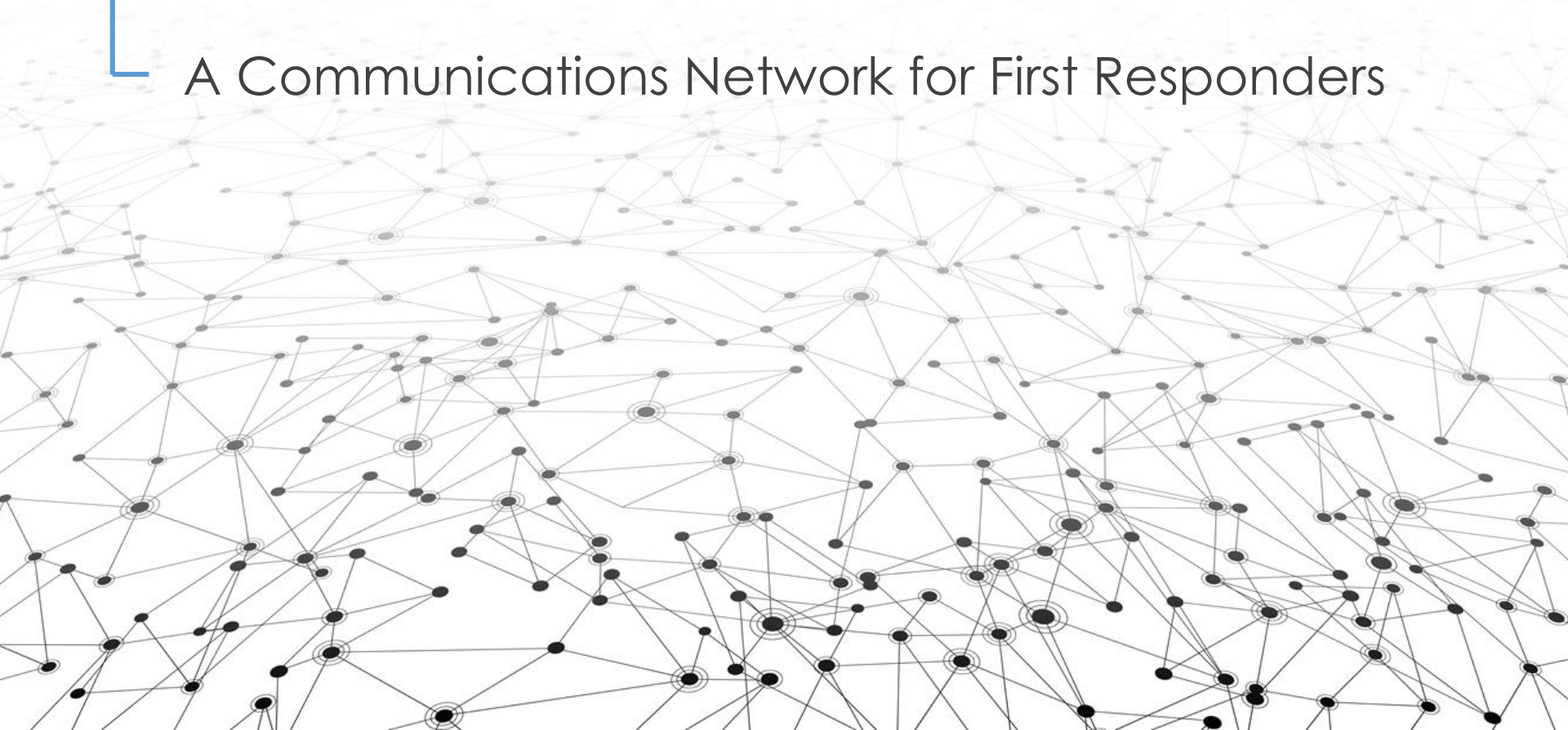# FirstNet | A Communications Network for First Responders

Outline of Presentation

1. What is FirstNet and why was it created?

2. How will FirstNet work?

3. How is FirstNet governed?

4. What is the role of counties in FirstNet?

5. What are the next steps for FirstNet?

FirstNet 101

FirstNet is an independent authority under the National Telecommunications and Information Administration with the purpose of creating a nationwide interoperable broadband network for first responders, with deployment of the network expected to begin in late 2017

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What is FirstNet?

