



# The Emergency Management Take



## ON MY MIND

In 2019, the First Responder Network Authority is focusing on building even more connections for rural and remote users, increasing capacity for urban responders and keeping public safety connected with innovative solutions. For emergency managers, this translates into having the coverage and capacity necessary to support the tools needed to get the job done right.

**Lesia Dickson**

In the time since FirstNet initially deployed, we have witnessed the network's impact on large-scale incidents throughout the nation. We have also seen its impact on smaller regional incidents and events. Last summer, emergency managers in Oklahoma experienced FirstNet in action when the Citizen Potawatomi Tribe hosted its annual FireLake Fireflight Balloon Festival in Shawnee, OK.

In past years, festival noise inhibited first responders from relying on traditional radios and cell phones to communicate. This all changed with FirstNet on hand. Not only did FirstNet-issued devices enhance audio quality, but first responders were able to communicate with multiple public safety agencies through a push of a button. At this year's festival, FirstNet proved especially valuable by ensuring clear communications for emergency managers who helped coordinate rapid response during several incidents, including a lost child, heat-related illnesses, and cardiac issues.

In fact, experiencing FirstNet at the Balloon Festival actually benefited the entire state as emergency managers and responders became acquainted with the deployable resources now available through FirstNet.

"The lessons we learned at the festival allowed our office to develop standard operating procedures for all Oklahoma emergency managers on how to best utilize FirstNet for a disaster or event," said **James Hock**, Oklahoma State Broadband Coordinator. "We put these procedures to work during the Governor's Inauguration in January of this year and FirstNet communications worked perfectly."

You can learn more about this story in the March edition of *TribalNet* Magazine. Also in this issue, we feature a [video about the Terre Haute Airshow](#) -- a two-day event that draws thousands to see the Navy's Blue Angels and other aircraft. With several local, state, and federal first responder organizations supporting the event, organizers were looking for ways to enhance public safety communications. They decided to deploy FirstNet to provide a robust interoperable broadband connection for all involved.

"We were able to bring in FirstNet to establish the broadband and the Wi-Fi that blanketed the airport to support all the public safety entities that were responding," said **Brad Thatcher**, Director of Response, Indiana Department of Homeland Security. "Having that available early on and knowing that capability existed in the planning process was really instrumental in the success of handling that event."

For me, its stories like these -- whether they gain national media attention or make the difference to a single community, tribe or responder -- that truly drive home the significance and effectiveness of FirstNet and the value it provides

If you have an example of FirstNet in Action, I would love to hear from you and feature it in our newsletter! Drop me a line at [Lesia.Dickson@firstnet.gov](mailto:Lesia.Dickson@firstnet.gov).

*Lesia Dickson is Director, Northcentral Area - Public Safety Advocacy, First Responder Network Authority*

## WHAT'S NEW AT FIRSTNET

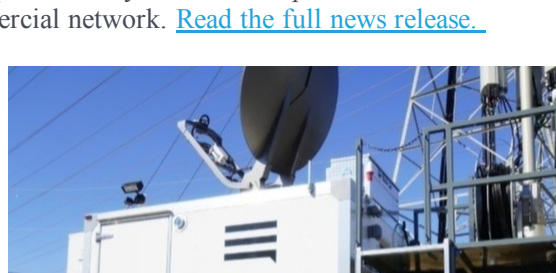
### News release: FirstNet Crosses Half-a-Million Connections, Expands Coverage Nationwide

The FirstNet communications platform continues to gain rapid momentum as it brings advanced capabilities to first responders across the country. It has surpassed the half-a-million mark, with 600,000+ device connections being used by more than 7,250 public safety agencies. And it continues to expand the coverage, capacity and capability available to first responders, giving public safety a network experience that consistently performs over 25 percent faster than any commercial network. [Read the full news release.](#)

