

# Newsletter

May 2019

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## Department of Homeland Security Hazmat Exercise

In December 2018, the Department of Homeland Security Science & Technology Directorate, and the Next Generation First Responder Apex program, worked with multiple agencies to simulate a hazardous materials crisis in the Port of Houston. Hear how participants used FirstNet to communicate and to stream information about patients and first responders. [WATCH VIDEO](#)

## We're able to go from "1,000 words to a picture is worth 1,000 words"

**By Rodney Reed**

Assistant Chief of Operational Support  
Harris County Fire Marshal's Office

Harris County was one of the early adopters of FirstNet and access to Band 14. So, we got an early understanding of what it means to have an LTE network specifically designed for public safety and to support our first responders.

As we began to shift to FirstNet, we started looking for ways to migrate first responders and allow them to quickly take advantage of the extra band class. One of the gaps we have identified in technology adoption is figuring out how to create a pipeline that will allow us to move the amount of bandwidth we need.

*(Continued on Page 2)*



## FirstNet crosses half-a-million connections

### Expands coverage and capacity in 600+ markets nationwide

FirstNet, built with AT&T\*, continues to gain rapid momentum as it brings advanced capabilities to first responders across the country. FirstNet has well-surpassed the half-a-million mark, with 600,000+ device connections being used by more than 7,250 public safety agencies. And the coverage, capacity and capability available to you continues to expand, giving you a network experience that consistently performs over 25% faster than any commercial network.<sup>1</sup>

### Transforming communications

"Last year's 7.0 earthquake really brought the significance of the FirstNet system to light," said Justin Doll, Anchorage Police Chief. "When the shaking stopped, I relied on my FirstNet phone to begin our response to the disaster."

"Where others had trouble connecting due to network congestion, FirstNet gave us the uninterrupted ability to coordinate our tireless efforts to keep the citizens of Anchorage safe."

A majority of agencies and nearly 50% of FirstNet's total connections

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## OTHER NEWS

“We're able to move video and data in an environment where we're not afraid we're going to get throttled.”

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That's where FirstNet is going to help us. It's going to give us that resilient network. It's going to give us the pipeline we need, when we need it. It's going to allow us to work together and integrate. So that when we are in those mission-critical environments and have to share information, FirstNet is going to allow us to do that.

### Testing the network

For the Port of Houston exercise, we brought together fire, EMS, law enforcement, hazmat from multiple agencies and emergency operation centers from the county and the city. Each one of us have our own procurement process. And as we adopt new technologies, one of the big challenges we face is bridging operational communication gaps. The port environment created a unique situation that allowed us to look for those gaps. We have land-based operations, we have water-based operations, and we have ship boarding. All of these create some really unique problems.

But with the sensors that were on our first responders and on our simulated patients and victims, we could move that data back to the situational awareness screens. So, that allowed us to go from 1,000 words to a picture is worth 1,000 words.

It was an absolute eye-opener for us to visualize this data on these single screens. To have constant connectivity. To be able to see our first responders and our patients – despite the geographic distances.

The information management was absolutely phenomenal.

### The new standard

For the longest time, LMR – or land mobile radio – was the standard for us to share information. But we're going into a digital age where we're sharing data and analytics, first responder



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physio capabilities, vital tags with patient information, so we have to transcend LMR.

That's what FirstNet is going provide. Now we can go to our vendors and say, “Here is public safety's network, you need to start focusing your research and development on the capabilities we've been asking for.”

### Another bonus

Since moving to FirstNet, our agency has seen that we're able to move video and data in an environment where we're not afraid we're going to get

throttled. That's a critical piece.

I would say FirstNet is now the new standard.

*Rodney Reed is Assistant Chief of the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office and was previously the deputy chief for planning. He was a Captain in the U.S. Army. Reed graduated with a master's degree in Crisis/Emergency/Disaster Management from Columbia Southern University in Alabama and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and Media Studies from Texas A&M University.*



# MAY FOCUS: Lynnée Hopson

## Delivering the network for first responders carries a “certain degree of honor”

**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.

Lynnée Hopson was working and living in the Washington, D.C. area during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

When the planes hit the World Trade Center towers in New York City, she remembers calling her firefighter husband and asking: “What if something like that happens here?”

