



First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) Weekly Update to the State Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) – March 16, 2015

FirstNet News

- FirstNet's Second Notice has been published in the *Federal Register* and is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/03/13/2015-05855/further-proposed-interpretations-of-parts-of-the-middle-class-tax-relief-and-job-creation-act-of>. Written comments may be submitted electronically through www.regulations.gov or by mail to the address provided in the notice. The deadline for submitting comments is April 13, 2015. We have posted an [FAQ about the Second Notice](#) on our website.
- We conducted the initial consultation meeting with Massachusetts on 3/12 with more than 45 public safety stakeholders on hand, including nearby states (ME/NY/NH). We have held 16 consultation meetings with more than 1,150 total stakeholders.
- Last week, FirstNet participated in the National League of Cities (NLC) Congressional Cities Conference, the APCO Emerging Technology Forum, the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA) Homeland Security, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1802 Committee meeting, and the Colorado Statewide Radio Summit.
- FirstNet is looking forward to the annual IWCE conference and exhibit this week in Las Vegas. Senior staff and Board members will be participating on a number of panel sessions, including: legal and regulatory issues, cybersecurity, early builders, FirstNet integration, NG9-1-1 and public/private partnerships.
- FirstNet, in coordination with the NTIA State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) Team, will host the 2015 SPOC Meeting on April 14-15, 2015 in Reston, VA. This two day meeting will be designed to discuss the FirstNet and SLIGP updates, solicit state and territory feedback on FirstNet planning activities, and provide a forum to share successes and lessons learned on FirstNet planning efforts. The meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Reston located at 1800 Presidents Street, Reston, VA. A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Hyatt. **If you are interested in attending the 2015 SPOC Meeting, please RSVP to outreach@firstnet.gov. Additionally, you can reserve your hotel room by March 16 with the room block (government rate of \$229/night) online at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/TheEventPlanningGroup>**

- In coordination with the NTIA State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) team, we are preparing for a 3/23 webinar for FirstNet to release the final data collection elements needed to inform FirstNet's acquisition process and state plans and NTIA to discuss the process to prepare your grants for SLIGP Phase 2. To continue with messaging and education about the data collection, FirstNet is developing an outreach package to include a SPOC Letter, Data Collection Workbook, Slick Sheet, and Webinar Presentation.
- FirstNet has received completed consultation checklists from 48 of 56 states and territories. Confirmed upcoming initial consultation meetings are: Nebraska (3/18-3/19), Washington DC (3/26), South Dakota (4/1), Missouri (4/7), New York (4/20), North Carolina (4/23), South Carolina (4/30), West Virginia (5/5), Rhode Island (5/6), Arkansas (5/14), Virgin Islands (5/19), Maine (5/20), Idaho (5/21), New Hampshire (6/9), New Mexico (6/10), Ohio (6/11), Vermont (6/16), Kansas (6/17), Wisconsin (6/18), California (6/23-25), Illinois (7/14), Alabama (7/15), Georgia (7/21), Pennsylvania (8/4), Hawaii (8/12), Indiana (8/26) and New Jersey (9/3).
- The consultation schedule and tracker is on the FirstNet website: <http://firstnet.gov/consultation/meetings>.
- FirstNet will hold March regional SPOC/SWIC calls this week: Monday, March 16, Regions 5 & 9; Wednesday, March 18, Regions 4, 6, 7 & 8; Thursday, March 19, Regions 1, 2 & 10, and Friday, March 20, Region 3. We'll be including resources to highlight the second Public Notice for Comment, discuss the 3/23 webinar on data collection, and solicit your feedback on the draft agenda for the upcoming 2015 SPOC Meeting.
- The Federal Agency Point of Contact call will occur on Tuesday, March 17. This is the inaugural call for the group.
- The next FirstNet Board and Committee meetings will be March 24-25 at the Department of Commerce headquarters building in Washington, DC; the meetings will also be webcast. These meetings are open to the public and press on a first-come, first-served basis. Space is limited. In order to get an accurate headcount, all expected attendees are asked to provide notice of intent to attend by sending an email to BoardRSVP@firstnet.gov. Additional information is available at <http://firstnet.gov/content/board-meeting-march-2015>.
- The next quarterly SPOC webinar will be held on Thursday, April 2 from 2:00 – 3:30 pm Eastern Daylight Time. This meeting will focus on follow up from the March Board meetings. The link and call in number will be sent out soon to update your Outlook calendar appointment.