- The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) is an independent authority under the U.S. Department of Commerce

- FirstNet was established to create **a nationwide interoperable wireless broadband network for first responders**

- The network aims to enable police, firefighters, emergency medical service professionals and other **public safety entities to more effectively communicate during emergencies**

Why was FirstNet Created?

- During the tragic September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City **over 400 first responders including firefighters, police officers, and paramedics were killed** in the line of duty

- On November 27, 2002 Congress and the president created the **National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States** (P.L. 107-306) to examine and report upon the facts and causes resulting in the loss of life during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001

- Among many factors, the commission found that **communications failures led to many first responders not receiving orders to evacuate the World Trade Center** complex prior to the buildings collapsing

The Legislative Background of FirstNet

- On February 22, 2012, **the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012** (P.L. 112-96) was enacted, mandating the creation of FirstNet to create a nationwide interoperable wireless broadband network for first responders

- Under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act, Congress authorized **$7 billion of spectrum auction proceeds**, as well as valuable spectrum bandwidth, toward the deployment of FirstNet
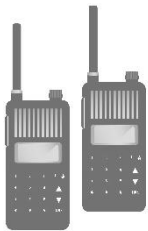
How will FirstNet work?

Understanding FirstNet's Technology

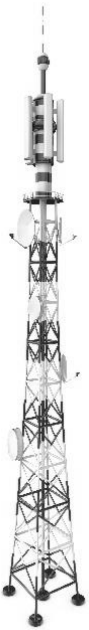First responders primarily rely on two types of communication technology during emergencies:

Land Mobile Radio (LMR) technology has been widely used by first responders for decades. LMR technology includes push-to-talk two-way radios, and typically only supports voice

Long-Term Evolution (LTE) technology has been deployed in recent years and is used in most of today's smartphones. LTE technology can support the transmission of both voice and data, including pictures and video

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Understanding FirstNet's Technology

- The **FirstNet network will be LTE based**, and thus will be capable of supporting both voice and data, including pictures and videos

- Several telecommunications companies already deploy nationwide LTE networks that first responders and the general public can subscribe to

- However, public LTE networks can become unreliable in densely populated areas, resulting in network failures. **FirstNet's network will be dedicated to first responder use,** minimizing the risk of network interruptions

FirstNet and Next Generation 9-1-1 working Together

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) is an Internet Protocol (IP) based system that allows digital information to flow from the general public to public safety answering points (PSAPs), or 9-1-1 call centers. 9-1-1 call centers with Next Generation 9-1-1 technology will be **able to receive voice calls, images, videos and text messages**

When properly designed and implemented, Next Generation 9-1-1 systems and FirstNet will complement each other by:

- Providing a reliable network for first responders to receive data from Public Safety Answering Points (9-1-1 call centers)

- Enabling the public to transmit more information than ever before to first responders before they arrive on the scene of an emergency

How is FirstNet governed?

FirstNet's Governance Structure

- Unlike many federal agencies, FirstNet is **managed by a 15 member board**, including the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Attorney General, the Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, and leaders in public safety, telecommunications and government. (see next slide for list of members)

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FirstNet's Board

- **Ms. Susan Swenson** | **FirstNet Board Chair** | Former President and CEO of Cellular One

- **Mr. Jeffrey Johnson** | **FirstNet Board Vice-Chair** | CEO Western Fire Chiefs Assn.

- **Chief Chris Burbank** | Chief of Police, Salt Lake City, Utah (Ret.)

- **Hon. Shaun Donovan** | Director, White House Office of Management and Budget

- **Mr. Edward Horowitz** | Venture Capitalist/FMR. CEO of SES Americom

- **Mr. Kevin McGinnis** | Chief/CEO, North East Mobile Health Services

- **Hon. Annise D. Parker** | Former Mayor, Houston, Texas

- **Hon. Richard W. Stanek** | Sheriff, Hennepin County Minnesota

- **Mr. Barry Boniface** | FMR. Chief Strategy and Development Officer, Bell South

- **Mr. Neil E. Cox** | CEO Repio, Inc.

