

# Newsletter

February 2020

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Volume 4, Edition 2



## Connecting towing and first responders

Apollo Towing Service in Corpus Christi, Texas, needed more reliable communications with the local and regional first responders it supports. See how FirstNet has helped Apollo support public safety and serve the community.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

**“FirstNet allows us to have virtually seamless communication”**

**By Michael Staff**

Vice President, Apollo Towing Services

When Hurricane Harvey hit the Gulf Coast in 2017, it knocked out everything – the repeating towers, the electricity. We couldn't communicate. So, we had to double-down on our manpower and send our drivers out in twos or threes.

The devastation just north of Corpus Christi was beyond description. We were lifting trees off homes and cars. We were taking motor homes out of trees. And we were assisting the fire department and EMS in rescuing people from their homes and out of vehicles.

We'd send our drivers out at 7 in the morning and ask them report back at noon.

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## Supporting public safety during Big Game

Helping to ensure first responders stayed connected

While all eyes were on pro football's big championship game in Miami, members of the FirstNet team huddled with public safety agencies in Miami emergency operation centers to get ready.

Their single focus: Helping to ensure first responders stay connected.

Jason Porter, Senior Vice President – FirstNet program at AT&T, said supporting first responders before and during massive events like the Big Game is an example of what puts FirstNet a cut above the rest.

“We're honored to serve beside public safety every day,” said Porte

To help keep fans safe at one of the year's biggest sporting events, the FirstNet team at AT&T and the First Responder Network Authority worked hand-in-hand with dozens of public safety agencies. The advance work helps to ensure first responders have the coverage, capacity and capabilities they need to stay connected. This includes network priority and preemption.

AT&T has been working for more than a year – and invested more than \$85 million – to boost our network through a series of both permanent and

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“I would strongly recommend FirstNet service to those who support first responders”

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We didn't know what tasks they would have to perform when they got there. But if they didn't report back by noon, we'd have to go look for them.

As a manager of a company employing 30-plus people and responsible for their safety – not having direct and clear communication was a serious concern. A lack of communication is not a good thing for any industry. And it's certainly not a good thing for anyone working closely with public safety. That led to us to go out and look at what was available. And that's why we're on FirstNet.

## Communication is critical

Apollo Towing Service frequently works with local law enforcement. And it's important for us to have direct communication with our local first responders – on a day-to-day basis.

We work with Corpus Christi Police Department, Corpus Christi Fire Department, the Nueces County Sheriff's Department, the Nueces County fire district. And we work very closely with the San Patricio County Sheriff's Department.

FirstNet service has allowed us to have virtually seamless communication with all of them. They can give us very clear and accurate locations and descriptions. This allows us to get the right equipment and the right people at the right time in the right location.

It helps us expedite all those services to get a roadway open. And it prevents secondary accidents and backups in traffic.

## Harbor Bridge incident

An example of something else we do is a call we got from the Corpus Christi Police and the Corpus Christi Fire Department about a year ago.

An 18-wheeler loaded with lumber lost control on the Harbor Bridge. While trying to avoid an accident, it had veered over the centerline and jumped over the Jersey barrier. And it was dangling precariously over the water. The only thing that stopped it from going into the water was that the trailer



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## Company Snapshot

### Apollo Towing Service

- 21 years in business
- 32 employees
- 28 full-time assets that are deployable at any particular moment or instance
- Serve an area in south Texas, down to the Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville to Laredo, up to San Antonio, to Houston, and back to the Corpus Christi area

weighed more than the cab. But the cab was tilting and teetering over Nueces Bay.

It would have been a contamination scenario, and it would have been a huge mess for everybody involved.

We deployed our 50-ton rotator, which is a large tow truck for recoveries, and went out with the fire department. We were able to grab that vehicle from the side and over the top of the bridge, and bring it back onto the roadway where they could tow it back to its customer base.

## Life lessons

I worked for the Corpus Christi Police Department for 22 years. And there were multiple occasions where we requested tow service and they would send the wrong equipment, or they'd send the equipment to the wrong location.

Now that I'm on the other side, I can take those experiences back to the towing industry, and see what we can do to improve it and move it forward.

communication. A lot of times, it required an assistant manager or a manager to call a third party to say, "Is my operator there on site? Can you have them call in and tell us they're doing okay?"

## Using FirstNet

Now that we're on FirstNet, we use multiple FirstNet services. We use the push-to-talk service every day. Our dispatchers use that to talk to our drivers. Our drivers use it to report back to the dispatch.

We use a tablet system in our heavy-duty trucks; the phone system in the light duty trucks and mobile apps on all of those systems. The ability to send photos of job scenes and job sites in a very short amount of time has worked very well for us.

I would strongly recommend FirstNet service to all those who support first responders. It has done nothing but improve the communication, and the service ability and timeliness of our services.

*Michael Staff is Vice President of Apollo Towing. Before joining the company, he was a patrol officer for the Corpus Christi Police Department for 22 years. This included accident reconstruction and follow up, and hit-and-run accident investigation duties. In his time with Corpus Christi Police Department, he said he investigated over 10,000 incidents, about 150 fatality accidents, and completed approximately 50 reconstructions on major accidents.*

# Supporting public safety during the Big Game

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temporary upgrades in the city. All this is designed to help residents, first responders and fans stay connected wherever they are.

