



OhioFirst.Net

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2016

Imagine...

Imagine a world where cops, firefighters and paramedics can communicate during a disaster seamlessly, clearly and with cutting edge data applications that feed live video, health care telemetry and background checks across jurisdictions in real time.

We're getting closer.

Police departments are deploying body cameras, firefighters are wearing biometric monitors and rescue teams use drones and robots to go where responders cannot safely go. These technologies are here, but the cellular networks they rely on are not perfect.

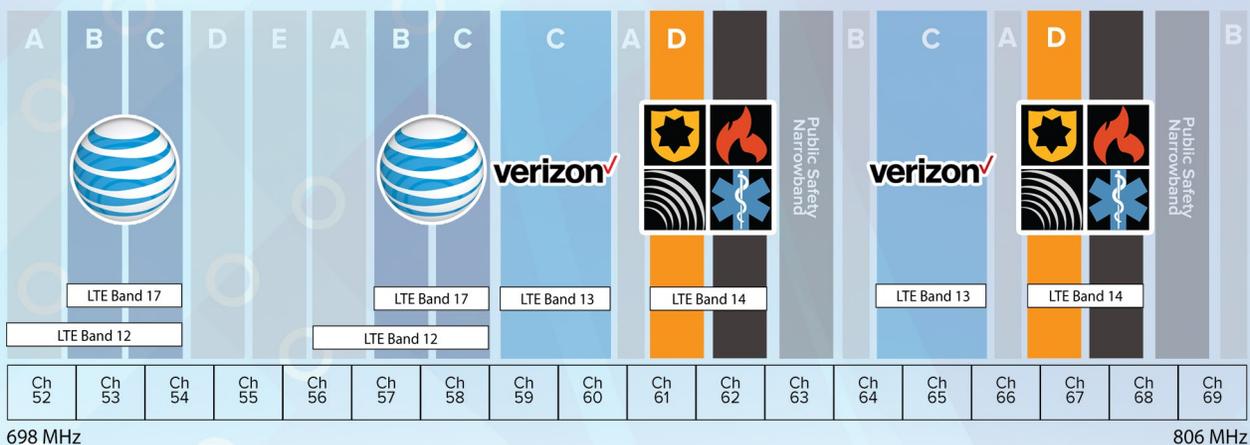
Major cellphone carriers are promising priority for public safety users willing to pay a premium to not compete with the masses for bandwidth when it's needed the most. But commercial networks cannot provide a public safety grade of service.

There are still rural and in-building coverage issues, location-based mapping is okay at best and funding is lagging demand. Crimes are going unsolved and lives are not saved because of these issues.

About FirstNet

In 2012, President Obama signed legislation creating an independent federal authority known as “FirstNet” (First Responder Network Authority) within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. This law grants dedicated spectrum to FirstNet to provide a mission critical cellular data network for public safety entities nationwide. The law also provides \$6.1 billion to build the network.

The network will provide coast-to-coast coverage across the nation allowing for public safety to utilize 20 MHz of spectrum bandwidth when they need it and without congestion. This spectrum is a valuable resource for the public safety network, providing public safety with the same amount of spectrum used by major national carriers Verizon and AT&T for 4G cellular service in the 700 MHz band.



The figure above depicts frequencies dedicated to public safety (“Band 14”) for the nationwide public safety broadband network. The more space on the airwaves a carrier has, the more data users can push.

You don’t have to be a wireless expert to understand that a dedicated public safety network that can push as much data as a major cellular network will be good for first responders!

What's Happening in 2016?

Ohio's nationwide public safety broadband efforts are governed by the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee and the National Public Safety Broadband Network Subcommittee. These committees are well-established groups with representation across state and local public safety entities.

The OhioFirst.Net Implementation Project (OFIP) lays out our planning activities which will result in a truly informed data-driven requirements document we will use to negotiate our state plan with FirstNet. OFIP's first activity was to launch a Point of Contact Survey, the purpose of which is to identify the right person within each of Ohio's 3,000+ public safety agencies to answer questions related to communications assets and needs. We have also issued a User Population Survey to collect data for end-user requirements and adoption projections for FirstNet.

We are performing data-driven county-by-county coverage reviews which will be completed by October 2016. All 88 counties and each major city will have a dedicated coverage review. Our results will be shared with FirstNet and the public safety community to develop the best state plan for Ohio.

Ohio has been granted use of the Band 14 dedicated spectrum for a pilot project in Greene County commencing January 1, 2016 and running through June 30, 2016. This three-site project will include tabletop communications exercises with the first responder community.

Our ongoing efforts include getting the word out to public safety and potential private partners throughout Ohio about what FirstNet can do for them. We continue to seek input and participation from stakeholders who know what technology they need so that Ohio first responders can make their jobs easier and more effective.

What's the Problem?

FirstNet's "startup" funding of \$6 billion is a drop in the bucket. Even utilizing existing infrastructure and assets, estimates range from \$15 to \$41 billion to build out the entire nation. Even offering to allow partner carriers to buy excess spectrum capacity to customers when public safety is not using it may not fully fund the effort.

Another issue is time. Public safety has needed interoperable voice and data communications for decades but it took until 2012 to pass enabling legislation. It has been slow and daunting to stand up a new hybrid type of federal agency—not only to mobilize the organization but also to ferret out all of the necessary regulations.

How Can I Help?

If you would like to be placed on our distribution list for upcoming events, meetings and updates, please contact us via email at kelly.castle@das.ohio.gov.

We deploy subject-matter workgroups when we need input and feedback to give to FirstNet on both a formal and informal basis. These groups meet via Webex. If you are a public safety practitioner or technology expert, we would welcome your participation.

Finally, check out our website at <http://ohiofirst.net> and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



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