“Things were pretty frantic,” says Hopson, now the Assistant Vice President for the FirstNet Program at AT&T and Public Sector Marketing. So, she left her office and drove home. “As I got home, a plane hit the Pentagon in D.C. and my house shook.”

Several of her work colleagues who were in a building next to the towers lost their lives that day, Hopson says. To have a front row seat to the attacks was terrifying. “But the response to that horrible event is what prompted the creation of FirstNet,” says Hopson. “There’s a certain degree of honor around being able to deliver a network dedicated to first responders that helps them with their mission. To help them come home safe at night. And to help them serve their communities and be able to communicate from an interoperability perspective.”

### Passion for public safety

Hopson’s passion for FirstNet extends to most everything she supports at AT&T. She joined the company in 2002. And she’s held various marketing and operations roles throughout her career, largely in mobility. In her current role, she supervises both the FirstNet and the Public Sector Marketing teams. For the former, she works to increase awareness of the network built for first responders. And for the latter, she works to help ensure public safety agencies have the tools they need to operate efficiently and effectively. “From my vantage point, supporting FirstNet and the Public Sector and



SPOTLIGHT  
PROFILE

## Lynnée Hopson

“I feel very, very lucky to be in the position that I’m in to help raise awareness about the value that FirstNet and AT&T are bringing...”

having those agencies be able to talk to each other in a time of crisis is an incredible feeling,” she says. “I truly believe in the missions I support – and that FirstNet is the tool that will help our public safety professionals save lives and keep themselves and their communities safe.”

There’s a lot of juggling involved, she says. So, she relies on her teams to make sure she doesn’t drop any balls. And she’s learned to take risks.

“I once worked for a VP who was not afraid to take risks and push the envelope,” she says. “I watched how he was able to get things done. And he was a big influence because even now, I’m not afraid to ask for what we need and push for what’s right.”

### Reaping the benefits

Doing what’s right is personal, as well, for Hopson.

“My husband is a retired firefighter, so I know firsthand the challenges that he’s experienced,” she says. “But I’ve had several instances where I’ve needed to call first responders to come to my aid. So, to be able to provide them with services to help them do their job better means the world to me.”

First responders were there to pull her out of a vehicle after a bad car accident on the beltway in D.C. They came to her rescue during a dispute

that put her in a dangerous situation. And they pulled her from the sand after she threw out her knee doing the long jump as a track athlete in high school.

“I was fine in all those instances,” she says. “But it was scary at the time. And it was good to have them there to get me out of harm’s way.”

### The best job around

In a word, Hopson says, FirstNet means safety to her.

“I feel very, very lucky to be in the position that I’m in to help raise awareness about the value that FirstNet and AT&T are bringing to the market,” she says. “I truly have the best job in the company.”

“When I first got my public sector job... people thought I was crazy,” she adds. “But it’s one of the most high-profile places in the company where the work we do means more than just how many widgets we sell. It matters. And it’s making a difference.”

*Lynnée Hopson grew up in the Philadelphia area. She moved to D.C. for college and graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Science degree in marketing and business management. Except for 5 years in Dallas, the D.C. area has been home ever since.*

# FirstNet crosses half-a-million connections

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are new subscribers (not AT&T migrations), and that mix continues to shift. Since January 2019, most of the FirstNet connections added are new subscribers. This underscores the role FirstNet is playing to expand your adoption of wireless capabilities.

"We are always looking for new ways to be innovative in the fire service," said Seattle Fire Chief Harold Scoggins.

"FirstNet is highly beneficial to the first responder community and will improve our communications during and following a major disaster, such as an earthquake. This system provides firefighters with a tool to communicate with one another, without the worry of congestion issues."

