

# Newsletter

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## FirstNet core brings first responders a much-needed upgrade, new tools

FirstNet – the first nationwide public safety communications platform dedicated to first responders – is bringing public safety a much-needed technology upgrade. With the launch of the FirstNet network core at the end of March, you now have access to a truly specialized communications system that can keep up with your needs.

“The launch of the network core comes a year into the FirstNet public-private partnership.

It’s been a non-stop 12 months,” said Chris Sambar, senior vice president, AT&T – FirstNet Program. “And we’re proud of the quick progress we’ve made in this short timeframe, consistently delivering on or ahead of schedule. But bringing the FirstNet



*Photo by Beatriz Terrazas*

Karl Schlieber, Director of Operational Certification and Advanced Technical Services at Willow Technology Lab in Belmont, Wash., (left) talks to Tracy McElvaney and Peggy O’Connor of the First Responder Network Authority during a tour of the lab. Authority members visited the lab in March to hear proof points and see demonstrations of FirstNet elements.

network core to life is one of the most exciting milestones yet.”

### **What this means for first responders**

The launch of the FirstNet evolved packet core – built on physically separate hardware –

finally gives first responders their own separate and secure nationwide broadband network. And the First Responder Network Authority is in the process of certifying the core, so that first responders can be confident it’s a

solution they can count on.

### **How it works**

The evolved packet core operates like the brain and nervous system of FirstNet. It:

- Creates and controls the FirstNet experience, which is only available to FirstNet subscribers
- Processes and carries your vital information
- Unlocks critical capabilities, like First Priority™, to help law enforcement, EMS and fire respond to unfolding incidents
- Forms the basis for the unified, interoperable and nationwide communications system that public safety envisioned.

## Former fire captain turns boyhood dreams into life's mission on FirstNet Program



Every day on his way home from school, Ryan Fields-Spack passed the firehouse in Genesee, Colo. From time to time, he would spy the white banner calling for volunteers. And he'd dream about joining the fire service someday.

"When I was old enough, I went in and applied," says Ryan, who was 17 and a junior in high school at the time. "It got into my blood."

"When you get that call about a fire in your neighborhood or an emergency, you either love it or you hate it. It was the former for me," says Ryan, now 35 and a member of the FirstNet Program at AT&T.

After high school, Ryan followed his parents' advice and went off to the University of Denver to get his business degree. Right after graduation, he accepted a job offer at a wine house in Chicago.

But he missed his days in the fire service. So, he got his paramedic certification, moved back to the Denver area and landed a job with Stadium Medical providing medical care for some of Denver's most elite professional athletes.

When he got an offer from the Aurora Fire Department in Aurora, Colo., in 2008, he jumped at it and "spent the next four years riding backwards in the back of a firetruck."



### SPOTLIGHT PROFILE Ryan Fields-Spack

A childhood dream turns into lifelong service to public safety for former fire captain.

#### Aurora shooting

In July 2012, Ryan was among dozens of first responders who answered the call to the Aurora Theater shooting, where a gunman opened fire on a theater full of moviegoers. The gunman killed 12 and injured more than 70 others. Ryan responded to an apartment building not far from the theater, where the shooter had set a bomb to go off when officers opened the door.

"The shooter had set his radio to go off at 11:40 p.m. to draw the police to come and open the door to stop the person making the noise," says Ryan. "Once that door opened, [the bomb was] set to go off, kill the officers and draw every resource we had so he could

inflict major damage. Thankfully, the person who answered the call decided not to open the door.”

Ryan’s work continued long after the Aurora shooting. He completed an after-action report to capture the learnings and then used the experience to help train future firefighters at the training academy.

He spent over 15 years as a paramedic, coordinator with the Aurora Office of Emergency Management and eventually as a fire captain with the Aurora Fire Department. He holds a master’s degree in securities studies, homeland security and defense, from the Naval Postgraduate School’s Center for Homeland Defense and Security.

That same drive to serve public safety is what prompted Ryan to leave his job as a fire captain to become a member of the FirstNet Program at AT&T. He wants to increase awareness and an appreciation for the challenges first responders face daily. And he wants to make sure the focus stays on public safety.

“I want to make sure we stay deeply immersed in the emergency operations process,” he says, “so that we’re integrating with public safety in whatever they need.”

FirstNet is a solution built with and for first responders

– built to suit their needs – Ryan says. “So, our goal is to make sure that we keep the public safety strategy and policy pointed in the direction of public safety – both short-term and 25 years from now.”

### Priorities

This fits right in with Ryan’s two priorities in life.

The first is his family and children. Ryan lives in the Denver area with his wife and 2-year-old son, Bromley. And he and his wife are expecting a second child in August.

“My wife has a dance studio,” says Ryan. “She teaches jazz, ballet and modern dance and has over 300 students ranging in age from 3 to 18. So, I guess you could say I’m a dance dad.”

The second is public safety.

“Those that are in the public safety sphere know that for someone my age to leave a comfortable job or a life as captain, is something that doesn’t happen. Truly, I left that position because I firmly believe that FirstNet will change the face of public safety. We are bringing the tools that will allow people to respond. It’s not going to stop this from happening, but it’s vastly going to improve their situation.”

## WHAT’S NEWS

### Fostering innovation and capabilities that extend beyond first responders

The FirstNet network core will serve as a springboard for ongoing innovation and advanced functionality, delivering value-added capabilities and benefits not available on commercial networks. First responders on the FirstNet evolved packet core can now access **First Priority™**. The **always-on** access to priority and preemption – built to your specifications – gives first responders 2 more priority levels. With 3 options at their fingertips, public safety agencies will have the ability to assign priority levels based on their command structure or shifting needs. The launch of the FirstNet evolved packet core also unlocks the incident management portal. This puts you in control of your network resources. Depending on the event

or emergency, you may need to uplift critical users to the highest priority levels.

Using the Incident Management Portal, you can make these adjustments in near real time to help you stay safe and save lives. You can also temporarily uplift other non-first responder users that are essential to managing the incident – like utilities, healthcare or transportation.

These extended primary users are those public safety entities – whether individuals, agencies, organizations or non-profit companies – who may be called upon to support first responders. They provide mitigation, overhaul, clean up, restoration, or other services in an emergency or its aftermath.



Participants at the San Francisco Hackathon

### Sign up for the IoT Civic Hackathon April 20-21

Developers, designers, students and technologists from all over Indiana will come together this weekend at the IoT Civic Hackathon in Fishers, Ind., to build mobile apps and hardware solutions to help make their communities safer.

[Hear from participants](#) in the FirstNet Hackathon last month in San Francisco. And [register today!](#)



## Moving to FirstNet core can be as easy as swapping out your SIM card

While the FirstNet evolved packet core was under construction, some of the early FirstNet adopters were accessing some benefits of FirstNet, like priority and preemption, through the AT&T network.

Once the First Responder Network Authority completes its extensive testing of the network core, all FirstNet customers can begin their migration to the FirstNet core.

“We’ve been transitioning to FirstNet to take advantage of our network – a network designed for and being built just for us,” said Brazos County Sheriff Chris Kirk.

“And we’ve already seen the tremendous difference FirstNet can make in helping us cut through the clutter and get access to the vital information we need to keep ourselves and those we protect out of harm’s way.

“That was before the launch of the FirstNet network core. So, we’re expecting it to only get better from here, which we believe will continue to improve our operations.”

Moving to the FirstNet evolved packet core may be as simple as swapping out the commercial SIM card with a FirstNet SIM card. So, check with your FirstNet specialist about moving to FirstNet, a communications solution especially for first responders.



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The exclusive communications system  
built with and for first responders



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