What is FirstNet?
The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Authorized by Congress in 2012, its mission is to develop, build and operate the nationwide public safety broadband network (NPSBN) that equips first responders with dedicated communications to save lives and protect property. This is a federal program that includes state guidance.

“Adding coverage, priority and preemption... will truly enhance the safety of the public and first responders during every day and large scale events.”

Michael J. Risvold
Chief of Police
Wayzata Police Department

Why you should care about FirstNet?
FirstNet was envisioned and championed by first responders for first responders. It provides public safety the robust wireless network they require and deserve. You can expect:
- Affordability
- Availability and reliability
- Local control
- Public safety grade
- Connecting responders in rural areas
- Interoperability
- Quality of service
- True priority for public safety

How you can benefit from FirstNet?
Today’s first responders utilize broadband networks to perform critical aspects of their jobs from looking up information at a traffic stop to tracking responding personnel and vehicles. First responders have no choice but to use commercial carriers today even though these networks do not meet public safety requirements. Commercial networks are becoming ever more congested and lack much needed rural coverage.

FirstNet is a new option available for public safety communications. FirstNet offers something more than what is available on commercial networks, it offers priority and preemption, and is dedicated to satisfying public safety requirements. Having a dedicated wireless network enables first responders to avoid network congestion that can and does occur with current commercial networks. It’s not by chance that congestion happens exactly when it is needed most, such as during planned or unplanned events.

FirstNet is a federal program that offers our first responders a dedicated reliable network that allows them to perform tasks and access applications that may or may not work in today’s current mobile environment. It will enable secure and dedicated pathways to criminal and customer records. It will allow first responders to transmit streaming video in the field without concern of network congestion. FirstNet will perform closer to public safety grade levels when transmitting streaming data with priority and ruthless preemption.
FirstNet in-depth

Organization
- Governed by a fifteen member board, and advised by a 43 member Public Safety Advisory committee made up of public safety experts from across the country.
- A public-private partnership with AT&T to build and deploy the network.

Finances
- The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 allocated $7 billion from the spectrum auctions, and 20MHZ of Band Class 14 spectrum to get the project started.
- The Act states that FirstNet must be financially self-sustaining. FirstNet will leverage the assets granted, and develop a user fee schedule similar to a current commercial carrier.
- FirstNet will offer an additional competitive option for cellular service. They will be competitive, and offer differentiating features from commercial carriers. Local decision makers will always retain the right to choose the wireless provider that best meets their needs.

FirstNet’s public-private partnership
FirstNet has partnered with AT&T to build the first nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to America’s first responders. AT&T will spend $46.5 billion to build, deploy, operate and maintain the network, with a focus on ensuring robust coverage for public safety.

What next?
With the recent awarding of the FirstNet contract, initial deployment of the 5-phased implementation is tentatively scheduled for the Winter of 2017-2018. What can you do to prepare:
- Reach out to your regional coordinator
- Determine at what phase of the FirstNet deployment meets your wireless needs
- Understand the pros and any cons
- Understand and plan for migration
- Educate others

MN FirstNet Consultation Project
MnFCP is a statewide effort ensuring the successful implementation of the NPSBN for all Minnesota public safety entities.

MnFCP Stats
- Agencies Providing Survey Feedback - 910
- Coverage Review Attendees - 380
- Regional Build Out Attendees - 309
- County Coverage Reviews - 87/87

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