young boys and a wife at home. If you can't call home and get that comfort in



The Southwest Texas Fusion Center in San Antonio houses officers from the San Antonio Police Department, Fire Department, as well as representatives from the FBI, DHS and other federal agencies.

knowing that they're okay, it makes it very difficult to work. So, when FirstNet came in and started giving us information we were ecstatic. FirstNet takes care of some of response challenges we've had in years past that many of us with 30-plus years of service remember. We know how difficult it was to not be able to communicate with a multitude of agencies.

Staying connected

The year before the Final Four, I was able to go out and shadow the Phoenix Emergency Management Team. I was able to look at their communications and the number of partners or stakeholders that were part of providing for their Final Four.

We were able to take that knowledge and look at where we set up command, how we run our Fusion Center, how we stage our resources and the number of military and federal agencies that are going to come in and help us.

The other thing we had to consider is we were going to have 20,000 to 30,000 people coming out using their

cellphones and potentially tying up the system. For us to not have to worry about that as a challenge – it was something that was very comforting.

It would be disappointing to go into a major metropolitan city or to deploy our assets someplace else and not have that FirstNet capability. I know the next two cities hosting the Final Four shadowed here. They saw the interaction, they saw the capability. So, I'm sure for any large-scale event that FirstNet is going to be a part of it.

Charles Hood has been the Fire Chief for the San Antonio Fire Department – one of the largest in the country with about 1,800 personnel – for the last 12 years. He has 35 years of experience, including with the City of Phoenix Fire Department. Chief Hood holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Service Management from the University of Ottawa and has attended the Harvard Kennedy School of Executive Education. He is on the adjunct faculty at Texas A&M University National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center.

McLeod: Technology can make the future real and apps bring it to life

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.

Suzette McLeod usually starts her mornings with exercise. Then she jots down her big “to do” items on the whiteboard beside her computer – her “big rocks,” as she calls them – and gets to work.

As the marketing manager for the Apps Ecosystem of the FirstNet Program at AT&T, she's usually working to identify new apps that can be useful to first responders. Or she's planning webinars to educate the first responder community about the latest apps. Or she's working on putting apps through the certification process to help ensure that they are tested and reliable. The tasks are endless.

“Technology can make the future real. And the network is critical,” McLeod says. “But to me, what will really bring it to life is the apps. The first responder community has not really had access to improvements in technology. And this is an area that's ripe for help.”

McLeod joined the FirstNet Program in June 2017, after 11 years with the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security. There, she worked on building adoption of national information-sharing policy, programs and technical solutions across local, state, tribal and federal agencies. And she supported the President's 21st Century Policing Task Force by designing the national body-worn camera toolkit.

But her work with the federal agency that develops national policy and administers financial benefits to survivors of fallen officers ignited a new passion. She wanted to ensure public safety had the tools they needed to do their jobs.

Solving everyday problems

“Apps – and technology in general – have already transformed the lives of the people they protect and serve,” McLeod says. “With FirstNet, they get



SPOTLIGHT PROFILE

**Suzette
McLeod**

“Apps ... have already transformed the lives of the people they protect and serve.”

the reliable connections they need, so they can start depending on apps and digital tools to make their jobs easier.”

The apps that excite her the most, she says, are the ones that address the typical problems we see every day. For example, there's an app that could help officers quickly identify a person with special needs. That could be an elderly person with Alzheimer's or someone with autism, both of whom might respond differently in an encounter with law enforcement.

There's an app that helps students in an active shooter situation. The app can send information about the student's location and the shooter – so law enforcement can get a better picture of what is happening.

“The days I love the most are the ones where I'm talking to product providers who are doing things for public safety,” McLeod says. “Or talking to first responders who are telling me things they need.”

The right technology

The right tech can automate the mundane and administrative and simplify the complex, she says. And that's what public safety needs.

In her conversations with law enforcement, she said, she's already getting great feedback about the apps they're using. “Many of them have told me that the rest of the people in their agency were continually trying to borrow their phones,” she says. “I'm

hearing some great success stories out there. We need to make those more commonplace.”

Her message to first responders who are not yet on board: “FirstNet is your communications platform. You asked for it. And I really want you to get involved early on so you can start using all this great technology.”

Learning from the best

In terms of the big influences in her life, McLeod says she's had many. But if she were to name just one, it would be her father. He was a pioneer in the computing world, designing computer systems well before PCs and cell phones.

“He challenged me to do things far beyond my age, education and experience,” she says. “I remember testing an early educational prototype with an odd keyboard and suction cups on our hall phone before I understood how unusual that was. And soldering chips on circuit boards for a ticketing system in the 6th grade. Working with him, I learned to take risks, learn quickly and figure out things on the fly.”

