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Image courtesy of First Responder Network.
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NJLM Educational Foundation Board
Building communities through knowledge

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Taran Samhammer & Amy Spiezio

Trenton Op Ed
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Cyber Security Starts Locally

This October is the 15th Annual National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While the awareness is good, action is really the goal. The League has consistently worked to provide tools and resources for you to take such action because if government infrastructure and systems are compromised by cyberattack, the ramifications go far beyond financial loss.

The Department of Homeland Security is the federal national lead in the partnership to promote this important work. Its site includes themes, key messages, and toolkits your government can access at www.dhs.gov/national-cybersecurity-awareness-month. This month, NJ Municipalities assists you as well with guidance and resources focused particularly on the needs of municipal government.

Loss of connectivity can put lives at risk. FirstNet is a response to that threat. After years of development, it provides emergency responders with a redundant connectivity system, and certified hardware and software you and your first responders can rely on during a disaster that impacts normal connectivity. The range and sophistication of FirstNet will impress even the most experienced emergency managers.

Loss of system control can shake confidence in the government’s decision making and ability to lead. Are your information systems reliable and resilient to attack? Rutgers has guidance on auditing your systems and the personnel responsible for them to assure their reliability and state-of-the-art status with regards to protection.

Because of the growing reliance on technology in all aspects of local government operations, the need and the threats to this part of your government will only continue to grow in complexity and importance. That means protecting your risk exposure with insurance as well. MEL provides understanding of the need and cyber insurance options so you can better control the losses from such events.

Your community relies on government services provided by and through technology. It’s an area where your municipal government can shine or be reduced to merely reacting to events beyond its control. Take a moment now to review the guidance in this issue of NJ Municipalities. Check the resources at the League website www.njslom.org/516/Technology-Management-Support-Service and review the upcoming technology sessions at the 103rd Annual League Conference November 13-15, including digital transformations of municipal government, sessions on municipal websites, smart cities technology, administration roles in technology and more. (www.njslom.org/923/Session-Listing)

Michael Darcy
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A Communications Ecosystem
How FirstNet will benefit New Jersey First Responders

By J. Michael Schweder, President, AT&T Mid-Atlantic

On September 11, 2001, the United States was faced with tragic terrorist attacks that forever changed the way we live. On that day, first responders experienced many harrowing challenges, including major communication obstacles. The communication issues that many encountered made it clear that there was a need for a dedicated, purpose-built solution for first responders.

Following the attacks, Congress created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority), an independent government authority tasked with carrying out the vision of a designated communications platform that had been long-advocated by public safety. This led to the creation of FirstNet, a solution that provides first responders with services they need as they work to serve and protect our communities.

Public safety network
FirstNet is the country’s first nationwide communications platform designed for and dedicated to the public safety community. Built with AT&T in public-private partnership with...
the FirstNet Authority, FirstNet will allow first responders to more easily, quickly, and reliably connect to the critical information they need daily and in times of emergency. This includes fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, and public safety answering points (PSAPs/911 Centers). This communications ecosystem provides a platform offering interoperability among FirstNet subscribers from different agencies and jurisdictions and improved communications capabilities. FirstNet will provide substantial benefits to first responder users in communities in New Jersey, giving them access to technology across agencies and jurisdictions at the local, state, and federal levels.

All 50 states, five territories, and Washington, D.C., have opted-in to FirstNet, with New Jersey being one of the first six states to make this choice. Municipalities in New Jersey are in the process of choosing whether to subscribe to FirstNet services, which would provide their authorized users with service using the dedicated and highly secure nationwide platform that supports the voice, data, text, and video communications needs of first responders.

FirstNet users will also have priority over non-public safety users. This includes not only FirstNet primary users (police, fire, and EMS officials), but also hospitals, critical infrastructure repair teams, transportation, sanitation workers, and others designated as extended primary users.

First responders in small towns and large cities in New Jersey, as well as the rest of America, will see the benefits of FirstNet as the platform that allows users to access one-of-a-kind public safety solutions. With FirstNet, users will have access to groundbreaking technology, such as telehealth/telemedicine mobile applications. These applications will enable users to communicate with physicians and specialists via picture and video imagery, thus helping to expedite treatment and stabilization during emergency transport.

