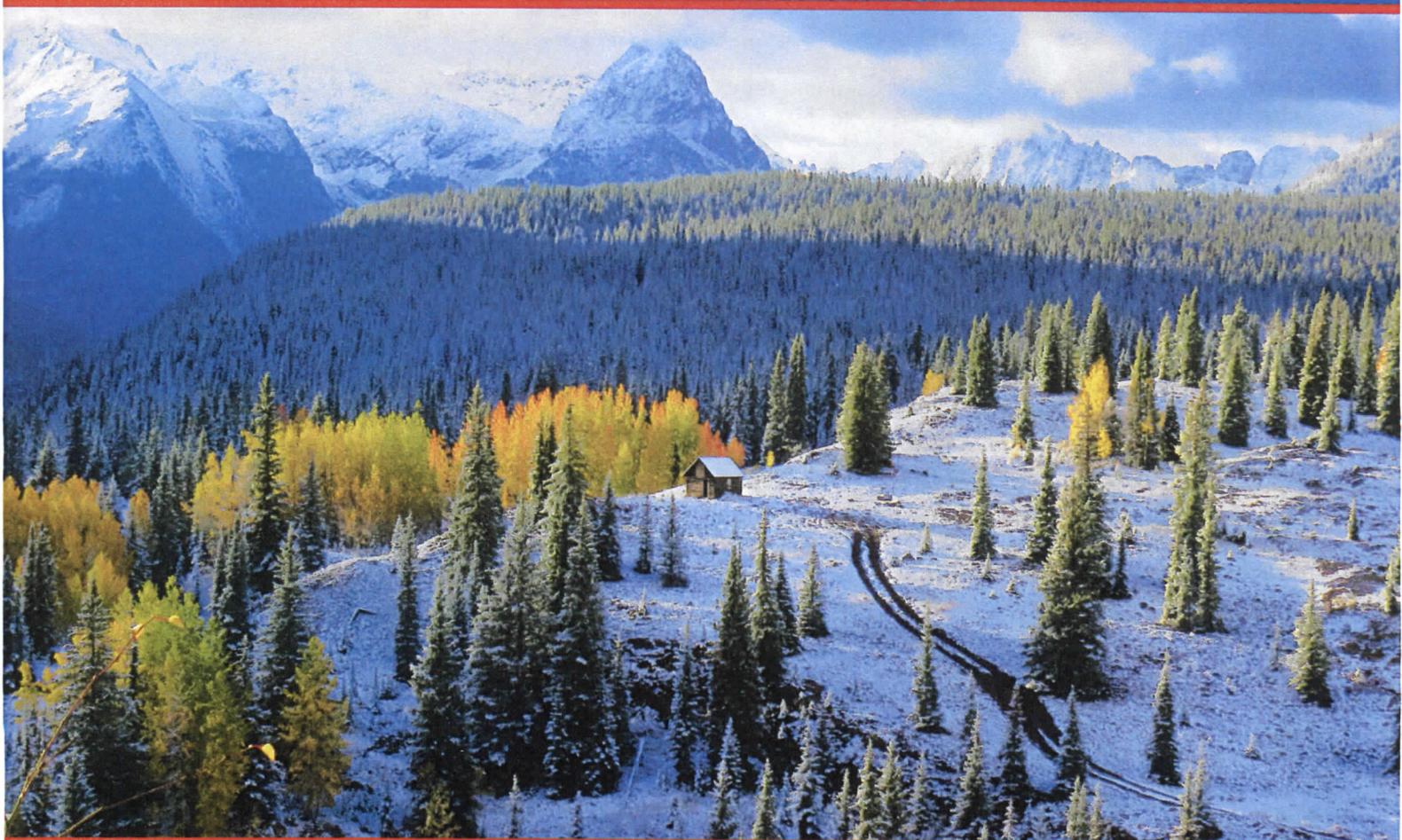




Colorado SHERIFF

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FirstNet
Colorado

FirstNet Colorado: *21st Century Cutting Edge Technology for Colorado Sheriffs*

Imagine this: a high-speed network that allows first responders to communicate seamlessly across agencies *without* competing for bandwidth with “regular” cell phone users. Imagine a network that helps a Sheriff’s Deputy locate victims of crime rapidly – and supplies real-time information about the incident, the suspect(s) and critical details to navigate the situation. That network is coming – and Colorado is at the forefront!

Established through the Middle Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, the First Responder Network Authority, or FirstNet, is an independent authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. FirstNet is tasked with designing, building and operating the first nationwide, interoperable, high-speed wireless broadband network devoted solely to public safety responders.

The National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) will be based on Long-Term Evolution (LTE) technology, which is the same cellular and broadband technology used by commercial carriers. The NPSBN will allow public safety personnel to share information, access applications and better utilize critical resources during day-to-day operations and large-scale incidents.

Why do first responders need their own network?

The answer to this question boils down to a basic concept: reliability. Both natural and man-made incidents have taught us that commercial networks become overwhelmed and often fail during critical incidents leaving first responders without access to a key communications mechanism when they need it the most. Even during day-to-day operations, first responders are left competing for bandwidth with the general public they are trying to protect. Just as public safety requires a dedicated *radio* network, the time has come for a dedicated broadband data and cellular network.

What will the network do?

