

Newsletter

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Volume 5, Edition 5



Connecting 9-1-1 and first responders in Quad Cities

Dispatch centers and first responders in Rock Island County, Illinois, subscribed to FirstNet to ensure that they have reliable connectivity for day-to-day and large scale emergencies. Hear how they're using the FirstNet communications platform. [WATCH VIDEO.](#)

Helping 9-1-1 in Illinois Quad Cities with reliable coverage

By Steve Seiver

Village Administrator, Village of Milan, IL
and Chairman, Rock Island County
Emergency Telephone System Board

The Village of Milan is a community in central Rock Island County. We're a part of the Quad City Metro Area, a two-county region equally split between Illinois and Iowa. We're nestled among 5 larger cities, which always takes a bit of explaining as to why we're known as the "Quad Cities." And we share a lot of common problems and regional issues with our neighboring communities.

As village administrator I am involved daily with each of the individual city departments. We provide basic city services, and our departments include police (there is a separate fire district), public works, water and sewer and

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ROG: The mission critical team connecting you to the data you need

Your ability to communicate is critical – especially during a crisis or a natural disaster.

FirstNet provides the backup you need to stay connected. So, you can coordinate your public safety response during large events and quickly restore access to the voice and data you need in an emergency.

With FirstNet, you have access to the Response Operation Group (ROG) — a dedicated team of former first responders always ready to support you. ROG assists in deploying more than 80 dedicated deployables – including Satellite Cells on Light Trucks and Satellite Cells on Wheels. These are mobile cell sites that link to FirstNet via satellite. They don't rely on commercial power availability. And they provide first responders with connectivity capabilities much like a cell tower.

It doesn't stop there though. During emergent, urgent or planned events *(Continued on Page 6)*

THE FIRSTNET HEALTH AND WELLNESS COALITION

A commitment to addressing first responder needs

By Dr. Anna Fitch Courie

Director, Responder Wellness,
FirstNet Program at AT&T

First responders experience higher rates of depression, post-traumatic stress, burnout, anxiety, and other issues.^{1,2,3}, compared with the general population.

Consequently, there is a growing movement towards supporting the mental, physical, spiritual health of first responders in an effort to get upstream from the problems they face as a result of the service they provide to our communities.

To engage in support responder health and wellness, AT&T established the FirstNet Health and Wellness Coalition in October of 2020. The mission of this coalition was to integrate responder, community, industry, and academic capabilities to support the health, wellness, and readiness of America's First Responders. This effort is bringing together over 20 public safety organizations to strategically identify the most critical priorities facing first responders and lend its resources to creating meaningful solutions.

The FirstNet Health and Wellness Coalition will

- Establish a framework in which to integrate leadership across first responder professions;
- Assess and analyze existing data on first responder health and wellness needs;
- Identify key priorities for action;
- Facilitate action planning in which to address priorities; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of activities for future planning and activities.

Currently, the coalition is analyzing the results from the First Responder Needs Assessment sent out December 2020 through January 2021. This survey collected 368 full data sets across multiple first responder disciplines including law enforcement, fire, emergency management, dispatch, paramedics, and emergency medical.



The mission of this coalition was to integrate responder, community, industry, and academic capabilities to support the health, wellness, and readiness of America's first responders.

These data demonstrate awareness of the mental and physical stressors facing the respondents including post-traumatic stress, depression, access to mental healthcare and drug and alcohol abuse concerns. The data also indicated areas in which responders wanted to engage in improving their wellness through stress management, physical fitness, wellness coaching and resilience training.

Finally, the respondents shared barriers to engaging in wellness activities such as not enough time, work-life balance struggles, the cost of activities, and a lack of awareness of resources.

The respondents shared valuable ways to engage first responders in their health and wellness needs. Specifically, the respondents wanted to see their leadership engaging in health and wellness, not just speaking to it.

One respondent remarked:

“Leadership needs to be involved with this {wellness} at the same level as other staff and provide funding and

participation that shows their real support.”

The analysis of over 200 free text responses demonstrated comments that supported the quantitative data and provided rich contextual input surrounding first responders needs in mental health, sleep issues, family member support, needed training and programs, and addressing stress and leadership engagement.

Additionally, the respondents felt that organizations need to provide awards and incentives for participation, increased amplification of wellness programs and identify standards for well-developed first responder programs. These results are promising as they indicated first responders are aware of their health and wellness needs and risk factors. They see the barriers that may prevent them from engaging. And they offered insight into solutions that may help improve first responder health and wellness activities.

The First Responder Needs Assessment is one piece of the

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process the FirstNet Health and Wellness Coalition is using to drive its efforts. Collaborating with public safety is facilitating innovation, dialog, and solutions that will help to systematically develop action plans to address these top concerns. These action plans are the critical next step in ensuring our activities support the most pressing health and wellness needs of the population we seek to serve: first responders.

Take a look at the questions posed to respondents in the [First Responder Needs Assessment survey](#).

