



SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SAFETY BROADBAND NETWORK

On Wednesday April 1st those interested in public safety mobile broadband communications in South Dakota came together on the banks of the Missouri River in Ft. Pierre. We all gathered to hear the latest updates from the federal First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) team, who are working to build a nationwide dedicated public safety mobile broadband network. The South Dakota team and stakeholders were able to learn from the consultation, and also provide FirstNet with examples specific to the unique needs and issues across all of South Dakota.

Fifty-four stakeholders from the telecommunication industry, tribal entities, law enforcement, fire, EMS, 911 communications, and government officials converged to discuss FirstNet. The main goal was to engage in collaborative communication to clarify communication needs and issues with the FirstNet representatives and learn where South Dakota state leaders are in the process.

Jeff Pierce, the South Dakota single point of contact (SPOC), welcomed the group and told everyone it was an interactive meeting so South Dakota stakeholders as well as the FirstNet team can have a better understanding of the nation-wide FirstNet project, plans and future directions. Introductions took place and included the board members of the South Dakota Public Safety Communications Council, which serves as the South Dakota FirstNet governance board.



Jeremy Zollo, from the FirstNet Outreach office provided the FirstNet update and explained the purpose of the Initial Consultation process. He provided the national overview, the reason and concept for FirstNet, anticipated benefits, roles and responsibilities and their roadmap timelines. Jeremy explained the need for Data Collection objectives. They are looking to the state to provide data collection in the areas of Coverage Objectives (phased build out), Users and Operations (Public Safety Users, devices, etc.), Capacity (including Applications used and data usage), and Current Service (i.e. service plans, procurement, etc.). With this data collection information FirstNet and the state will work together on what is called "The State Plan." The state plan will provide information on how FirstNet would build out the mobile broadband network in South Dakota. With this plan our Governor will be making the decision to accept this plan or choose that the state will build its own public safety mobile broadband network. South Dakota has a lot of research, data collection, and state public safety first responders needs that must be included in this state plan in order to make sure that we have all our unique needs identified. The state officials are working hard to ensure South Dakota is not overlooked by making FirstNet aware of our concerns. We want this network to function in some of our most remote areas as well as in our metro areas.

We and FirstNet know it will take some time until we have all of the information possible to produce the best plan for our state, with all the needs addressed. With the collaboration and help from our public safety community, we will make sure everyone is properly represented.





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After the update from Jeremy, it was South Dakota's turn to talk with FirstNet and help them understand the unique aspects of our state. Mike and Jeff provided an update on the efforts thus far on the FirstNet project in the state of South Dakota. They presented an update of our outreach efforts, as well as where South Dakota is in the process and how it ties into the national FirstNet plans.

Many stakeholders provided information about our state such as:

- 1) Demographics of our state
- 2) The types of digital devices are being used (for public safety) now and for what purposes
- 3) What incidents or issues they've experienced with digital connectivity
- 4) What are their current plans for the future when it comes to digital communications
- 5) Discussion about various incidents and major events such as:
 - a. Tornadoes, blizzards, flooding, Sturgis Rally, LifeLight festival, Pow-wows, etc.
- 6) What are the major considerations for establishing a cross-jurisdictional/statewide system
 - a. Including jurisdictional considerations in tribal areas
- 7) In general the FirstNet team was able to take away how our public safety community works
 - a. Especially how everyone knows everyone in the room.

State FirstNet Project Manager Mike Waldner kicked off this part of the meeting talking about the capabilities through a partnership of a South Dakota municipal law enforcement agency and their local school district. Law enforcement has mobile access to the school district camera system within the school buildings, allowing more situational awareness if an event would require it. The questions today are if the commercial carrier would get congested and not allow the first responders the necessary mobile network speeds while knowing many students would also be utilizing that same network.

South Dakota Highway Patrol Sergeant Jason Husby presented about their department's data connectivity and usage. Sergeant Husby talked about their Computer Aided Dispatch, mobile use by troopers in the car, and many of the administrative functions performed in the vehicle. He also talked about the trooper's abilities to do electronic citations and warnings, and how their video evidence system operates today. Knowing these duties are needed everywhere in our state, much discussion and interaction revolved around how a network like FirstNet could improve that process to some extent. It was nice to hear, not only about the data usage and communications, but for the FirstNet team to learn about the applications they use, and need to rely on to keep our state safe. The FirstNet team was taking down notes to take back to the application team at FirstNet. Discussions for possible follow-up in-depth "knowledge swap" meetings with our SD HP and the FirstNet application team have already begun.



