FIRSTNET®

# Newsletter

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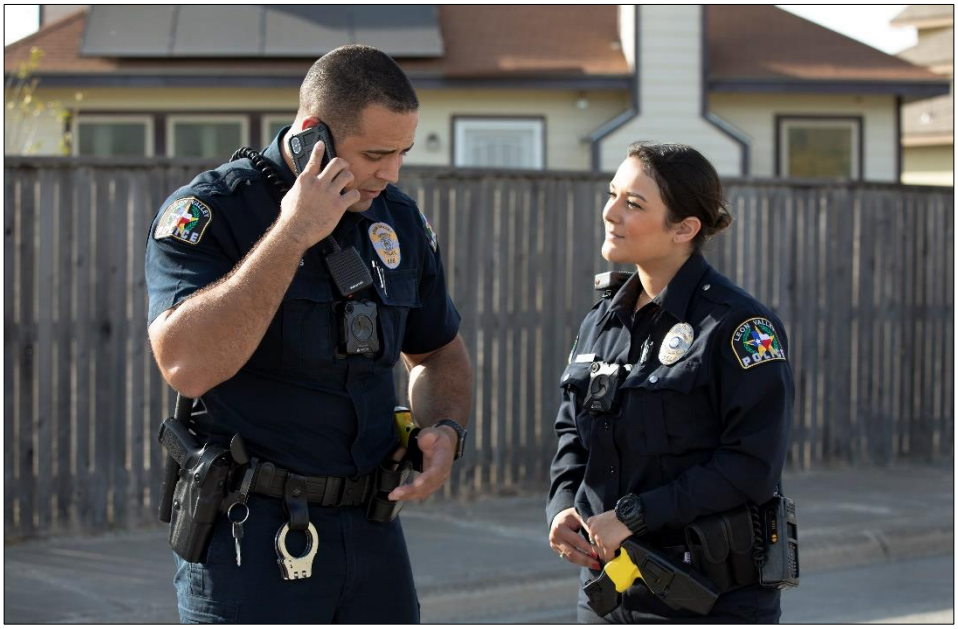

## Small town, cutting edge communications

Leon Valley, Texas, is a small town with more than 11,000 residents living in 3.4 square miles. But it's surrounded by the city of San Antonio, which means its city administrators and first responders face the same reliability and connectivity issues as any other big city. Watch to learn how FirstNet brought the town up to date with its communications. **WATCH VIDEO**

## Using FirstNet to deal with big city communications needs

**By Joseph Salvaggio**
Chief of Police, City of Leon Valley

Leon Valley is a small city stuck in the middle of the 7th largest city in the nation. We used to be on the outskirts. But as San Antonio has grown up around Leon Valley, we've become encircled.

And being that close to the inner city of San Antonio, we deal with many of the same problems – in crime and other issues – that the large city does. But being a smaller city gives us a lot more responsibilities than some of your smaller cities around the nation. We have only about 11,500 people in 3.4 square miles in

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## FirstNet soars with over 1 million connections, launch of "FirstNet One" deployable blimp

### Band 14 coverage expansion more than 75% complete

FirstNet, built with AT&T, is growing in a big way. More than 10,000 public safety agencies and organizations across the country have subscribed. And over 1 million FirstNet connections are now in service, bringing you and those who support you the reliability and capability you can trust to carry out your mission.

"Public safety is called upon to handle emergencies every single day. They have to be ready for the worst with the best tools to help them respond safely, efficiently and effectively," said Jason Porter, senior vice president, FirstNet Program at AT&T. "We're honored to see FirstNet play a supporting role in that response for thousands of agencies across the country. FirstNet is the only wireless communications platform that's been

*(Continued on Page 4)*

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# Using FirstNet to deal with big city communications needs

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Leon Valley. But we have seven apartment complexes, a lot of neighborhoods, and probably the busiest street in the San Antonio area – if not one of the busiest in the state.

Upwards of 90,000 cars come up and down that road each and every day. So the biggest issue that we deal with are the accidents and responding. And it's imperative that when we get those calls, or if we need to call for assistance, that we're able to do so.

This is why we went with FirstNet.

## Reliability

Before going with FirstNet, we were on a large nationwide carrier – one of the largest in the nation. But we continued to receive the dropped calls. Or we couldn't get through on our computers when we really needed to in the major part of the day. And that's when our biggest issues were occurring.

When we'd try run people on our MDTs (mobile display terminals), the system would just freeze. It would take us forever to get through. And sometimes it took multiple tries.

Since we've gone with FirstNet, we've not had any of those problems. We get priority in the system. And that has been a tremendous help for all of us to respond to the citizens' needs.