Dr. Anna Fitch Courie, Director of Responder Wellness, FirstNet Program at AT&T is a nurse, Army wife, former university faculty, and author.

Dr. Courie has worked for over 20 years in the health care profession including Bone Marrow Transplant, Intensive Care, Public Health, and Health Promotion practice. Dr. Courie holds a Bachelor's in Nursing from Clemson University; a Master's in Nursing



Respondents wanted to see their leadership engaging in health and wellness, not just speaking to it. Take a look at the questions posed to respondents in the [First Responder Needs Assessment survey](#).

Education from the University of Wyoming; and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Ohio State University. Dr. Courie's area of expertise is integration of public health strategy across disparate organizations to achieve health improvement goals.

¹ Heyman, M., Dill, J., & Douglas, R. (2018). The Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders. Ruderman Family Foundation.

² Benedek, D., Fullerton, C., and Ursano, R. (2007). First responders: Mental health consequences of natural and human-made disasters for public health and safety workers. Annual Review of Public Health. 28: 55-68.

³ Substance Abuse, Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2018). Disaster Technical Assistance Center Supplemental Research Bulletin: First Responders: Behavioral Health Concerns, Emergency Response, and Trauma. Retrieved from: [First Responders: Behavioral Health Concerns, Emergency Response, and Trauma \(samhsa.gov\)](#)



First Responder Agencies:

FREE SMARTPHONE FOR LIFE*

Available with a new activation or eligible upgrade on a 2-year service agreement or AT&T installment 30-month agreement.*

*Available only to First Responder Agencies, including Medical Emergency Departments, for their Agency Paid Users on FirstNet Mobile—Unlimited for Smartphone line. 2-year agreement: Upgrade your smartphone with a new eligible smartphone every two years at no additional cost for as long as your service plan is in effect and in good standing. Pay \$0.99 for eligible smartphone at purchase, credited back within 3 billing cycles. Upgrade requires new 2-year agreement. AT&T Installment 30-month agreement: Upgrade your smartphone with a new eligible smartphone every time you satisfy your current AT&T Installment agreement and sign a new one for no additional cost for as long as your service plan is in effect and in good standing. For both agreements, tax on full retail price due at sale. Activation and other fees, taxes, charges and restrictions apply. [SEE DETAILS](#)

ILLINOIS: Village of Milan

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parks. So we provide a good quality of community service to both businesses and residents in our area, and benefit from the amenities of the larger metro area.

I'm also involved in the budgeting for the community. Working with our elected officials, volunteers and boards and commissions, we establish and carry out a mission and vision for the community.

FirstNet® provided us an opportunity to up our game – to make sure that we have reliable coverage and communications. That includes both for day-to-day operations and emergency services. We've been involved with FirstNet for two years now.

FirstNet Push-to-Talk

FirstNet gives us the coverage we need in a very cost-effective way. Because in local government, finance is always a consideration, though it should never trump public safety.

Currently, we're using FirstNet both for administrative purposes and to communicate during the pandemic. We have a number of phones on FirstNet. And we're in the process of rolling out 15 phones onto FirstNet Push-to-Talk. We think that will probably grow beyond the 15 phones, but now we're excited to get it out in the field.

We were quite satisfied with the coverage and the additional functionality that it brings us. And the potential in the future to incorporate it with any kind of an emergency response.

The push-to-talk feature of the FirstNet phone gives us an advantage in effectively communicating with a large group in real-time, versus trying to text or make individual calls. It gives us many of the advantages of a local land mobile radio. But it also gives us all the advantages of a smartphone and the FirstNet network, which was one of the very key features we needed. This is the reliability, the coverage, the 7x24 support, and the affordability of the FirstNet solution.



FirstNet PTT helping East Moline Fire Department

The 2020 derecho took out East Moline Fire Department's radio coverage. Hear how Chief Rob DeFrance used FirstNet Push-to-talk to get help on a 911 call.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

The 9-1-1 Board

The Rock Island County Emergency Telephone System Board has oversight responsibility for 9-1-1 for Rock Island County and for coordinating with adjoining counties that provide 9-1-1 services. We were the first county in the state of Illinois to adopt Enhanced 9-1-1 in January of 1990. So, while we are very proud of having a 31-year track record providing Enhanced 9-1-1 services in Rock Island County, we have to adapt to the way the world and the technology have changed.

My role as chairman on the board is to try to help facilitate 9-1-1 dispatchers and first responders, giving them the tools they need for emergency response. And FirstNet plays a role in that.

Since we're a part of a metropolitan area, we have a very close partnership with the people who provide emergency services in Scott County, Iowa, and Davenport and Bettendorf Iowa. Our two county area has a population of about 300,000. So, while we're a small community, we're actively involved with a lot of players in providing the best quality service we can.

Call handling

The Mississippi River divides the metropolitan area almost equally. As

such, we have bluffs and ravines, and cellular coverage can bounce between cell towers. If a mobile call originates in the Illinois Quad Cities, a cell tower in the Iowa side might handle it. And the same goes for Iowa callers "hitting" Illinois cell towers. As a result, 9-1-1 agencies always have a lot of calls to exchange.