- **Hon. James H. Douglas** | Governor of Vermont (2003-2011)

- **Hon. Jeh Johnson** | Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- **Hon. Loretta E. Lynch** | Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice

- **Mr. Ed Reynolds** | FMR. President of Network Operations, Cingular

- **Ms. Teri Takai** | Government IT Expert/ Former CIO for Michigan and California

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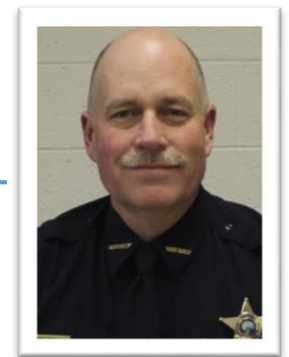
FirstNet Governance at the State Level

- The governor of each state appoints one **Designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC)** to serve as a liaison to FirstNet, the governor, and to state and local public safety officials

- The SPOC is the **primary person responsible for FirstNet's outreach in the State**

- Click here to view a list of SPOCs by State

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FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee

- As mandated by Congress, in addition to receiving strategic guidance from its board and input through state SPOCs, **FirstNet receives guidance from a 40 member Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC)**

- The Public Safety Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives of agencies and organizations that have a stake in emergency communications, **including the National Association of Counties (NACo)**

- NACo's representative on the Public Safety Advisory Committee is the **Hon. Len Humphries, sheriff, Fremont County, Idaho**

What is the role of counties in FirstNet?

County Elected Officials Have a Voice in the Process

FirstNet plans on increasing its outreach and education campaign in 2016, and encourages county governments to participate in the process. **County officials can get involved in the governor's upcoming decision by:**

- Contacting the designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for FirstNet in your state and joining them when they have an "executive consultation meeting" with the governor, the company selected to build the network, and FirstNet staff

- Providing recommendations to the governor on their decision to opt-in or opt-out of FirstNet's plan to build within the state

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What Role Can State Associations of Counties Play?

FirstNet staff are available to engage your state association to make sure that counties are aware of developments and engaged with the State Single Points of Contact (SPOCs). **FirstNet staff can provide the following services:**

Appearing as guest speakers at your conferences

Participating on conference calls or webinars for your members

Scheduling one-on-one meetings with local elected officials

What are the next steps for FirstNet?

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The Current Status of FirstNet

- On **January 13, 2016** FirstNet released a request for proposals (RFP) to solicit vendors to begin bidding on the contract to build the FirstNet network

- FirstNet's goal is to **award a winning bidder** to build the network by the fourth quarter of 2016

- Once a vendor is selected to build the FirstNet network, that company will be responsible for developing individual **state plans** mapping out how the FirstNet network and infrastructure will be built in each state (as early as mid-2017)

- Following the development of individual state plans, FirstNet and the company selected to build the network will **present each state plan to the respective governor**

Next Steps: States Opt-in or Opt-out

- Once FirstNet and the company selected to build the network present the individual state plan to the governor, he or she **will have 90 days to accept** the FirstNet plan (opt-in), giving authorization for the company that is selected to build the network to begin construction within that state

- If the governor rejects the plan presented (opts-out), **they will be given 180 days to find an alternate vendor** to build a FirstNet compatible radio access network within the state and **develop an alternate plan**

- Under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, alternate plans are **subject to approval** by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and FirstNet, to ensure interoperability and sustainability

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Additional Resources

- A list of state Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) can be found at: http://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/spoc-directory-Mar%204-2016.pdf

- FirstNet Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Contact: **Justin Shore**, Senior Counsel for Government Affairs, at Justin.Shore@FirstNet.gov

- NACo Staff Liaison to FirstNet: **Jacob Terrell**, Associate Legislative Director for Telecommunications and Technology, jterrell@naco.org or (202)942-4236

NACo's Legislative Affairs Staff

Legislative Director	Deborah Cox dcox@naco.org
Deputy Legislative Director	Paul Beddoe pbeddoe@naco.org
Agriculture and Rural Affairs	Arthur Scott ascott@naco.org
Community, Economic and Workforce Development	Daria Daniel ddaniel@naco.org
Environment, Energy & Land Use	Julie Ufner jufner@naco.org
Finance, Pensions & Intergovernmental Affairs	Mike Belarmino mbelarmino@naco.org
Health	Brian Bowden bbowden@naco.org
Human Services & Education	Jack Peterson jpeterson@naco.org
Justice & Public Safety	Hadi Sedigh hsedigh@naco.org
Public Lands	Chris Marklund cmarklund@naco.org
Telecommunications and Technology	Jacob Terrell jterrell@naco.org

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