



Press Release



Springfield, Va., Feb. 13, 2024

FirstNet Authority, AT&T Announce 10-Year Investment to Transform America's Public Safety Broadband Network

First Responder Communications Stay at the Forefront of Innovation with 5G Upgrades, Coverage Enhancements, and Mission-Critical Services.

Key Takeaways:

- The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) is launching the next phase of FirstNet through a series of strategic investments totaling more than \$8 billion over 10 years.¹
- Today, the FirstNet Authority and its network partner, AT&T, join to unveil the latest network investment of \$6.3 billion, delivering full 5G capabilities on FirstNet, expanded mission-critical services, and enhanced coverage. The FirstNet Authority anticipates an additional \$2 billion in ongoing investments dedicated to coverage enhancements, which is currently under discussion by the parties.
- Starting in March, FirstNet will provide America's first responders with *always-on* priority and preemption across 5G, expanding to include all AT&T 5G commercial spectrum.
- AT&T is deploying a new standalone FirstNet 5G network core built on the latest industry standards with dedicated public safety functionality and features.
- The FirstNet Authority and AT&T will continue to work with public safety officials and government stakeholders to grow and enhance the network.



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What's the news? The FirstNet Authority and its network partner, AT&T*, are announcing a major investment in the future of public safety communications. The FirstNet Authority's 10-year, \$8 billion investment initiative will evolve and expand [FirstNet®](#) — America's public safety network. The FirstNet Authority plans to invest \$6.3 billion through its network contract with AT&T and anticipates an additional \$2 billion for ongoing investments in coverage enhancements for public safety, which is currently under discussion by the parties. These strategic investments will expand and evolve FirstNet so public safety stays at the forefront of innovative, lifesaving technologies.

As public safety's partner, AT&T has already grown FirstNet — the *only* network built with and for America's first responders and the extended public safety community — to cover more first responders than any network nationwide. With **more than 5.5 million connections and about 27,500 public safety agencies and organizations on FirstNet**,² first responders can reliably communicate with one another during everyday operations, big events, emergencies in the field, and more.

This landmark announcement launches the next phase of FirstNet with a 10-year investment initiative that will:

- Provide first responders on FirstNet with *always-on* **priority and preemption across all AT&T 5G commercial spectrum** bands, starting in March.
- Build thousands of new, purpose-built FirstNet cell sites across the country – including **1,000 new sites within the next two years**. Beyond the initial \$6.3 billion investment, the FirstNet Authority anticipates additional investments over the next decade to deliver Band 14 coverage enhancements. These coverage investments will reflect public safety factors and network considerations, all in support of public safety response operations.
- Create a **standalone 5G core** to enhance current 5G functionality with specific public safety features on FirstNet and support the transition of public safety's Band 14 spectrum from LTE to 5G.



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- Expand **mission-critical services** — voice, video, data, and location — to complement public safety's localized, voice-only radio systems with reliable, wireless connectivity.
- Upgrade public safety's dedicated **fleet of deployable network assets with 5G connectivity** to improve operational safety, security, and resiliency.
- Ready the network to **evolve beyond 5G**, while remaining focused on public safety's unique needs and emerging requirements when implementing future technological advancements.

Why is this important? FirstNet is a catalyst for technology and innovation for public safety. The network has created a robust ecosystem of mission-centric apps, solutions, and dedicated connectivity for public safety operations. This strategic investment initiative ensures FirstNet remains at the forefront of technology, continues to solve the communications challenges facing public safety today, and has the flexibility to adapt to public safety's future needs.

With the [initial buildout of FirstNet complete](#) - covering more than 2.97 million square miles - this investment initiative will expand access to public safety's Band 14 spectrum in the near term, with plans for additional coverage enhancements on a recurring basis. The FirstNet Authority will work closely with public safety across the states, territories, and tribal lands to identify areas that could benefit from broader coverage. The FirstNet Authority will take this information into account, along with other public safety factors and network considerations, to ensure future coverage enhancements maximize investment dollars and make the biggest impact to public safety operations.