So, the chance for a good outcome for somebody calling 9-1-1 starts with the call handling. That means getting the call reliably to the public safety agency that handles the 9-1-1 calls, so they can get people to the scene.

FirstNet will aid us in handling communications to our assets that roll on the street. Whether it's an ambulance or a police car or a firetruck that responds, those assets will have FirstNet-capable functions embedded in them for those communications.

In public safety, it's always a matter of trying to get the right response as quickly as possible. And FirstNet helps us with that reliability.

Why FirstNet?

One of the things I would encourage other providers, whether it's the 9-1-1 agencies or the emergency service providers in other areas, is to think outside the box.

It's important for 9-1-1 agencies

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across Illinois, the Midwest and the entire country to consider how they can use FirstNet. One of those is as back-up – to provide redundancy and reliable communications. Whether that is a data path or a voice path, we can incorporate both into our 9-1-1 process. And FirstNet excels at providing that reliably.

For us, FirstNet is more than just a technology. It's a group of people who support public safety across the nation. They're there seven days a week, 24 hours a day, with solutions and support that we can't do any other way.

While there are a variety of cellular services we could rely on, what FirstNet brings to the table for us is invaluable. It's also affordable. We couldn't do it without the support of the people who are FirstNet. It is an entire commitment to serving public safety across the United States.

Steve Seiver is the Village Administrator for the Village of Milan, IL, and Chairman of the Rock Island County Emergency Telephone System Board. He has been in 9-1-1 and public safety for 43 years.



Putting the AirgainConnect to the Test



First responders in Illinois' Rock Island County struggled for connectivity when responding to calls in the rural Loud Thunder Forest Preserve. Hear what happened when they tested the FirstNet Ready AirgainConnect, a High Power User Equipment solution, in the preserve.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



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RESPONSE OPERATIONS GROUP

The mission critical team connecting you to the information you need

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or incidents, ROG helps you:

- Restore a fiber cut quickly
- Place backup generation at macro sites
- Improve in-building coverage
- Provision devices quickly
- Cover up to 100 square miles of area with FirstNet One, our connected blimp
- And much more

How FirstNet restores communication

The FirstNet deployable program has helped firefighters stay connected as they battle wildfires. It has assisted rescuers in the aftermath of severe weather. And it's helped law enforcement maintain communications as they manage large events.

Agencies on FirstNet can connect with the ROG team and FirstNet resources at no additional charge. FirstNet provides the tools you need to help keep you connected to your team and other responding agencies.

So, while America depends on you to save lives, protect property, and keep your communities safe, you can depend on FirstNet.

GoRed in-building kits

When you need in-building communications for an emergency, FirstNet has a cache of CellFi GoRed repeaters that can provide 15,000 square feet of coverage up to 50 feet inside a building. If this is the best solution, the ROG team can ship these resources to the scene for installation.

In addition to deployables, Rapid Deployment Kits – designed for use during emergencies in rural and remote areas – are available for agencies to purchase.

Agencies can use a drop kit while waiting for a FirstNet dedicated deployable to arrive. These kits include a satellite link, Cradlepoint mobile



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router and Sonim XP8 smartphones.

Contact your FirstNet Specialist today for more information on ordering a deployable. And see why thousands of agencies around the country have already chosen FirstNet for their communication needs.

Requesting a deployable

Q: How do I request a deployable?

A: Call FirstNet Customer Service at 800.574.7000, 24/7/365, or call your FirstNet solutions consultant.

Q: How long does it take?

A: Once a request is received, the ROG team activates and triages the need in conjunction with the dedicated FirstNet customer liaison. We assess the situation and determine the best course of action. SatColt (Satellite Cells on Light Trucks) deployments follow a 14-hour (or less) on-air objective for emergency requests – from getting the request to having a deployable on scene and operational.

The FirstNet ROG team at AT&T will evaluate and prioritize requests from public safety agencies on FirstNet, using the National Incident Management System. This system incorporates life safety, incident stabilization, property conservation and situational awareness into

deployment decision-making. Please note it may not be possible to accommodate all requests.

Q: How do I request one for future use?

A: Call FirstNet Customer Service at 800.574.7000 or contact your solutions consultant. For planned events – such as a concert, festival or sporting event, for example – you must submit your request at least 30 days in advance of the event.

Q: How much does it cost?

A: Public safety agencies on FirstNet can activate the ROG team and the solutions they provide at no additional charge.

Q: Are we limited to FirstNet deployables?

A: No. In addition to the more than 80+ dedicated deployables, we may coordinate with AT&T for access to its fleet of hundreds of deployables of varying types.

Q: Can we purchase our own?

A: Agencies can purchase their own [Compact Rapid Deployable](#). This hitch mountable deployable functions just like any cell site and can serve as a complement to the services the ROG team provides. Contact your FirstNet consultant for more information.