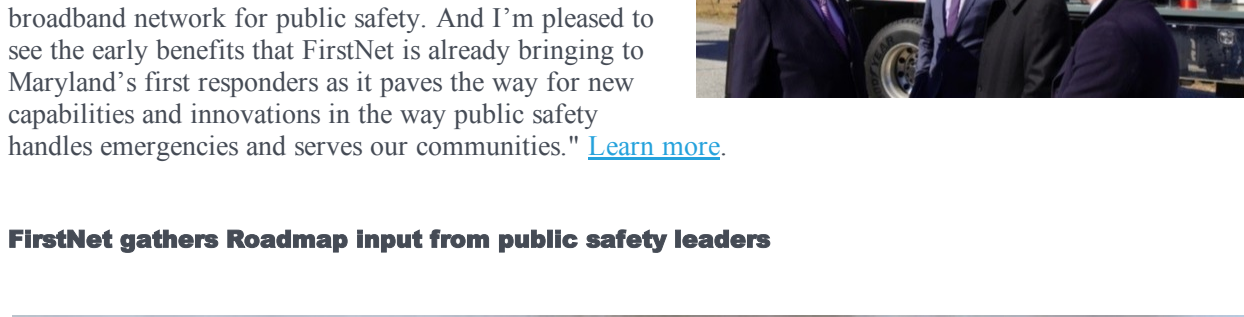
### FirstNet improves network coverage for first responders in Baltimore County, MD

On March 5, Baltimore County, MD, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate its first FirstNet cell site. The site is in a high-traffic area that public safety officials identified as a critical location for mission-critical network capacity.

Maryland Congressman **Dutch Ruppersberger** said, "I supported the legislation behind FirstNet, recognizing the need for and benefits of a dedicated, nationwide broadband network for public safety. And I'm pleased to see the early benefits that FirstNet is already bringing to Maryland's first responders as it paves the way for new capabilities and innovations in the way public safety handles emergencies and serves our communities." [Learn more.](#)



### FirstNet gathers Roadmap input from public safety leaders



In its March 20 public meeting, the FirstNet Board and executive team [announced plans to develop a Roadmap](#) to enhance the FirstNet network, which will be driven by the needs of the public safety community and reflect industry trends. The Board also endorsed a set of principles to guide the FirstNet Authority's investments in the network -- investments that will reflect public safety feedback and priorities for their critical communications needs

As part of our Roadmap engagement program, the First Responder Network Authority held a Public Safety Innovation Day on March 6 in College Station, TX. The event brought together thought leaders from various public safety disciplines to discuss emerging technologies and exchange useful feedback.

FirstNet Board Chair **Edward Horowitz** said in his event keynote, "FirstNet is not a technology, it is a strategic asset that communities can use to become safer and achieve a higher quality of life for their residents."

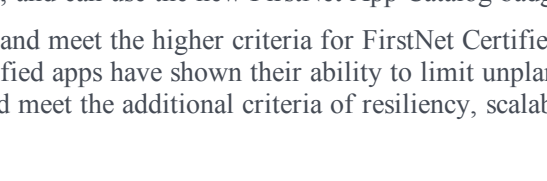
[Learn more](#) about the event; also read about Roadmap engagements in [Virginia](#), [Arizona](#) and [Michigan](#).

### FirstNet App Catalog Spotlight: New badges and webinars

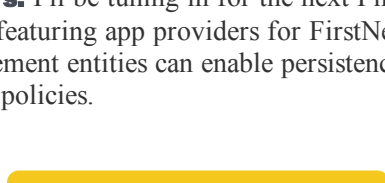
The FirstNet App Catalog adds new apps frequently to help law enforcement and other public safety users.

Every app in the FirstNet App Catalog has been inspected to 1) verify the app is directly relevant to the needs of first responders, 2) be highly confident the app is secure and protects data, and 3) demonstrate a history of limited unplanned outages with three 9's (99.9 percent) availability. An app that meets those criteria is approved to be FirstNet Listed, and can use the new FirstNet App Catalog badge.

App providers who apply for and meet the higher criteria for FirstNet Certified may use the FirstNet Certified badge. FirstNet Certified apps have shown their ability to limit unplanned outages with four 9's (99.99 percent) availability and meet the additional criteria of resiliency, scalability, and optimized use of mobility resources.



**Check out FirstNet App Webinars:** I'll be tuning in for the next FirstNet App webinar on **May 16, 1:30 - 3 p.m. ET**. Hosted by AT&T and featuring app providers for FirstNet, the webinar will discuss the ways public safety and emergency management entities can enable persistence services and enable, set, and enforce security and data-protection policies.

