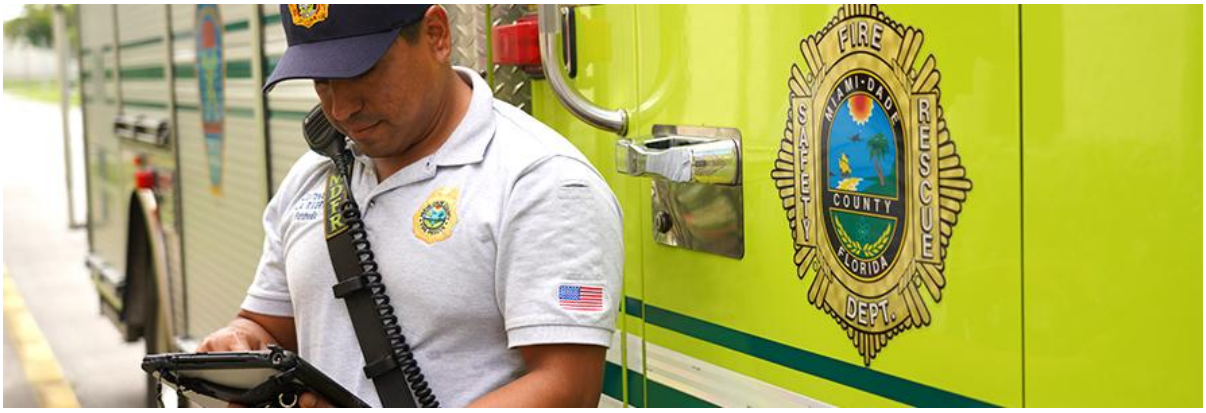
Share Tweet Forward

View this email in your browser



The Fire Services Take: Summer 2020

The Fire Service Take by Mike Worrell

FirstNet is built for today's challenges

We are in unprecedented times. From a public safety standpoint, it's been said our current situation is like there is a fire, flood, or tornado in every city across America. Public safety is fully engaged in response efforts, and FirstNet is built for the demands that our nation faces.

Technology tools of today

Some fire departments have dusted off their old continuity of operations plans (CoOP) to maintain services for their communities. Many CoOP plans had to be adapted to incorporate today's new technology tools. Some agencies had to rush to acquire and distribute mobile broadband devices in order to allow remote connectivity for fire department staff. As an example, first responder data usage on FirstNet increased twice as

much compared to AT&T's consumer data usage from January to May and the network has continued to perform well.

Priority and preemption

While the entire country transitioned to virtual schooling, meetings, and conferences, demand for wireless service increased. I personally experienced this as everyone in my neighborhood and household was working from home, streaming movies and television, virtual chatting, and distance learning. On my local commercial network, I had limited bandwidth and was unable to effectively use it. Fortunately, my FirstNet devices allowed me to maintain connectivity with the speeds needed to operate.

With FirstNet, public safety users have priority—they are the first and most important users. Dedicated infrastructure separates public safety traffic from non-public safety users' traffic. Public safety has priority and preemption on all of the FirstNet spectrum (Band 14) and on AT&T's commercial spectrum. FirstNet's priority and preemption keeps public safety users connected during times of high network congestion. Learn more about FirstNet's always on priority and preemption capabilities in these videos.

Coverage and capacity

Fire departments across the nation are responding to COVID-19 by supporting field hospitals, quarantine locations, and testing centers. FirstNet provides fast and interoperable connectivity at these sites. For example, the Navy hospital ship USNS Mercy was docked in Los Angeles to help local hospitals at capacity with COVID-19 patients. A dedicated one-gigabit land-to-ship circuit connection was installed and activated to connect the mobile hospital via FirstNet. Under normal circumstances, this setup would take more than 30 days. But within 24 hours the ship's first responders had the broadband coverage they needed. Plus a FirstNet deployable was on site to provide additional capacity for the influx of first responders. FirstNet offers the necessary coverage and capacity so that public safety can focus on saving lives.