Sergeant Husby provided the FirstNet team with many examples of interagency operations across the borders of our state. Giving examples of the need for cross state interoperability, he talked about work between the Wyoming and SD



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troopers during the Sturgis Rally, working with the Minnesota State Patrol during Interstate 90 “coast to coast” challenge, Nebraska State Patrol during “Riverboat Days Saturations” and other such examples.

Sergeant Husby discussed the needs of the SD HP during the Sturgis Rally - the large motorcycle event held in the Black Hills. Not just about the radio communication needs but how they also work with the SD Department of Transportation (SD DOT). SD DOT has installed many video cameras to help



keep the traffic flowing for the safety of the public and the massive amounts of traffic. Some of these cameras are hard wired with fiber, and many rely on commercial mobile carriers which get overloaded and congested during the weeks of the rally. Following Sergeant Husby was Department of Criminal Investigation (DCI) agent Dan Satterlee, who presented about how the DCI also works together with the SD DOT, as well as all of the Law Enforcement entities to keep everyone safe during the rally.

A portion of the interactive discussion was about the collaboration of databases and the work taking place in South Dakota, to provide the information securely to the right person when they need it. With the FirstNet project many questions revolve around what to do with all the data we are capable of having access to. This shows that South Dakota is already working together to streamline and get the best solution for our state.

South Dakota Public Safety Communications Council member Harrold Timmerman, representing the SD Emergency Managers Association, provided insights to ways a network like FirstNet with connectivity coverage is necessary. He cited an example of an incident whereas they were looking for a missing person in an area with hills and deep valleys. In many areas they ended up with no coverage, which created a potential hazard of now having more people missing – the very people trying to help respond to the incident. He also talked about the Christian music festival held in south east part of our state basically in a huge field. The logistics and need for communications in the event of severe weather to evacuate that many people and get them to safety is another concern.

We also heard from the South Dakota National Guard (SDNG). Tactical Communications Officer Lew Weber and Tactical Communications Technician David Goodwin provided an overview of the National Guard Communication Capabilities throughout the State. In the broadest of communication capability terms, the SDNG can provide garrison and deployable voice, video, and data communications throughout the State of South Dakota. Our National Guard units have assisted in many of the disasters that have happened within our state. They utilize the state radio system, and are always interested in what local entities are using so when they are deployed to come to the assistance they know they will have communication means to work with local first responders.





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After we provided our state update, Doug Harder from FirstNet (State Plans – Technical Liaison) updated the attendees on users and coverage goals. He talked about identifying the potential user base and their operational areas. He walked through a suggested method for estimating current usage of mobile data, potential users, and creating various usage profiles for the state, as well as the baseline coverage objectives provided by FirstNet. These estimates come from different databases, tools, and data gathering methods. It is now the state's responsibility to fill in the gaps from our first responders' feedback. This will be part of the data collection efforts the SD FirstNet personnel will be working to obtain over the next few months.

The slide is titled 'SDPSBN & FirstNet' and is divided into two columns. The left column is for the State, featuring the SDPSBN logo, the website www.psbnsd.gov, and the goal: 'Best design for South Dakota'. The right column is for the Federal FirstNet, featuring the FirstNet logo, the website www.FirstNet.gov, and the goal: 'Build, Operate a National Network'. In the center, between the two columns, is an image of two hands shaking, symbolizing cooperation.

We all know and understand this process is going to take several years to complete. The future network, to be successful, will have to be a cooperative venture between FirstNet, their partner(s) (i.e. commercial providers) and state and local governments. It will not be easy; fact is that it will be difficult, both technically and administratively. We will need good sound yet flexible policy, that will allow each state to fully take advantage of the network features while meeting their individual unique needs of their state.

While the process is moving towards its end goal, South Dakota must continue the work and support of its existing Land Mobile Radio Networks, and current utilization of commercially available data technologies. While we are fortunate in South Dakota to have good commercial mobile data coverage, mission critical voice (LMR radio) will continue to be the primary means of communications for public safety responders for the foreseeable future. We need to ensure our first responders are working with the technologies that are currently available. Utilizing these technologies will help prepare our state for the time this network is available to us. After hearing from our public safety community during this consultation we find that these new technologies are being used as best as possible. With a fast, reliable, network (the promise of FirstNet) the usage and innovative ways South Dakota first responders will utilize the network will only increase.

The presentation slides from the meeting can be found on our website at <http://psbn.sd.gov>. Photos of the event are on our Facebook page located at: https://www.facebook.com/SDPSBN/photos_stream.

For more information about the national FirstNet project you can browse to <http://FirstNet.gov> and to learn about the FirstNet effort in South Dakota you can browse to <http://psbn.sd.gov>.

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