Using the NPSBN will help deputies' situational awareness

through information sharing with other responders (e.g., fire, EMS, and secondary responders like utilities). This in turn will facilitate a coordinated emergency response. In mass casualty incidents, the Incident Commander will be able to determine what resources are available and who is responding, giving him or her critical information to make decisions quickly.

Increased access to existing and new public safety applications will help first responders deal with the increasingly complex situations they deal with. Priority Access and Quality of Service elements of the LTE technology will ensure that responders have the bandwidth and services they need throughout an event. Additionally, the hardened infrastructure will ensure that the network remains operational during both natural and made-made incidents.

How does this integrate with current Land Mobile Radio systems?

FirstNet will provide mission-critical, high-speed broadband data services to supplement Land Mobile Radio (LMR) networks as well as non-mission-critical cellular communications. Currently, LMR systems provide mission-critical voice communications but with the increased reliance on data, that is no longer enough. Initially, the NPSBN will be used to send and receive critical data: location information, video, images and text and support non-mission-critical voice communications as well. This will allow deputies to use smart phones for both data and critical voice communications. The network will augment and complement the current LMR systems. There is no question the public safety community must maintain LMR systems for critical

voice communications. There is a tremendous amount of research and development being put into developing a mission-critical voice capability for the NPSBN using LTE technology. The vision is that one day first responders will have a single device for data as well as voice communications. It will take time to integrate data and mission-critical voice communications into a single device.

How might FirstNet help Colorado County Sheriffs?

Scenario: A report of a vehicle accident on a remote road comes into a dispatch center in the Rocky Mountains. Currently it can take up to 25 minutes for deputies to find the accident. FirstNet will give responders access to technologies such as Advanced Automatic Crash Notification systems – critical information that can be relayed to the dispatch center and then passed to the deputy via FirstNet. The Global Positioning System location could activate a map on the deputy's device highlighting elevation, terrain and obstacles, giving a fairly specific location. Everyone involved in an incident would be able to access all of the relevant data on smartphones, tablets or laptops/computers.

With a simple camera and the robust wireless network capabilities that FirstNet will offer it will be possible as the deputy approaches a motorist to stream video to the dispatch center. As the information is received from an incident it can be used to search databases helping the deputy determine who this person is and if they are a known danger to the deputy and the public. In a rapidly evolving incident the command staff will be able to view the deputy's environment and command will be able to determine if

they need to send additional resources to the deputy's location. Sheriff's deputies in the field will have at their disposal automated fingerprint identification as well as facial recognition, giving them additional tools beyond the Drivers License to determine whom they may need to detain.

What does this mean for Colorado?

The federal statute that created FirstNet designed this effort to be coordinated at the state level. In addition to the funding for the development of the network, the NTIA set aside money in a State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) to fund the necessary planning at the state and local level. Additionally, each state has designated a 'Single Point of Contact' (SPOC) to interface with FirstNet. In Colorado one of the first tasks addressed was to develop a comprehensive, collaborative governing body to oversee the effort. As the lead state agency on the effort, the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) reached out to all public safety disciplines and levels of government for representation on Colorado's governing body. The result is the FirstNet Colorado Governing Body which is made up of representatives from Fire, EMS, all levels of government (municipal, county, state), law enforcement including the County Sheriffs of Colorado (as represented by Sheriff Chad Day of Yuma County) and the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police as well as other key stakeholders.

With the governing body in place and the SPOC identified as Brian Shepherd at OIT the next step was to hire staff and begin an education and outreach campaign to engage local first responders and

ensure we are all following state guidelines. Ed Mills, FirstNet Outreach & Education Manager, along with Kim Coleman Madsen, FirstNet Public Safety Broadband Manager, from OIT, serve on the FirstNet Colorado team under the direction of the FirstNet Colorado Governing Body and Brian Shepherd. Ed & Kim have travel the state visiting local, regional, state and federal public safety stakeholders to educate and engage them in this tremendous task. To date, the FirstNet Colorado staff has visited every All Hazards region, multiple association meetings, and met with more than one-third of Colorado's counties.

What's next?

As we continue with basic education and outreach efforts, the next step is to define coverage and capacity requirements for each county. We are asking first responders to tell us where they need wireless coverage so they can use smart phones, tablets and computers as they respond to emergencies. OIT issued a Request for Proposal for resources to develop a county-specific coverage model, validated by incident and crime data, which will allow the counties to determine what their coverage needs will be for the NPSBN. This process will begin in early 2015.

FirstNet and the NPSBN will bring twenty-first century cutting edge technology to Colorado's Sheriff Deputies. The high-speed, wireless broadband network being developed through FirstNet will allow all first responders to do their jobs more efficiently, keeping them safe and in turn, keeping Colorado safer. However, we need your input. We need all first responders to work with the FirstNet Colorado Governing Body and the FirstNet

Colorado staff to plan and implement this critical network for the public safety community in Colorado.

Contact Ed Mills, FirstNet Outreach and Education Manager (Ed.Mills@state.co.us) about how you and your agency or organization can get involved in this initiative.

To learn more about FirstNet, visit www.FirstNet.gov. To learn more about the FirstNet Colorado activities, visit www.FirstNetColorado.org.

Ed Mills is the FirstNet Outreach Manager with the Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology. Before working for the state, Ed was a Counter Terrorism Specialist. He served as a Military Policeman in the U.S. Army. Mr. Mills is currently a volunteer firefighter and Emergency Medical Responder with Evergreen Fire Rescue.

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