

Newsletter

November 2018

Citizen Potawatomi Nation



2018 FireLake Fireflight Balloon Fest

When Citizen Potawatomi Nation invited the public to attend its 2018 FireLake Fireflight Balloon Fest in rural Oklahoma, more than 30,000 people showed up. See how FirstNet helped first responders maintain communications and respond to emergencies. [WATCH VIDEO](#)

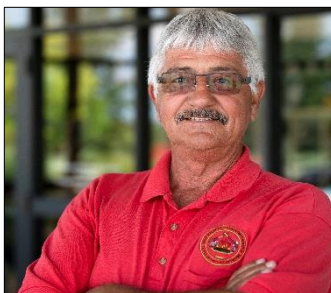
Adopting FirstNet early is key to developing needed tools

As director of emergency management for Citizen Potawatomi Nation of Oklahoma, I've worked with FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security for many years. That's how I learned about the 9/11 Commission report – and about FirstNet. And I believe it's going to change the way public safety agencies communicate — for the better.

It's already having a big impact for us.

At Citizen Potawatomi Nation we expected more than 30,000 visitors to our FireLake Fireflight Balloon Fest in August. So, we asked

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Tim Zientek, Director of Emergency Management, Fire and Housekeeping for Citizen Potawatomi Nation

Keeping first responders connected

More than 3600 public safety agencies across U.S. have joined FirstNet

First responders from federal, state, local and tribal public safety agencies are continuing to turn to FirstNet for the communications tools they need – especially during emergencies and large events.

More than 3,600 public safety agencies across the country have now joined FirstNet. That's a nearly 50 percent increase in the number of agencies subscribing to the nationwide wireless communications ecosystem in less than 2 months.

That accounts for more than 250,000 connections on FirstNet.

"FirstNet is being purpose-built to favor the important work first responders do. This is challenging and time consuming. It's also necessary," said Chris Sambar, senior vice president, AT&T – FirstNet Program. "Much work still needs to be done to make sure FirstNet is a solution that meets the needs of all first responders. But we're proud of how FirstNet has been delivering for first responders and the communities they serve when help is most needed.

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Adopting FirstNet early is key to developing needed tools

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the FirstNet team at AT&T for a Satellite Cell on Light Truck (SatCoLT) to enhance our communications during that weekend.

We wanted our visitors to come and enjoy the festival. But we also wanted to make sure we had dependable communications in case of emergencies. If someone were to have a medical emergency, we wouldn't be able to get to them without communication.

The result: All the devices that connected to the SatCoLT worked flawlessly*.

Rural areas

Citizen Potawatomi Nation incorporates about 1,000 square miles in the state of



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Oklahoma. It takes in most of Potawatomi County and six miles of Oklahoma County and Cleveland County. We dispatch for 28 agencies within Potawatomi County. So, we have three dispatchers on staff, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To protect the safety of people within our jurisdiction — whether they're Citizen Potawatomi Nation or not — we need reliable communications. That's why we signed up for FirstNet.

Whether it's a manhunt, a large grass fire, or a wildfire, our officers need to be able to call back in to dispatch or to the command center and say, 'I need this

resource.' It helps save lives. It brings the entire community together when we can talk to each other either on the radio or off the radio.

In addition, many Native Americans live in rural areas. Some have no electricity or running water. And we need to have connectivity in these areas. The goal for FirstNet for us is to provide coverage in these areas.

Adopting Early

So, it was important that Citizen Potawatomi Nation sign up early on — while FirstNet is in the build-out stage, simply because it is new.

I want to be able to give the First

Responder Network Authority and the FirstNet team at AT&T feedback about how FirstNet is functioning and what we can do together to improve it. If you're building this network for us, those of us in public safety should make sure it's doing what we need it to do.

It's not fully built out yet. But it's up and coming. And it's a tool that first responders will come to depend on for a very long time.

Tim Zientek is the director of Emergency Management, Fire and Housekeeping with Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

*Individual results may vary.

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Public service runs in the family for chief operating officer in charge of FirstNet strategy

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.

Public service runs in the family for vice president in charge of FirstNet strategy

Bob Sloan comes from a long line of public servants. His father was director of civil defense in his hometown of Cranford, N.J. His two brothers retired from the secret service and then continued into public service – one into law enforcement and the other into security. And his grandfathers were a police officer and a firefighter in Springfield, Mass.

"You could say that service to public safety was about staying in the family business for me," said Sloan, an Assistant Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the FirstNet Program at AT&T. He's responsible for the development and execution of the strategy and business model for the FirstNet Program. His primary focus is on the customer experience, development of critical public safety communication solutions and public safety partner solutions.

And while he didn't go into



SPOTLIGHT PROFILE

Bob Sloan

"There are several different words to describe FirstNet, depending on what aspect you're talking about. It's **innovative** in terms of what we're providing; **successful** in terms of how it's going forward. And in terms of why it exists, it's because it's '**needed**.'"

the family business, Sloan did stay in public service. He got his bachelor's degree in government and education from Curry College in Massachusetts and his MBA in finance from Seton Hall University in New Jersey.

