



## Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

**Edward Parkinson, Acting CEO, First Responder Network Authority**  
**Planetary Keynote Address**  
**CES Government Conference – Las Vegas, NV**  
**Jan. 11, 2019**

Good morning, I am Edward Parkinson – Acting CEO of the First Responder Network Authority. Thank you to CES-G for having me here today. It is a pleasure to join this group of leaders from the public and private sectors, all of us here today under a shared mission.

How can we maximize technology to help the government better serve the American people and public safety, and how can we use and create technology to enhance the security and resiliency of our communities and the first responders that protect them?

That is what drives everything we do at FirstNet.

For those who are not familiar with FirstNet’s mission, we are delivering the first and only dedicated public safety broadband communications network. The network is making a difference for public safety and the communities they serve. It is modernizing and transforming the way first responders do their jobs every day and in every emergency. And this is helping them save lives.

To do so, we have formed one of the largest and most innovative public-private partnership with AT&T. Together, we are a force multiplier for public safety, bringing together our collective expertise to create an entirely new marketplace for public safety.

### **Building Community Resiliency with FirstNet**

FirstNet is providing a reliable and robust connection that is enhancing how public safety communicates and shares information. With more than 5,200 agencies and 425,000 connections on FirstNet today, the network is enabling police, fire, and EMS to take advantage of mobile technology like never before. And this is having a lifesaving impact for all communities – rural, remote, and urban.

Because, as we all have seen just in recent months, no community is immune to disasters. But all communities should have the best tools and capabilities to prepare for and respond to them.

Across the country – in every state, county, city, or township -- emergency managers, police, fire, EMS and dispatchers work tirelessly to help ensure that families and businesses can get back to life and prosperity as quickly as possible after disaster strikes. And they will tell you – as they have told us – the ability to communicate with each other and the public is at the heart of enabling community resiliency.

Because with better communications and more information, they can respond faster, safer, and more efficiently to your 9-1-1 call, an active shooter situation, a wildfire, or during recovery efforts after a hurricane.



We know this firsthand because FirstNet has been there with first responders and communities supporting response efforts from Texas to California and North Carolina and Florida. And in communities like Whiteville, North Carolina, which was one of the first cities in the state to join FirstNet.

As you know, North Carolina was hard-hit by Hurricane Florence in September. The slow-moving Category 1 storm brought historic flooding to the City of Whiteville. Whiteville public safety, city officials and some mutual-aid personnel were able to maintain communications by using enhanced push-to-talk service (EPTT) over the FirstNet system without interruption, boosted by FirstNet's mobile cell site.

And as the testimonial behind me from Hal Lowder, the city's director of emergency operations, says: "When everything was down, FirstNet was working ... At one point, we were the only thing talking in the county." This testimony shows us all that FirstNet is the differentiator to public safety, and this is just the beginning. Imagine where the network will be in the future, and with your help and you becoming involved in the public safety broadband space, the opportunities are incalculable.

With FirstNet, cities like Whiteville can better prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters knowing they have a common, resilient mobile platform they can rely on.

### **First Responder Innovations**

Yet, FirstNet is more than a connection. It is more than the network, too. FirstNet is driving innovation for all of public safety.

The network has opened the door to a new marketplace where innovators, entrepreneurs, and developers – like many of you here today – are finding opportunities and a mission to deliver cutting-edge technology for our first responders.

The network is enhancing emergency communication with access to mobile data like never before. But we are only beginning to scratch the surface on innovations for first responders, considering:

- IDC projects that global smart community spending will reach \$158 billion by 2022 with officer wearables and vehicle-to-everything connectivity generating the fastest growth in smart community spending.
- Our market research shows us that the U.S. market over the short- to mid-term is in the region of \$600 billion. Coupled with the over \$2 trillion market potential in smart cities, the capabilities and possibilities for public safety and for companies in the market are huge.

Today, an officer may lose mobile data connectivity when they exit their vehicle because fixed routers and computers are prevalent. But FirstNet will help officers stay connected and untethered. This is just one use case – fire, EMS, emergency management, 911 all have similar challenges. And we want to make them more mobile. More connected. Because their mission requires it.

In fact – in 2016, state and local governments spent \$375 billion on public safety and security according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. And with good reason – according to analysis from the Brookings Institute, "Public safety is an area where budgetary investments pay off in economic growth, crime reduction, and community integration."



Now, with FirstNet, there are opportunities for government and public safety leaders to bring forward new ideas on how mobile data can help them effectively and efficiently serve their communities to maximize taxpayer dollars.

So, to the government leaders in the room today – I would challenge you to think about your operations today. What could you do to improve public safety if you had unthrottled, untethered, robust mobile broadband?

And to industry – join us. Our nation’s first responders need you. What innovations are you delivering to the consumer market today that could benefit public safety? What innovations could you create for public safety specifically that might also help consumers?

The safety of our hometowns is important to each of us – it is so personal. We want secure communities to raise our families and grow our businesses. In fact, this is universal around the world, isn’t it? The way that public safety services are delivered, say in the UK or New Zealand or Japan, are not much different. Communications capabilities will always be at the center of resilient communities worldwide.

The FirstNet Authority is leading on public safety broadband globally – with more than 30 countries interested in learning about or moving to develop their own dedicated public safety broadband networks. But as we share lessons and successes with our global peers, we are forever focused on the more than 60,000 public safety agencies here in the U.S. that are serving on the frontlines every day.

The FirstNet Authority has a key role in continuing to engage with our first responders to understand how FirstNet can help with achieving their lifesaving mission – and bringing their need for technology forward to educate industry. We will also be investing in the network and innovations to ensure it continues to evolve and deliver for public safety. These investments will be based on public safety’s input.

Join us in enabling resilient communities and helping our nation’s first responders. You can learn how to get involved on our website at [FirstNet.gov](http://FirstNet.gov) or find me or the FirstNet Authority staff here today.

Thank you.