FirstNet is for all public safety – career and volunteer, urban, rural or tribal. So, FirstNet launched the [FirstNet Digital Sign Up Portal](#) to help qualified first responders gain access to FirstNet service. Individual first responders can now subscribe online at virtually any time, from anywhere.

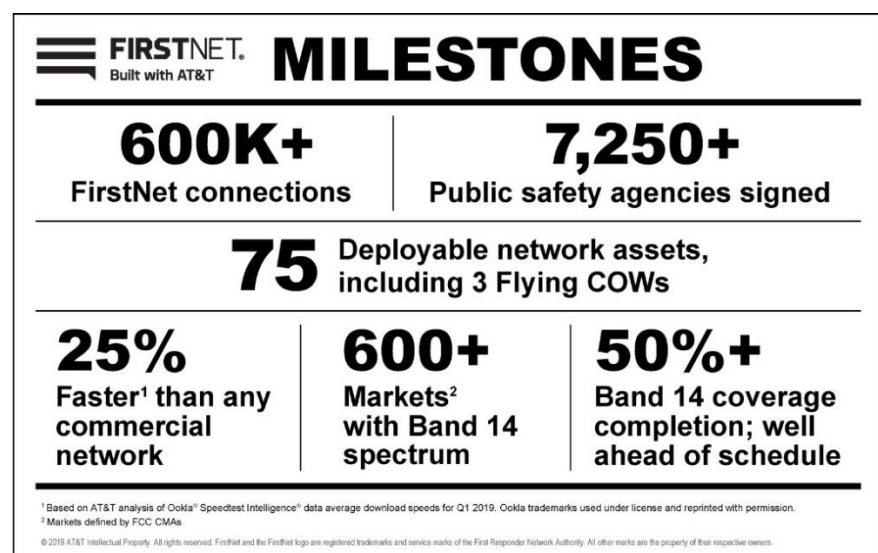
"FirstNet is a gamechanger for first responders – from volunteer firefighters in the rural part of Alabama to the EMTs in more populous metro areas across our great state," said Reid Vaughan, Executive Director of the Alabama Firefighters Association.

## Extending connectivity

To better serve you, we continue to extend the reach of the FirstNet communications platform. We've deployed Band 14 spectrum in more than 600 markets,<sup>2</sup> further giving FirstNet the ability to reach agencies large and small, urban, rural and tribal with the connectivity and modern communications tools they need.

"Rural Idaho presents significant challenges in terms of emergency communications coverage and interoperability," said Elmore County Sheriff Mike Hollinshead. "FirstNet is addressing our challenges of coverage and providing state of the art capabilities needed to ensure the safety of the public and our law enforcement officers."

"We provide emergency ambulance services to 1.2 million residents



across 16 counties in rural Mississippi," said Andy Geske, Chief of Information Technology, AAA Ambulance Service. "Serving a large rural environment can present a number of challenges, but with FirstNet, communications are no longer one of those. No matter where we go, in or outside of the counties we cover, FirstNet has given us clear communications to coordinate and interoperate across our crews.

"When it comes to providing time-critical, life-saving services, FirstNet's reliable, easy-to-access and persistent connection is vital. It'll also enable us to advance our services forward; we expect capabilities like emergency telemedicine are now just around the corner."

## Enabling the fastest overall experience for public safety

AT&T was recently recognized as the fastest wireless network in the nation,<sup>3</sup> according to the first quarter 2019 results of tests taken with Speedtest® as analyzed by Ookla®. Since FirstNet subscribers have access to all AT&T LTE bands in addition to Band 14, these results translate to the network experience delivered by the public safety communications platform.

And with the specialized capabilities enabled by the physically separate and dedicated FirstNet network core – like priority and preemption – FirstNet brings FirstNet subscribers like you

the fastest overall experience.