The transition to a full 5G network will enable FirstNet to keep pace with current evolutions in technology and 3GPP standards-based mission critical advancements. The planned 5G network upgrades will generate faster speeds, increase capacity, enhance the quality of service for FirstNet users, and drive innovations in 5G mission critical services. Throughout this multi-year transition to a full 5G network, the existing FirstNet 4G LTE network will remain fully operational and maintain the high level of service that first responders have come to rely on.



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This announcement does not change AT&T's financial guidance information provided during its January 2024 earnings.

Why does public safety need a unified, standalone 5G core? By delivering a standalone 5G core, FirstNet will be able to evolve with public safety-specific technological advancements in the coming years that simply aren't possible with 4G, while maintaining its *always-on* priority and preemption that is critical for mission-critical communications.

5G's ability to handle large amounts of data and connect more devices at once is essential to enabling the future of emergency response. From using drones to transmit high-definition video during search and rescue operations to opening the door to an influx of Internet of Things (IoT) data that will enhance situational awareness and improve emergency patient care, 5G is the foundation for the future of first responder-centric technologies.

Plus, by integrating 5G on FirstNet with [9-1-1](#), public safety will be able to leverage the full potential of this technology, allowing for a more informed and rapid response to emergencies.

What is FirstNet? FirstNet was [shaped](#) by the vision of Congress and the first responder community following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Built in an unprecedented [public-private partnership](#), FirstNet stands above commercial offerings. The FirstNet network provides first responders with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it, unique benefits like mission-critical services, and high-quality Band 14 spectrum to help save lives and protect communities. The FirstNet Authority has a legislative mandate and self-sustaining business model that requires it to invest program generated funds back into the network.

Where can I find more information? Visit [FirstNet.gov](#) to learn more about the FirstNet Authority and how the federal government is delivering on its promise to public safety. For more about the value FirstNet is bringing to public safety, check out [FirstNet.com](#). And go [here](#) for more FirstNet news.



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What are people saying?

Joe Wassel

Executive Director and CEO, FirstNet Authority

"We are dedicated to the future of public safety communications, and that starts with expanding and evolving FirstNet to meet first responders' needs. With this investment, we are ensuring FirstNet remains at the forefront of technology so that public safety can respond smarter, safer, and more effectively. I look forward to our continued partnership with the public safety community and AT&T to deliver the most reliable, innovative communications network for public safety."

Jim Bugel

President—FirstNet, AT&T

"Our partnership with the federal government has given us the distinct privilege of delivering America's public safety network. FirstNet is critical infrastructure that is reliably connecting those who tirelessly protect and serve. With 5G, public safety will unlock new and innovative tools to keep them mission ready — and we aren't stopping there. Together with the FirstNet Authority, we will continue to expand and enhance public safety's network based on their feedback, giving them the solutions and connectivity they need, both now and in the future. That's the FirstNet promise — continually prioritizing first responders and the communities they serve."

Chief John S. Butler

International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) President and Board Chair and Fairfax County, Virginia Fire and Rescue Chief

"The IAFC is excited about today's investment announcement — the FirstNet Authority is listening to public safety's needs and putting resources to action to continue to improve the network for our nation's fire and emergency services. We look forward to seeing how these continued improvements and enhancements help us in our lifesaving mission every day."

¹ Figure based upon ongoing sustainability payments.

² As of Q4 2023



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About the First Responder Network Authority

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Created in 2012, its mission is to ensure the building, deployment, and operation of the nationwide broadband network that equips first responders to save lives and protect U.S. communities. Learn more at [FirstNet.gov](https://firstnet.gov) and follow the FirstNet Authority (@FirstNetGov) on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for updates.

***About AT&T**

We help more than 100 million U.S. families, friends and neighbors, plus nearly 2.5 million businesses, connect to greater possibility. From the first phone call 140+ years ago to our 5G wireless and multi-gig internet offerings today, we @ATT innovate to improve lives. For more information about AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T), please visit us at about.att.com. Investors can learn more at investors.att.com.

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