From the States and PSAC Organizations

- The PSAC Executive Committee met via conference call on 3/9 and discussed the status of the working groups, the priority and preemption taskings, upcoming PSAC

member appointments for the February 2015-2017 term and discussed the PSAC meeting schedule for the remainder of 2015.

- The PSAC priority and preemption and public safety grade task teams held conference calls last week. The priority and preemption task team continued its review of the draft usage scenarios and the public safety grade task team began reviewing the draft critical infrastructure definitions.
- The Tribal Working Group (TWG) sent its initial recommendations for tribal outreach, education, and inclusive consultation strategies to the PSAC Executive Committee on 3/4; the recommendations were sent to FirstNet on 3/15.

Media Watch

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Traditional Media

Media coverage on FirstNet largely focused on the release of the Second Public Notice and Chair Swenson's testimony before the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on March 11. The team is developing a frequently asked question document in response to some of the key questions from the hearing to post on our website.

FCW: Hiring, Procurement Are Pain Points for FirstNet

<http://fcw.com/articles/2015/03/11/firstnet-pain-points.aspx>

The development of a nationwide broadband network for first responders is being hindered by cumbersome procurement rules and delays in hiring, said Sue Swenson, chairwoman of FirstNet, the federal entity tasked with building the network. FirstNet and its parent agency, the Commerce Department, have twice sought rapid hiring authority from the Office of Personnel Management, according to Swenson's testimony during a March 11 hearing of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. They were turned down once and are awaiting a reply to their second request, which was made in August 2014. Swenson testified that it can take up to nine months to hire new staff, and the agency currently has just over 100 dedicated employees.

Radio Resource: FirstNet: \$100M Cap on Administrative Expenses is Too Low

http://www.rrmediagroup.com/newsArticle.cfm?news_id=11811

In its annual report to Congress for the fiscal year ending September 2014, the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) said the amount it is limited to spend on administrative expenses — \$100 million — during the first 10 years of operation may limit its flexibility to grow and adapt as needed and may introduce risks to the program. “After significant financial modeling, this cap has been identified as a future barrier for FirstNet progress because it is projected to limit administrative costs to impractical levels,” the report said. As of Sept. 30, FirstNet paid \$8.5 million in administrative expenses subject to the limitation.

Urgent Communications: FirstNet’s Swenson to Congress: Final RFP Due This Year, ‘We Should Be Shot’ If 2022 Goal Not Met

<http://urgentcomm.com/ntiafirstnet/firstnet-s-swenson-congress-final-rfp-due-year-we-should-be-shot-if-2022-goal-not-met>

FirstNet Chairwoman Sue Swenson testifies before the Senate Commerce Committee that FirstNet plans to issue its final request for proposal (RFP) by the end of this year and that “we should be shot” if the much-anticipated nationwide broadband network for first responders is not operational by 2022.

Fierce Mobile Government: Swenson: GAO's FirstNet Cost 'Built on Assumptions'; Board Confident in Own Estimate

<http://www.fiercemobilegovernment.com/story/swenson-gaos-firstnet-cost-estimates-built-assumptions-says-board-confident/2015-03-11>

While Congress has approved \$7 billion for an independent government board to build and operate a nationwide, wireless communications network for first responders, the Government Accountability Office pegs the price tag anywhere from a low of \$12 billion to as high as \$47 billion during the first decade. “I think what’s important to understand about the GAO report is that the information that’s in there is built on a lot of assumptions,” said Susan Swenson, chair of the First Responder Network Authority, or FirstNet, during a March 11 hearing of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. In prepared testimony, Mark Goldstein, GAO’s director of physical infrastructure, said those cost estimates come from a variety of entities that use different assumptions about the network’s scope.

Fiscal Times: Another Government Project Is Turning into an Expensive IT Nightmare

<http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/03/11/Another-Government-Project-Turning-Expensive-IT-Nightmare>

The federal government has another multibillion-dollar IT mess on its hands. In 2012, the government began work on a massive, nationwide public safety wireless broadband network intended to help police, firefighters and other first responders communicate quickly in the event of major disasters. Three years later, lawmakers and auditors are questioning whether that First Responder Network, or FirstNet, will ever actually get off the ground.