According to the results of tests taken with Speedtest as analyzed by AT&T, FirstNet consistently performs over 25% faster than any commercial network.<sup>1</sup>

"Our team remains focused on delivering the modern capabilities, coverage and capacity needed to strengthen first responders' communications nationwide," said Chris Sambar, senior vice president of the FirstNet Program at AT&T. "These results serve as another proof point to show the work is paying off for Public Safety. We've entered the second year of our FirstNet Band 14 rollout with incredible momentum, already tracking well ahead of schedule, covering more than 50% of our total nationwide coverage targets. And we don't intend to slow down as we keep delivering for those we rely on most."

Recent agencies to subscribe include AAA Ambulance Service, American Medical Response, Anchorage Police Department, Chicago Police Department, Elmore County Sheriff's Office, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Seattle Fire Department and U.S. Coast Guard.

<sup>1</sup>Based on AT&T analysis of Ookla® Speedtest Intelligence® data average download speeds for Q1 2019. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.

<sup>2</sup>Markets defined by FCC CMAs.

<sup>3</sup>Based on analysis by Ookla® of Speedtest Intelligence® data average download speeds for Q1 2019. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.



# Taking FirstNet connectivity to new heights

Connectivity is going airborne. FirstNet has added 3 Flying Cells on Wings (COWs) to the FirstNet deployable program. Each Flying COW:

- Comprises 2 tethered drones and a trailer for transport, equipped with a satellite dish and fiber connections
- Is capable of withstanding light rain and wind speeds of up to 25 miles per hour.
- Can reach heights of up to 400 feet, making it ideal for situations like wildfires and mountain rescue missions where the terrain may have previously made it difficult to maintain connectivity.
- Is set to be outfitted with Band 14 in the second half of 2019.

With access to a nationwide fleet of deployable network assets, which now include the Flying COWs, we can help equip FirstNet subscribers in the U.S. with the unthrottled connectivity they need, no matter the emergency.

Like the other 72 assets, the FirstNet Flying COWs are available at no additional charge. The FirstNet team at AT&T will determine the appropriate



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asset to send – or resolution – based on the situation. “FirstNet is transforming the marketplace for public safety communications – delivering products, services and technologies that are making a difference for our first responders,” said Ed Parkinson, Acting CEO of the First Responder Network Authority. “We are excited about the progress of the network enhancements. As we move forward, the First Responder Network

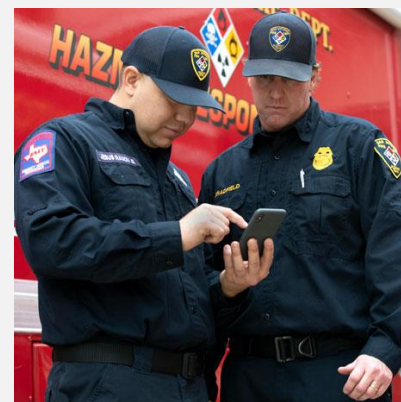
Authority and AT&T will continue to work with Public Safety to advance and evolve the network platform to meet their ongoing communications needs.”

FirstNet is built with AT&T in a public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority – an independent agency within the federal government. This helps ensure the FirstNet communications platform and service offerings meet the short- and long-term needs of public safety.

## Save when you get FirstNet!

Get a **\$200 CREDIT** when you purchase a new **FirstNet Ready™** smartphone line on **AT&T NEXT®** with an eligible **FirstNet Mobile plan.\***

\*Expires 5/31/2019. Not avail. In MA. Avail. only to elig. first responders who activate as new Subscriber Paid User w/ elig. voice & data svc (min. \$28.50/mo.). For elig. smartphones, see [firstnet.com/devices](http://firstnet.com/devices). Credit w/in 3 bills. If svc cancelled, device balance due. \$30 activation, add'l fees, taxes & restr's apply. [Click here for details.](#)



## The Samsung Galaxy S9

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\*Ltd time. Not avail. in MA. Select locations only. Avail. only to elig. first responders who activate as a new Subscriber Paid User. Req's qual. purch. for new line w/ elig. voice & data svc (min. \$28.50/mo.). \$.99/mo. after credits start w/in 3 bills. If scv cancelled, device balance due. \$30 activation, add'l fees, taxes & other charges, limits & restr's apply. [Click here for details.](#)