“I believe every single person has something unique and special to offer, so I try to stay open and learn from everyone,” she adds. “I truly love learning and everyone is a teacher.”

Perhaps three of her best teachers, she says: Her son and her two “perfect grandchildren.”

FirstNet Turns 1, celebrates with heightened capabilities

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And while attempts have been made by others in the industry to imitate the FirstNet core's dedicated, physically separate and highly secure environment, it continues to stand unmatched.

The FirstNet network core also continues to serve as a springboard for the new capabilities, next-generation functionality and innovative tools that will drive Public Safety's capabilities forward.

Twelve months in

Since its launch, more than 90 devices have been tested and approved to operate on the FirstNet network core, giving Public Safety access to the critical capabilities it enables. Of these, nearly 50 are FirstNet Ready™, which means they also support access to Band 14. And we continue to bring more devices to the FirstNet ecosystem. We just launched the ruggedized Kyocera DuraForce PRO 2, and we'll soon be adding Panasonic's TOUGHBOOK 33 and TOUGHBOOK 54.

We also upped your situational awareness and in-field capabilities. More than 50 iOS and Android apps now reside in the FirstNet App Catalog, representing 30+ unique apps relevant to the public safety mission. Recent additions include [AccessMyLAN](#), [Callyo 10-21 Video](#), [CrisisGo](#), [Lookout®](#) and [pulsara](#). We've also added two solutions from the Department of Homeland Security: eNIFOG and eAUXFOG.

First responders can learn more about each app in the Catalog via a monthly webinar series we just launched. You can register [here](#) for the April 18 webinar on situational awareness.

The next 12 months

To keep innovation for Public Safety going strong, we're rolling out new tools that will continue to help FirstNet subscribers take advantage of the specialized FirstNet experience.

- **FirstNet Single Sign-On** – First responders working a crime scene, fire or incident shouldn't need to spend precious seconds repeatedly entering complex passwords to get



Stacy Schwartz

and maintain application access. Single Sign-On solves for that. This new solution will give FirstNet subscribers easy access to participating applications and other mobile destinations while maintaining a highly secure environment without the need to constantly re-authenticate. It provides both user convenience and quick access in critical scenarios for first responders.

- **Encrypted Assets** – We're further fortifying the FirstNet-dedicated Satellite Cell on Light Trucks (SatCOLTs). As FirstNet subscribers connect to these assets, their communications are encrypted across satellite links. This creates an even more secure network environment for Public Safety. The FirstNet SatCOLTs are part of the nationwide fleet of 72 dedicated deployable network assets available 24/7 at the request of FirstNet subscribers and at no additional charge.
- **FirstNet Assist** – Available in the coming months, this app will take FirstNet customer care mobile. FirstNet Assist will also allow first responders that have been assigned a lower level of priority or FirstNet users providing essential services to support Public Safety – like utilities or

- transportation – to request priority uplift from the field. Once approved by the command post manager, this will enable these users to access higher priority levels. The ability to request priority uplift will be available upon entering a 50-mile radius of an emergency, making it even easier for command post managers to quickly uplift those critical to a response.
- **Increased Network Visibility** – We're giving FirstNet subscribers a level of network visibility unlike anything they've ever experienced. New enhancements to the Local Control Portal's Network Status Map will help public safety administrators better understand what's going on with the network at any given time. Plus, in alignment with data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), agency administrators can now overlay the status of ongoing flood and fire borders in relation to their jurisdiction for added situational awareness.

We're also rolling out 2 new tools for developers to help foster continued innovation for Public Safety across a broad ecosystem of innovators and creators:

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FirstNet celebrates with heightened capabilities, security

- **FirstNet Single Sign-On Software Development Kit (SDK)** – Developers creating public safety solutions can integrate FirstNet Single Sign-On directly into their apps. The new SDK can be found on the [FirstNet Developer Portal](#).
- **FirstNet App Priority™ Application Programming Interface (API)** – We're extending First Priority™ service to automatically apply to critical public safety apps sourced from the FirstNet App Catalog. Developers must request permission to use the App Priority™ API to build in the highest level of priority access to the use of their app – which will also need to be submitted for review and approval. App Priority™ is especially beneficial during mutual-aid situations where multiple first responders and support organizations are involved and relying on intelligence from key apps as part of their complex response. This can also be found on the [FirstNet Developer Portal](#).

It's been a transformational year for public safety communications. And we'll continue to deliver the products, services and technologies that are making a difference for first responders across the country.