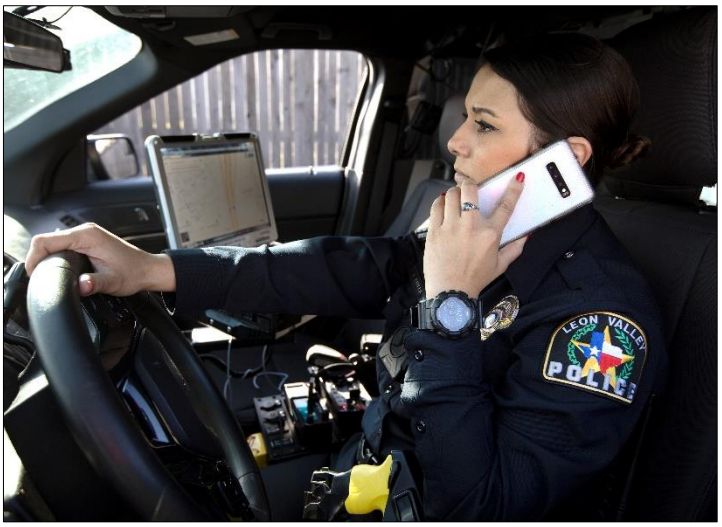
This is critical because the risk to our community and to our officers is tremendous if we don't have the ability to get through. We don't have the time to wait during an emergency.

## Answering the calls

My officers are very excited about having FirstNet. It speeds up their ability – whether on a traffic stop or answering a call or writing reports – to use the computer system and phones as designed. It makes us more efficient. In the long run, it ensures that we're out there as efficiently as possible, making the calls the citizens expect us to make.

Safety and security is the number one thing. Making sure our officers and citizens are safe. And making sure that we can respond and talk to each other in times of emergency is extremely important. My guys are good at what they do. And if they can get to the scene and they can communicate with each other, we're all going to have a successful operation. If they can't, or if I can't get a hold of them for whatever reason, then it's going to be problematic. So knowing that the communication's going to work, for my officers and for our community, has helped me sleep better at night.

I have full faith and confidence in my officers. Now I have full faith and confidence in the system to get them there.




*Chief Salvaggio says* his "officers are very excited about having FirstNet. It speeds up their ability – whether on a traffic stop or answering a call or writing reports – to use the computer system and phones as designed. It makes us more efficient."

## Interoperability

The biggest benefit that we've seen by switching to FirstNet is the reliability and the interoperability of the system. And just the safety and security in knowing that we are going to be there in case of an emergency.

Interoperability is key to our job. I spent 29 years with the City of San Antonio before retiring as a captain and as the commander of the airport police department. San Antonio's law enforcement works together. If they need help, we're going to go. If we need help, they're going to come. We definitely work as one team.

So the more agencies that get on FirstNet, the better off all we'll all be. Regardless of whether we're working with another local agency, a state agency, or federal agency, FirstNet will help ensure that we can talk to each other. It's going to help ensure our officers can see each other on the computer system. And that when we need to call another agency for mutual aid support, that they'll be there.

*Chief Joseph Salvaggio took over as Police Chief for the City of Leon Valley Police Department in September of 2016. Prior to this position, he worked with the City of San Antonio Police Department, retiring in October 2016 with the rank of Captain. Assignments included Patrol, Special Weapons and Tactics, Narcotics, Property Crimes, Gang Unit, Tactical Response Unit, Problem Oriented Policing Unit, and culminating as the Commander of the Airport Police Department.*

*Chief Salvaggio is also a proud disabled veteran, serving over 29 years in the U.S. Army and Air Force and finishing his distinguished career as the Security Forces Career-Field Manager (IMA).*

*Chief Salvaggio holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Texas at San Antonio and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Excelsior College. He is a graduate of the PERF Senior Management Institute for Policing, FBI National Academy, FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development, Texas National Academy Command College, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer School, Texas Chief Development Academy, and holds instructor certifications in a number of police-related areas.*

# DECEMBER FOCUS: Richard Hodes

## Helping to build a network for first responders after 9/11 is something FirstNet security team leader says he had to do

***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 30 years, Richard Hodes has been involved in one aspect or another of the telecommunications industry. But his primary focus these days is the security of the FirstNet Network.

Hodes is associate director of the FirstNet Security Operations Center (SOC) – and a member of the FirstNet Program team at AT&T. With his experience in network monitoring and security, he works to identify threats to the network. And he works to help ensure the system is safe and secure for public safety.

"After the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, I was directly involved with helping to restore the network," Hodes says. "Having had first-hand experience in 9/11, I understand the importance of communications being there and functional for first responders. It saves lives."