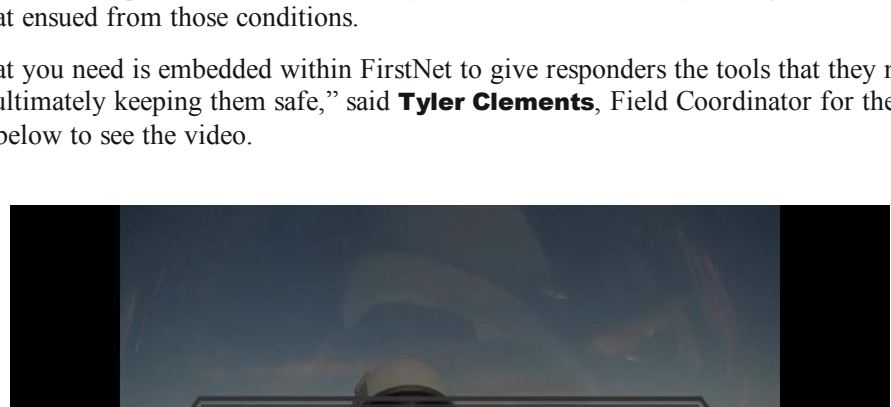


## WORTH A LOOK/LISTEN

### Video: FirstNet in Action - FirstNet Earns its Wings at Terre Haute Airshow

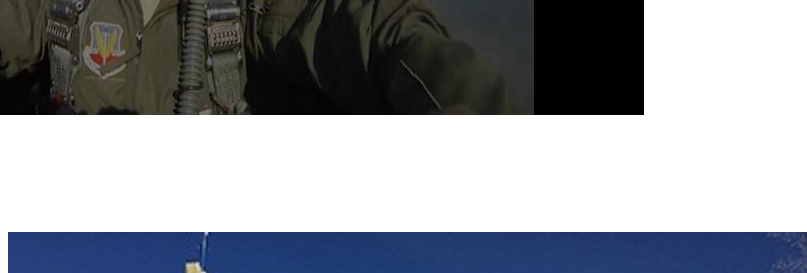
With parking lots flooded at the Terre Haute Airshow, many visitors parked miles away and traveled to the event by foot. But as temperatures reached triple digits, several visitors suffered from heat exhaustion. First responders were able to depend on FirstNet's "always-on" connection as they managed the influx of medical emergencies that ensued from those conditions.

"Everything that you need is embedded within FirstNet to give responders the tools that they need to communicate, ultimately keeping them safe," said **Tyler Clements**, Field Coordinator for the State of Indiana. Click below to see the video.



### Communications boosted at Birkebeiner Race with FirstNet deployable

Every February, 30,000 skiers and spectators descend on northwestern Wisconsin to take part in the largest cross-country race in North America, the American Birkebeiner. The more than 30-mile race, known as the "Birkie," tests the endurance of skiers. It also creates a huge emergency communications challenge for first responders.



But with FirstNet on the scene this year, Wisconsin's gained access to FirstNet Satellite Cellsite on Light Trucks (SatCOLTs), which provided first responders with similar capabilities and connectivity as a cell tower. [Read more in this article](#), originally published by the Wisconsin Office of Emergency Communications.

### Check out the updated FirstNet.gov

We recently updated our [FirstNet.gov](#) website, making it easier to learn more about FirstNet and the First Responder Network Authority. Here are some pages you may find particularly useful:

- [Emergency Management page](#)
- [Public Safety First podcast page](#)
- [FirstNet.gov blog \(latest news\)](#)



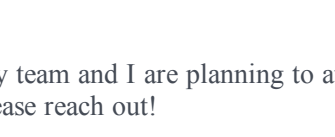
## LET'S CATCH UP

The First Responder Network Authority team and I are planning to attend the events below. If you want to meet up and share insights with me, please reach out!

- [Louisiana Emergency Management Conference](#), Lake Charles, LA, May 16
- [Emergency Management Leaders Conference](#), Phoenix, May 30

Thanks for your continued interest in FirstNet. If you have a technology idea with the potential to make a lasting impact for our fellow emergency managers, or if you'd like to schedule a Roadmap engagement, please reach out at any time to discuss it with me at [Lesia.Dickson@firstnet.gov](mailto:Lesia.Dickson@firstnet.gov).

[FirstNet.gov](#)



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