**Smart cities**

Along with that, the platform will help further the development of public safety focused Internet of Things (IoT) and smart city solutions. With the ability to access advanced technology through FirstNet, first responders can change the way they think about and use communications. The platform will...
Communications Ecosystem

allow for transformative possibilities by paving the way for first responders to utilize innovative future emergency response tools.

This could include connected vehicles that provide better visibility to the closest resources needed in an emergency and in-vehicle networking that could transform police vehicles into highly secure mobile networks by connecting vehicle systems like cameras, sirens, and weapon sensors.

Connected infrastructure like smart lighting solutions could help monitor traffic so first responders can take the fastest routes available. Sensors placed around communities could also provide situational awareness, helping public safety users detect gunshots when and where they happen.

Connected gear for first responders could also potentially feed critical data to incident commanders to help keep first responders safe. With this technology, firefighters could possibly monitor their health to help detect early warning signs of cardiac arrest, a leading cause of death on the job.

With AT&T’s infrastructure investments in connection with the FirstNet build, communities in New Jersey and across the nation will also experience improved wireless broadband coverage.

When a surplus of capacity on the FirstNet public safety spectrum occurs, the additional capacity can be used to support commercial traffic. This will help improve service for commercial wireless users in both urban and rural areas.

FirstNet is also expected to create 10,000 U.S. jobs over the first two years of the FirstNet build alone, providing opportunities for people within communities across the country. These jobs include positions in fields such as technology development, deployment, operations, and more.

Rick Koehler, North Region Manager, AT&T FirstNet Program, and the AT&T team are working to bring the FirstNet platform to fruition in an effort to assist the brave first responders who put their lives on the line every day. Now, communities in New Jersey and across the United States will see the benefits of a platform dedicated to our first responders. Through FirstNet, those who work tirelessly to keep us safe will have reliable communication access they need during day-to-day operations, disaster response and recovery, and event management. With these tools, first responders can harness FirstNet’s innovative and groundbreaking technologies that will help keep them secure and prepared while on the frontlines.

Testing FirstNet

So far, FirstNet has been successfully trialed at a handful of events. Here in New Jersey, FirstNet will be utilized at large events, such as game day at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford; the Far Hills Steeplechase; and, the Atlantic City Air Show. At these types of events, first responders are equipped with the FirstNet experience, which helps them stay connected to the information they need. Even with record highs in attendance and mobile data usage, first responders will have priority access to a reliable connection.
SHOW OFF YOUR CITY!

Enter to win!

Send us photos of your municipality!
Help us showcase our beautiful state by sending photos of your tourist attractions, downtown areas, economic development initiatives, parks, city halls, community groups and new projects.

All entries will be posted on the League’s Facebook page, website and some featured in the April issue of NJ Municipalities, and possibly other issues. A winner will be chosen and receives a free League publication of their choice!

Photos should be high resolution JPEGs, at least 1MB in size. Please provide photo credit if necessary.

Photos can be submitted to aspiezio@njslom.org, or mailed on CD or flash drive to 222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608.

Deadline to submit is February 1.

Entry details: Unfortunately stockphotos and images that are too low resolution will not be considered. By submitting a photo you are agreeing that you own the rights to the photo and that NJLM has permission to use the photo in NJ Municipalities, on NJLM’s social media and website, and on other printed materials. A winner will be chosen on February 15. Please include your Facebook profile name and we will tag your photo on Facebook!
TIMELINE

1941
In the February 1941 issue, technology came in the form of agricultural experimentation. In the Annual Report of the Experiment Station Rutgers University, New Brunswick, scientists were pictured testing the effect of oxygen on the purification of sewage to improve state sewage disposal.

1968
In the April 1968 issue, municipalities were ramping up into the world of computing. The recipe for deciding on whether it was time to upgrade and buy a computer system:

Take one part complete facts and one part forward thinking.
Mix in accounting principles and technical guidance.
Add an element of risk.
Boil away wishful thinking and oversell.
Sprinkle heavily with good judgment.
Serve with enthusiasm.

1983
In 1983, there was no Google, only people! And since most of the employees at Eastampton Township were part-time, they created the M.A.C., the Municipal Action Catalog, a rundown of commonly asked questions and procedures to provide full-time resident assistance within a part-time framework. “The end result of this approach is that resident assistance and public information are provided at the point of resident/employee contact throughout the working day and are not confined to the operation of part-time offices.”
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