"So when I first heard about FirstNet, I knew I had to be a part of it," he adds. "I felt it was imperative to have such a network. And I knew that it absolutely had to be successful."

### Focusing on security of data

Part of that success starts at the SOC, which provides command and control and incident response.

On a typical day, Hodes says, the SOC has ongoing real-time communications with all the various network and security teams within AT&T. This includes transport, mobility, 9-1-1 and the data and chief security office teams.

"We share information for any network and security insights," he says. "And this sharing of intelligence helps maintain a pulse for anything going on in the FirstNet network."

The teams monitor the network 24/7 for threats – including from hacks, malware, SPAM and others. And they track weather-related events – like hurricanes, floods and wildfires – to help determine the need to deploy FirstNet assets like cells on wheels on cells on light trucks.

"We staff the SOC 24/7 because the public safety network is needed 24/7," Hodes says. "The bad guys don't necessarily work 9 to 5."

SPOLIGHT PROFILE

**Richard Hodes**

"I felt it was imperative to have such a network. And I knew that it absolutely had to be successful."

Hodes was recognized for his work helping to restore the AT&T network after 9/11.

### Core values and principles

September 11 put it all in perspective and highlighted the need for the FirstNet network, Hodes says.

"In being a leader of the business, directing teams and projects, FirstNet has given me the opportunity to shape the landscape for years to come."

Hodes says the influences in his life have "changed over time with individual maturity, life experiences and expanding responsibilities."

"Initially, of course, my parents laid the groundwork, instilling core values and principles," he says. "My wife and two children make everything real as you begin to evolve into your parents. Then there's the life changing experiences – like a 9/11 event."

### Reliable network a necessity

For Hodes, FirstNet is critical, though he's not sure one word accurately describes it.

"FirstNet's success is critical to the fabric of this country's emergency services," he says. "There needs to be, and has to be, a reliable, available, and safe-from-bad-actors network for public safety to use. History has proven that real-time communication is an absolute necessity that saves lives."

First responders need a dedicated security organization because their needs are significantly different from a standard commercial user.

"They're not just working to keep their information and communication with their peers secure. They're also trying to keep your and my information safe."

For agencies that are serious about public safety and their ability to communicate reliably and securely, FirstNet is that network, he says.

# FirstNet soars with over 1 million connections, launch of "FirstNet One" – a deployable blimp for public safety

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architected from the ground up just for the public safety community. It's specifically designed to advance public safety communications, equipping subscribing first responders with the innovative, mission-focused tools, technologies and features they can't get anywhere else."

That includes a giant addition to the FirstNet disaster response arsenal. FirstNet One, a 55-foot aerostat more commonly known as a blimp, brings total FirstNet deployable assets to 76. It's a first-of-its-kind communications solution. And it's designed to help keep responders connected during catastrophic events. FirstNet One:

- Can fly up to 1,000 feet, potentially providing over 2 times the coverage area as compared to other deployable solutions, like Satellite Cells on Wheels and Flying Cells on Wings™ (COWs).
- Is fully operational in windspeeds up to 50 mph; can withstand windspeeds of up to 70 mph
- Can stay aloft for about 2 weeks before needing additional helium top-off, giving you wide-scale portable connectivity over an extended period of time
- Is tethered to a trailer to provide either satellite or wireline backhaul
- Reduces the need for multiple ground-based portable cell sites. This frees those assets for other agencies nationwide.

Like the other portable assets – including 3 Flying COWs™ – FirstNet One will be available 24/7 at no additional charge to agencies on FirstNet for use during major incidents.

This could include major hurricanes, like last year's Hurricane Michael. FirstNet deployed assets in the Florida panhandle for 3+ months while recovery efforts were underway there. The FirstNet Response Operations Group at AT&T, led by former first responders, will determine the appropriate asset – or resolution – to send, based on the situation.

So far this year, FirstNet has deployed

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"Public safety is called upon to handle emergencies every single day. They have to be ready for the worst with the best tools to help them respond safely, efficiently and effectively."

**– Jason Porter**
Senior vice president,
FirstNet Program at AT&T

network assets in support of 450+ emergencies and planned events. This includes sporting events, parades and training activities.

For example, Santa Clara County Sheriff Search and Rescue called the FirstNet team to support a large-scale training drill spanning multiple jurisdictions. The Response Operations Group deployed a FirstNet Flying COW™ to support the search and rescue team.

"In remote areas of the county, communications have always been a challenge. And if we can't communicate, we can't see if our teams are safe or obtain the latest rescue status from those in the field," said Rusty Wackermann, Santa Clara County Sheriff Search and Rescue Technical Rescue Coordinator.