Security

Some public safety agencies have recently experienced cyberattacks and the numbers and types of attacks are on the rise. FirstNet is built with enhanced cybersecurity features to help ensure that data is accessible only to authorized personnel and is transmitted securely on the network with end-to-end encryption. The FirstNet network infrastructure provides security and resiliency public safety users need. A team of dedicated personnel in AT&T's Security Operations Center monitors the FirstNet network 24/7/365.

Network built for today's challenges

After 9/11, public safety worked for a reliable, dedicated, and national high-speed network that first responders can rely on. Today, fire departments throughout the country are seeing the benefits of FirstNet. During these unprecedented times, FirstNet's priority and preemption, coverage and capacity, and security can make the difference for public safety. Learn how FirstNet is helping in your state via FirstNet.gov.

Your experience

The public safety community is the heart of our mission at the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority). Your shared FirstNet experiences assist other agencies in implementation and help the FirstNet Authority shape the buildout and enhancements to the network. I'd love to hear from you about your agency's use of FirstNet and any additional needs.

My FirstNet Authority colleagues and I are participating in these virtual public safety conferences, and I hope you'll check out our presentations and sessions.

- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) 2020 Fire-Rescue International, August 19-21
- International Wireless Communications Expo (IWCE) 2020, August 24 – 27
- 2020 Preparedness Summit, August 25-27
- 2020 Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Conference, November 2-6, 2020

Visit our Fire Services page

Inside FirstNet

Robert ("Tip") Osterthaler was named the new Chair of the FirstNet Authority Board, succeeding Edward Horowitz who will continue to serve on the Board until his term ends in August 2021. We're excited to welcome Mr. Osterthaler to his new role leading the Board!

The city of Alexandria, Virginia is using FirstNet for remote 9-1-1 operations during the pandemic. Working from home or remote locations, dispatchers take calls and use computer aided dispatch (CAD) via a secure and reliable FirstNet connection.

Check out the new state pages on the FirstNet Authority website with FirstNet info specific to each of the 56 states and territories. Then get introduced to the public safety advisor supporting public safety in your state.

In a milestone for the FirstNet Authority, our Board approved the first new investments into the FirstNet network that will: evolve the FirstNet core on the path to 5G and expand the fleet of deployable assets.

Know someone who is a leader in public safety broadband communications? Nominate that person for the Chief Harlin R. McEwen Public Safety Broadband Communications Award, the FirstNet Authority's sole, prestigious award to honor public safety.

Tech, Innovations, and Hot Topics in Fire Service

*Read what we've been hearing from public safety in the field about trends and drivers for fire services and emergency communications.**

Firefighters on the front lines of relief efforts are innovating faster than ever before. The International Association of Fire Chiefs has developed tools and resources to assist in the current responder environment. Many agencies have embraced digital communication and data-sharing software to stay safe and efficient. Some are taking a war room approach to strategize on personal protective equipment, quarantine locations, and testing procedures. When it is time to consider returning to full operations, FEMA has released an exercise starter kit to help agencies navigate the complexities.

Alachua County Fire and Rescue is an all hazards agency in Gainesville, Florida. FirstNet connects their mobile data computers to gather information while in route to calls. They use FirstNet-enabled smartphones to get priority service in an emergency. The EMS team also uses FirstNet to send health data directly from the ambulance to the hospital.

Watch the video on YouTube

Mike Worrell is an Area Director and the First Responder Network Authority Fire Services Subject Matter Expert. Learn more about Mike or email him with your questions.

Top photo: FirstNet services and features are being used by Miami-Dade firefighter to save lives, protect communities and preserve infrastructure.

FirstNet Authority may provide hyperlinks for third-party, non-governmental websites in order to offer additional context and added value for our users. FirstNet Authority does not endorse any product or service and is not responsible, nor can it guarantee the validity or timeliness of the content on hyperlinks outside of the federal government. In addition, users may wish to review privacy notices on non-government sites since their information collection practices may differ from ours.

Copyright © 2020 First Responder Network Authority, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.