

Episode 2 | The Road Ahead: Amplifying Public Safety's Impact on the Network
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Narrator: You're listening to Public Safety First, a podcast to help you learn about the First Responder Network Authority and how you can be a part of the future of Public Safety technology.

And now, your host Dave Buchanan.

Dave Buchanan: Welcome back to the Public Safety First podcast! As we travel across the country, we've captured many unique perspectives about FirstNet. Here's a sample of those perspectives from recent engagements in Massachusetts, Arkansas, and Rhode Island.

Officer Scott Wilder: My name is Officer Scott Wilder—Brookline Police Department, Massachusetts—I'm the director of technology and communications. I think FirstNet definitely enhanced communications like we've never had before. We're able to use our radio frequency over the FirstNet device; we have talk groups for public safety, for fire, over the device as well.

Chief Paul Keith: I'm Chief Paul Keith with the Bay Police Department in Bay, Arkansas. We joined in with FirstNet at the Police Chief's Convention in Arkansas. We saw the capability and the interoperability factor on it, so that was something that we wanted to be on the forefront of, because interoperability in our first response, it should be top-notch.

Chief Tom Guthlein: I'm Tom Guthlein from Rhode Island Emergency Management and I'm the Operations Section Chief. So, we try to take some of the new technology that's come out from FirstNet and apply it to this event. The tracking has been, of the public safety entities in the venue, has been great for us on a situational awareness part. When we had to move people to certain locations when people got hurt, or if there was a vehicle in a place it wasn't supposed to be, we were able to send the nearest people there, instead of trying to figure out where everybody was at.

Dave Buchanan: Today on the podcast I'm joined by Amanda Hilliard, who I work alongside advocating for public safety. Amanda and I are going to take a deeper dive into the Public Safety Advocacy Team's current program. Welcome to the podcast, Amanda!

Amanda Hilliard: Thanks Dave, it's great to be with you here today!

Dave Buchanan: So you and I have spent a lot of time over the years working, planning, and building for our 2018 engagement program with public safety. Can you talk a little bit today about where we want to start with this, and the important role of educating and informing public safety?



Amanda Hilliard: Absolutely! Educating and informing public safety and conducting our outreach program has really been our hallmark since FirstNet was formed. We've done that through national and state associations, the Public Safety Advisory Committee, statewide governing bodies, the great relationships we've had with SPOCs and SWICs, and with agencies across all levels of government.

So Dave, you saw firsthand how public safety engaged with us through the state consultation process. What do you hope to bring to this next version of engagement with public safety?

Dave Buchanan: We're really looking forward to this next level of engagement with public safety. We've already seen how excited public safety is to discuss with us their operational needs, learn how they can optimize FirstNet in their agencies, and how they can improve performance through FirstNet. We also know they're excited to talk about FirstNet from a business perspective and how they're able to conduct these operations even more efficiently and more effectively.

We've also seen and heard how important the technology questions are going to be in the technology dialogue with public safety as we help them better understand how to take full advantage of the software, the applications, the hardware, the devices, and the different services so that they can take full advantage of this technology and weave it into their existing networks, and their existing technology platforms. So really, if you're an organization that represents public safety, conducts public safety operations, or if you are a first responder, we're interested in engaging you, we're interested in providing you information and educating you about the value of FirstNet, and being able to answer your questions.

Amanda Hilliard: Our team is out every day talking with public safety about the value proposition that FirstNet brings. They're answering questions about coverage, capacity, the quality of service, priority, and preemption that is available today with the FirstNet offering. They're talking about applications—we're adding applications to the FirstNet app catalog—devices that are available today, and how the network is being used by those early adopters.

Dave Buchanan: Amanda, what can public safety expect from us this year? What is different about our approach?

Amanda Hilliard: Well Dave, as you very well know, our state consultation program was key to getting all that rich public safety feedback to really understand their needs and desires as we put this public-private partnership in place and now have FirstNet service available. We're going to continue to engage and collaborate with public safety to make sure that we're continually understanding their needs and desires for the network, and that we are providing them with the best network possible.



We have a couple different engagements that our team is in the process of developing, where we think we'll be able to engage directly with public safety agencies to better understand their broadband needs, and helping them to specifically understand the FirstNet offering and how FirstNet can integrate into their operations.

Dave Buchanan: I know that information is going to be very useful to us, and very interesting to us, and we're very much looking forward to that kind of dialogue with public safety. Can you take another minute to describe, in a little more detail, what these engagements are going to look like, and what kind of information we hope to get out of them?

Amanda Hilliard: Sure! We're looking to sit down hand-in-hand and work with public safety agencies to bring together their operational partners and talk through how they're responding today, how they're using technology today, whether they're using broadband or not, and where they see opportunities to integrate the FirstNet offerings into their operations.

Another engagement, as you well know, we have a lot of lessons learned that we glean from planned events, and real-world incidents that happen. So, we're also developing an after-action review engagement in which we can go out and meet with public safety, bring our partner, AT&T, to those engagements, and learn lessons learned from those events—what worked really well, where there might be some areas to enhance response through, again, FirstNet services and offerings.

Dave Buchanan: So, what are these engagements look like for us? What FirstNet staff are going to be involved in these engagements?

Amanda Hilliard: So, we've hired a team of public safety experts that have focused their careers on public safety communications. We have folks from all disciplines coming from Police, Fire, EMS, from PSAPs. We have tribal members, we have individuals that have focused on engagement with the federal community, so all of our staff that has been out for the past several years conducting our consultation program, will now be out making that shift and conducting these agency engagements.

Dave Buchanan: Yeah, I agree. I think we've been very fortunate; we've been to recruit and hire talent from the public safety field, and I know they're equally excited to be able to dig in deep with their colleagues from around the country, to learn more about public safety's use of FirstNet.

You did a nice job of laying out our engagement equation. Why and how we are educating and informing public safety; how we are offering a new in-depth collaboration engagement with public safety. Amanda, what can public safety expect from these engagements? How are the results going to benefit them?



Amanda Hilliard: Well, the immediate benefit that the public safety agency will receive after going through these in-depth engagements with our team, is really leaving with a better understanding of their needs and potential for data usage. They're gonna have a better understanding of the FirstNet offering and the services that we provide, and a better understanding of how they can operationalize that.

In addition, we expect that we'll receive a lot of good feedback on our existing products and services that we can take back to our partner, AT&T, that we can also take out to the marketplace to foster growth in the public safety technology market. Most importantly, public safety can expect that their feedback will directly influence future investment and enhancements to their network.

Dave Buchanan: Thanks, Amanda for joining the Public Safety First podcast. In upcoming episodes I'm going to sit down with Paul Patrick, Interim Chairman of our Public Safety Advisory Committee. He is the Division Director of the Utah Department of Health, and has been a champion of FirstNet for years. Paul and I will discuss his perspectives on FirstNet, and how we're working together to bring public safety's voice into our network.

I will also be broadcasting from the upcoming APCO Conference where I'll chat with first responders about their operations and the future of public safety communications

Narrator: Thanks for listening today! We're excited to have you join our podcast community. Join us for the next episode and make sure to subscribe on iTunes, SoundCloud, and YouTube. You can learn more about the First Responder Network Authority at FirstNet.gov, and learn about FirstNet products and services at FirstNet.com.

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A PODCAST WITH DAVID BUCHANAN
Public Safety Advocacy Director