"FirstNet is solving for this, giving us on-demand access to the connectivity we need when our community needs us the most."

And you continue to benefit with the aggressive expansion of FirstNet coverage and capacity across the country. Using all AT&T LTE bands, FirstNet already covers over 99% of the U.S. population today.

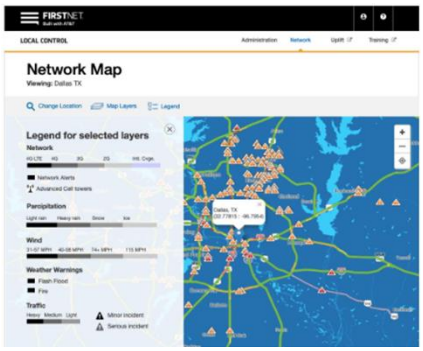
To date, we've deployed Band 14 in over 675 markets[1], completing more than 75% of our coverage target. This includes every major city from coast to coast. It includes rural towns like Hempstead, Ark., Lincoln, N.M., and Maury, Tenn., and tribal areas like White Earth Reservation where a new, purpose-built site recently went on-air nearby.

"After experiencing wireless data connectivity issues, we began searching for a solution. We field-tested several FirstNet devices and received an overwhelmingly positive response from all the users. So we made the decision to switch all city departments to FirstNet," said Captain Jeremy Ward, Blytheville Police Department. "Since the switch, we have had a reliable connection and great coverage, which helps us keep our community safe."

[1]Markets defined by FCC CMAs.

# New features for FirstNet users

## Network Status Map Enhancements




- The new Advanced Map View, which became available in early October, will provide eligible personnel access to a detailed view of unplanned network outages, including cell site locations.
- Eligible personnel must be designated by their agency as a Communications Lead, Emergency Support Function 2, Communication Coordinator, 911 Coordinator or similar role. Contact your agency administrator for FirstNet Services to apply for access.

## Intrepid Response for FirstNet

Intrepid Response is a low-cost, simple to use situational awareness platform for day-to-day and emergency operations.

- Locate – Geospatial solution feature-rich mapping, view all personnel, tagged assets, markers in real-time
- Connect – A multi layered collaborative workspace that provides secure team communications and sharing of digital content on demand
- Activate – A simple-to-use emergency notification and response team mobilization tool (Coming Soon)
- Integration to Enhanced Push-to-Talk – Deep Link to ePTT to engage talk groups

## 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:
  - Effectively use Uplift Management
  - Manage user profiles, services, and mobile devices
  - Shop for/customize: rate plans, wireless devices, and mobile solutions
  - View wireless-account reports and information

## Developer Portal

The FirstNet Application Developer Program provides a platform and tools to help the app developer community to develop apps for public safety, including a process for certification by FirstNet. **Among the key benefits:**

- Team members from the same organization have visibility into apps submitted by their organization.
- App review process documents, checklists are updated

# OTHER NEWS

## More than 100 FirstNet Ready™ devices, 100 apps in FirstNet App Catalog

FirstNet goes beyond delivering reliable, unthrottled connectivity to public safety. Public safety agencies on FirstNet now have access to more than 100 FirstNet Ready™ devices and 100 approved apps in the FirstNet App Catalog. The innovative tools in the FirstNet ecosystem are cost-effective and help advance routine and emergency responses.

For example, a public safety agency in Massachusetts is using the FirstNet Listed application Vizsafe to enhance situational awareness for its hazmat teams.

“Using Vizsafe on FirstNet, the agency can now broadcast and view live video streams from first responders,” said Peter Mottur, CEO of Vizsafe. “They can track near real-time user location on the front lines and share insights with command staff to improve decision making and streamline response.”

FirstNet also plans to launch FirstNet Push-to-Talk in early 2020. This is a standards-compliant, mission-centric solution that’s being purpose-built for public safety. It’s designed to further advance first responders’ communication capabilities with reliable, high-performance calling.

“Since its launch, FirstNet has created a dedicated marketplace for public safety broadband communications that never existed before, and we are only scratching the surface on the innovations this network is driving,” said FirstNet Authority’s Edward Parkinson. “Public safety’s critical communications needs will always be at the center of their network, and we are proud to support more than 10,000 agencies using more than 1 million FirstNet connections across the country. We look forward to continuing to work hand-in-hand with public safety and AT&T as we head into a new year of network expansion and growth.”

FirstNet is public safety's dedicated, nationwide communications platform. It's bringing public safety communications into the 21st century with new, innovative capabilities to strengthen first responders' incident response. And it's helping them connect to the critical information they need – every day and in every emergency.