GAO: Public Safety Communications: Preliminary Information on FirstNet's Efforts to Establish a Nationwide Broadband Network (GAO-15-380T: Published: Mar 11, 2015)

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-380T>

GAO's ongoing work has found that the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) has made progress carrying out the responsibilities established in the 2012 Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act (the 2012 act) but lacks certain elements of effective internal controls. FirstNet has made progress establishing an organizational structure, planning the nationwide public-safety broadband network, and consulting with stakeholders. Nevertheless, stakeholders GAO contacted cited upcoming issues, such as deciding the level of network coverage, which will be difficult for FirstNet to address as it continues to carry out its responsibilities. With respect to internal controls, FirstNet has begun establishing policies and practices consistent with federal standards, but it has not fully assessed its risks or established Standards of Conduct. Given that FirstNet faces a multitude of risks to achieve its complex objectives, fully assessing risks would help FirstNet respond to risks in a proactive way. Developing standards of conduct would help FirstNet address conduct and performance issues in a timely manner.

International Association of Fire Chiefs: IAFC President: FirstNet is Critically Important to Public Safety

<http://www.iafc.org/Media/articlePR.cfm?ItemNumber=8299>

G. Keith Bryant, IAFC president and chairman of the board, today testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation that FirstNet's goal of

building a nationwide public-safety broadband network to meet first responders' needs is critically important for public safety. He reaffirmed the IAFC's belief that FirstNet "is developing the leadership, staff and support from states, public safety and other key stakeholders required to make the network a reality."

Politico: Morning Tech: Senate Commerce Digs in on FirstNet

<http://www.politico.com/morningtech/0315/morningtech17426.html>

Chairman John Thune is set this morning to gavel in his committee's first look at FirstNet, the government's forthcoming \$7 billion public-safety wireless network, and he'll open by questioning the Commerce Department's role in helping to stand up the system. "The department should ask itself whether it is being the best partner it can be to FirstNet and facilitating development of a public safety network that makes us all more secure," Thune intends to say in his opening statement, shared early with Tony. He'll note there's "some risk" in setting up FirstNet under the agency as an "independent authority." And the senator will cite a recent unnamed report that compares FirstNet to HealthCare.gov. Per Thune's remarks, he'll note the "challenge of setting up [FirstNet] is arguably many times greater" than the troubled health care portal. "I strongly encourage the department to do everything it can to learn from the many mistakes of HealthCare.gov," he'll add.

C-SPAN: National Wireless Public Safety Network

<http://www.c-span.org/video/?324780-1/hearing-public-safety-broadband-network-progress>

Representatives of federal agencies and first responder groups testified hearing on progress made toward establishing FirstNet, which aims to be the first nationwide wireless broadband network for public safety.

YouTube: Wicker Questions Administration Officials on FirstNet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rh7b75ikzE&feature=youtu.be&noredirect=1>

U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, R-Miss., questions Obama Administration officials about their ongoing problems to implement a public safety wireless broadband network in Mississippi.

FIRSTNET ON ITS FUTURE: WE GOT THIS – Politico (March 12, 2015)

FirstNet describes its work to modernize first responders' communications as a "startup," and to that end, it's experienced its share of growing pains. Lawmakers at a hearing Wednesday expressed dismay that FirstNet has been caught up in the federal government's slow hiring process, which delays key staff additions — and watchdogs, including the Government Accountability Office, expressed their concerns about its budget. But Sue Swenson, the board's chairwoman, said in testimony and after the hearing she's confident the board can get the job done. I think we can solve some of these issues -- like I said, I think it's really important we control our own destiny," she told Tony with respect to fixing FirstNet's hiring woes. "We're going to work with Commerce; if that doesn't work, we'll go back to Congress." Earlier in the day, Swenson took care to stress it is too soon to say much more about the \$7 billion Congress allocated to the network in 2012. "I believe the financial model is solid," Swenson said, adding that "we won't know the answer to that" until the board issues its draft RFP (likely by month's end) and solicits feedback on how to build and run the network.

Web and Social Media

Social media discussions about FirstNet focused on consultation, the Second Public Notice, and the hearing. FirstNet blogs this week focused on Wyoming consultation, Chair Swenson's testimony from the hearing, and release of the annual report: <http://www.firstnet.gov/newsroom/blog>. The annual report blog was cited in several news articles. The FirstNet Twitter account has grown to 1,855 followers; LinkedIn 590; Google+ 29; and YouTube has 95 subscribers.