### Helping public safety

Preparations to help ensure first responders have the coverage they need ahead of the Big Game, included:

- Deploying high-quality Band 14 spectrum across the area to provide optimal coverage and capacity for first responders. Band 14 is public safety's VIP lane.

In an emergency, it can be cleared and locked just for FirstNet subscribers, further elevating public safety's connected experience and emergency response.

- Installing metro cells at numerous local and federal public safety agency centers. These enhancements provide agencies with a direct network connection to the critical information they need.
- Placing three FirstNet Satellite Cells on Light Trucks (SatCOLTs)



*Preparations to help ensure first responders have the coverage they need ahead of the Big Game, included deploying high-quality Band 14 spectrum across the area.*

- outside of the stadium for extra redundancy and to provide additional coverage to first responders, as needed.
- Equipping first responders with FirstNet Ready™ devices to help ensure they have communications across the highly secure FirstNet network core.

Plus, members of the FirstNet team will staff the public safety command posts to support local, state and federal agencies in the week leading up to and through the day of the Big

Game. This will help ensure communication we meet public safety's needs.

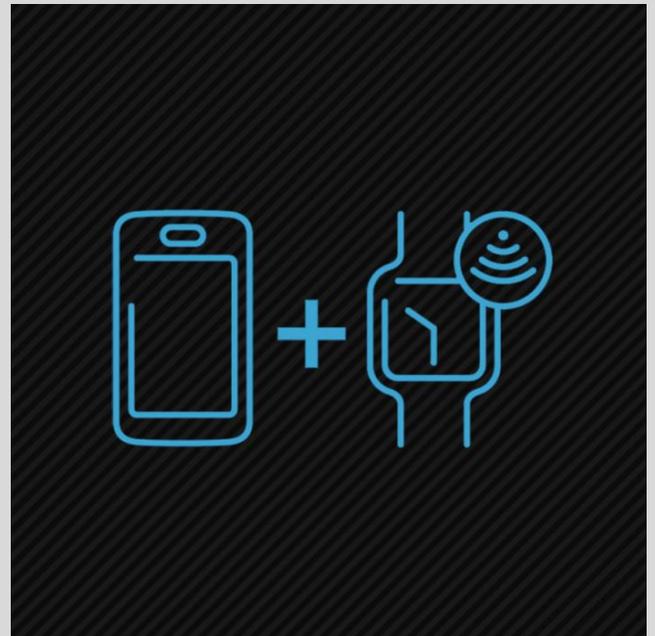
FirstNet is the nationwide communications platform dedicated to America's first responders and public safety community. It's built with AT&T in public-private partnership with the FirstNet Authority.

And it's bringing public safety a much-needed technology upgrade to help them connect to the critical information they need – especially at large events like the Big Game.

## Connect Your Way

FirstNet Smartphone and Watch. Connect both just \$60.00/mo\*

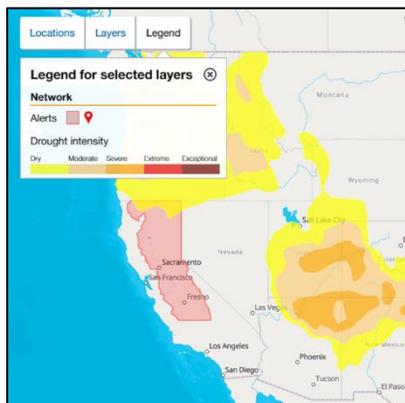
\*Limited time. Not available in MA. Available only to eligible first responders with 2 Subscriber Paid User lines of service —1 each of smartphone and watch. Smartphone req's line w/ FirstNet Mobile — Responder Unlimited plan (\$39.99/mo). Watch requires line w/unlimited voice & data svc. (\$25/mo). \$4.99 off after credits start w/in 3 bills. Additional fees, taxes & other charges, limits & restrictions apply. [Learn more](#)



## New features for FirstNet users

### Network Status Map Enhancements

- **Increased Situational Awareness:** In February, four new layers will be added to our Network Status Map to provide agencies increased situational awareness in the context of the FirstNet



Network. Find out how these changes will increase efficiency for you.

- Trauma Centers - Shows the location of a medical facility and trauma center level (I-IV)
- Flood Detail - Complements current “Flood Zone” alert
- Wind Direction - Complements current “ High Wind” alert
- Drought Intensity - Complements current “Active Fire” alert

Contact us at [FNSolCatSales@list.att.com](mailto:FNSolCatSales@list.att.com) to learn more.

### FirstNet leader-led Training available

- To help you use and manage features of FirstNet Local Control, leader led training is currently available. These courses are intended for FirstNet
- [Instructor-led courses](#) help you learn to manage your administrative needs for FirstNet wireless services. Plus, you'll have an opportunity to ask questions and get answers from the instructor in real time. Each 1-hour course is designed to efficiently and effectively manage your FirstNet service and get answers to your questions in real time! These courses will enable you to:
  - Effectively use Uplift Management
  - Manage user profiles, services, and mobile devices
  - Shop for/customize: rate plans, wireless devices, and mobile solutions
  - View wireless-account reports and information.

- **Paying your own bill? Apply and order online**

FirstNet is growing. Growing right along with that core network base is your ability to sign up as a FirstNet customer online. First responders can now go directly to [firstnet.com](http://firstnet.com) to apply for service and order devices for your individual lines of service through a simplified process.

You can even transfer your existing AT&T wireless number to your FirstNet account online. Just activate a FirstNet ID, log in, and begin shopping. Start the process now! [Apply today!](#)