He sees FirstNet as a mission.

"It's important to me to make sure that people like my family are provided the tools and the technology that can help keep them fundamentally safer while they do their job to keep us safer," he said. "When you see the lack of technology within this industry – and you see how a simple thing like technology can keep an officer, EMT or firefighter safer and help them do their job, it's amazing."

Growing up in Cranford

Growing up, Sloan said his biggest influence was his father.

"My family was brought up to give back, whether that was building a hospice

facility or an after-school program in a tough area of Jersey City," said Sloan, whose family is responsible for developing an after-school program for underserved youth.

"Our family has been brought up to make sure we contribute to the community," he added. "And FirstNet enables me to do that."

Sloan said he wants to give first responders the technology and information they need to help them keep somebody alive.

That includes such tools as public safety applications that make it easier for first responders to do their jobs and stay connected, Sloan said. Over the last several months, the FirstNet team has been working to stock the App Catalog's virtual shelves with powerful and intuitive applications for situational awareness, to handle emergencies and much more.

"FirstNet is an obligation to the country to do what's

right," Sloan said. "And that's our focus. To do what's right to keep the community safer."

Why FirstNet

FirstNet provides communications capabilities and technologies that enhance the way they do their job, Sloan said.

"My interactions both externally and internally are to make sure that the services we're providing public safety are meeting the customer needs and expectations," Sloan said. "It's keeping them safer as well as keeping the community safer."

When it comes to describing FirstNet, Sloan says it depends on what aspect you're describing.

"It's innovative in terms of what we're providing; successful in terms of how it's going forward. And in terms of why it exists, it's because it's 'needed,' he said.

"Ultimately, it's important."

Keeping first responders connected

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And we're honored to see public safety embrace their network."

Staying connected

Keeping first responders connected during times of crisis is part of the reason FirstNet was created. During Hurricanes Florence and Michael, FirstNet brought in the right assets to help public safety achieve its mission.

"We moved to the FirstNet system a few months before Hurricane Michael hit. And it was a no-brainer," said **Doug Cofty, emergency services director for the city of Colquitt Miller**. "Having the communications capabilities FirstNet provides was critical following the storm's devastation. Gaining that peace of mind around our communications meant we could focus on what mattered most – supporting our community."

FirstNet is continuing to serve the thousands of first responders and National Guard members who are still actively aiding in Hurricane Michael recovery efforts. Working with public safety, we stationed 2 FirstNet Satellite Cell on Light Trucks (SatCOLTs) at the Harders Base Camp in Panama City, Fla.

Providing rural coverage

The Yankton Sioux Tribe Police Department recently conducted a search and rescue mission for a missing person in the area. Being in a rural part of South Dakota, the department requested a FirstNet deployable asset to provide needed coverage for the operation.

"In situations like these, communication

is critical, and time is of the essence," said **Yankton Sioux Tribal Police Chief Chris Saunsoci**. "Knowing the mission was focused in an area with limited coverage, we requested a FirstNet SatCOLT to boost our connectivity. Communications were in place within hours of our request, helping us carry out our operation."

Chief Saunsoci served on South Dakota's Public Safety Communications Council and helped advise the governor's decision to approve the build out of FirstNet.

"After benefitting from FirstNet in real-life situations, it's a decision I'm proud to have supported for the South Dakota public safety community," Chief Saunsoci said.

Monitoring restricted airspace

In New Mexico, the annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta attracts more than 900,000 visitors every October. More than two dozen first responder agencies are responsible for safety at the event. FirstNet provided devices and technical assistance to help those first responders stay connected.

This year, the Fiesta also employed a drone detection system operated by Aerial Armor to monitor restricted airspace above Balloon Fiesta Park and the surrounding area. And FirstNet provided connectivity to the system to help it maintain peak performance.

"Prior to connecting via FirstNet, we were seeing signal dropouts," said **Brandon Lugo, operations**

manager at Aerial Armor. "This interrupted our ability to properly monitor the event. We worked with public safety officials at the Fiesta to get connected to FirstNet, allowing our operations to run much smoother. It also enabled us to get the right information – like pictures and text messages – to law enforcement right away."

According to preliminary numbers, there were 46 drone detections in the restricted airspace during the 9-day event, with 12-15 apprehensions.

"With congestion on the network, we typically don't have the connectivity we need via a traditional carrier to communicate at the level we need to coordinate with the people working in the Park. FirstNet gave us that," said **Steven Carroll, New Mexico State Police sergeant**. "I was able to get real-time pictures and videos of incidents that needed attention from law enforcement. The ability to stop potential issues before they negatively impacted attendees was monumental."

"Recent events continue to underscore the need for FirstNet," said **Edward Parkinson, CEO, First Responder Network Authority**. "We're still early in the build process, and we'll continue to work side-by-side with the public safety community to ensure FirstNet lives up to its promises. But to see FirstNet in action and hear how first responders across the country have already benefitted from the service is a remarkable start and a solid testament to why FirstNet was created."

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