

Looking Back: The Ultimate Stress Test for FirstNet

April 26, 2021

The past year has been challenging for first responders and healthcare workers. It's also been the ultimate stress-test for FirstNet. America's first responders battled severe wildfires, the COVID-19 pandemic and one of the most active hurricane seasons on record in 2020. They are now on the frontlines of our nationwide vaccination efforts. In an effort to shed light on the great work FirstNet has done over the past year, Ed Parkinson, CEO, First Responder Network Authority, will lead a conversation with Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH), Ranking Member of the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology. A panel discussion will follow.

Event Participants



EDWARD PARKINSON

CEO, First Responder Network Authority

Mr. Edward Parkinson is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the FirstNet Authority. He is responsible for overall management of all FirstNet Authority operations and the agency's strategic direction, to include its unique public-private partnership to deploy and improve the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network. He previously served as Acting CEO from October 2018 – May 2019. Before joining the FirstNet Authority, Mr. Parkinson served for five years as a Professional Staff Member for the House Homeland Security Committee, then chaired by Rep. Peter T. King of New York. During this period, Mr. Parkinson's primary responsibility was in the field of first responder telecommunications. He also worked on issues including national security, emergency preparedness, and cybersecurity. Previously Mr. Parkinson served as an associate at Kearsage Global Advisors, an advocacy firm, and a research analyst at McKenna, Long and Aldridge, an international law firm specializing in public policy. Mr. Parkinson holds degrees from Georgetown University (M.A), and WITS University, (B.A., Hons).



REPRESENTATIVE BOB LATTA (R-OH)

Ranking Member of the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

Since 2007, Congressman Bob Latta has served the people of Ohio's Fifth Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. Congressman Latta is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee where he plays

an intricate role in crafting the nation's energy, telecommunications, environment, health care, and interstate commerce policy. Latta is Republican Leader of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, where he advocates for policies that help consumers, grow our economy, and spur innovation.

Latta is also a member of the Subcommittee on Energy and the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, which he previously chaired. Along with his committee positions, Congressman Latta is a Deputy Whip and Co-Chairs the Rural Broadband Caucus and the Congressional Propane Caucus.

Throughout his tenure, Congressman Latta has advocated for the interests of the people of Northwest and West Central Ohio through policies that further economic prosperity and job creation. His top priorities include balancing the budget, maintaining a strong national defense, and implementing commonsense government reforms.



JASON PORTER

President, Public Sector and FirstNet, AT&T

Jason serves as President of Public Sector and FirstNet, which is inclusive of Government Solutions and all Federal, State and Local Government and Education customers. Additionally, Jason continues to lead AT&T's FirstNet business charged with providing first responders with the advanced communications capabilities they depend on. This includes responsibility for delivering on the 25-year public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority, which represents the largest government contract to ever be awarded to a telecommunications provider.

He's held numerous leadership roles during his AT&T tenure across its Chief Data Office, network and technology planning, cybersecurity, and has a successful track record of introducing and maturing emerging technologies, transforming businesses, and serving our customers.

Jason graduated from The United States Military Academy at West Point with a bachelor's degree in Engineering. He earned a Master of Business Administration from Regis University. He served in the Army as an Armor Officer, leading a Tank Platoon and Mortar Platoon.



CHIEF DWIGHT HENNINGER

City of Vail, CO Police Department

Dwight is Chief of Police in Vail, Colorado where he has served since 2002. He leads a 65-person organization that serves over two million domestic and international visitors.

Chief Dwight Henninger is the 1th Vice President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). He has been a member of the IACP Board of Directors for over 14 years.

He currently serves as the Chair of FEMA's Region 8 Advisory Committee and is a Co-chair of the Eagle County Law Enforcement Immigration Alliance. He was on the FEMA Preparedness Task Force and the Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice Rural and Tribal Working Group.

Dwight began his law enforcement career at the Garden Grove and Irvine, California Police Departments. He left Irvine after 14 years to accept a command officer position in the Laguna Beach, CA Police Department.

He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy session #196, PERF's Senior Management Institute for Police and the California POST Command College. Dwight received master's degrees from UC, Irvine in Business and Public Administration and from San Diego State University in Leadership. He has attended the Executive Leaders Program at the Naval Postgraduate's School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security.



CHRISTOPHER BECENTI

Executive Director, Navajo National Telecommunications Regulatory Executive Director

Christopher Becenti is currently serving on the Nez-Lizer Administration as the Executive Director for the Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission. His tenure started in January 2019. In this role, Christopher represents the Navajo Nation on the FirstNet Authority's Tribal Working Group and oversees the implementation of FirstNet on Navajo Nation. Christopher has more than eighteen years of experience in the cellular industry and has further expanded his expertise through collaboration with government stakeholders and telecom service providers operating on the Navajo Nation. Christopher has frontline experience supporting public safety and the community's broadband and technology needs. In addition to his work on the FirstNet project, Christopher played an instrumental role in the creation of the Navajo Nation E-Rate Consortium and attainment of funding for the first phase of E-Rate broadband projects to serve schools and libraries on the Navajo Nation.



CHIEF TOMMY SMITH

Retired Fire Chief, Redmond, WA

Chief Tommy Smith's career in public safety began in 1991 in Colorado Springs, CO. His formative years were with the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) where he rose through the ranks to the position of Deputy Chief. During his tenure with CSFD, he served in several capacities: Paramedic; Training Division Lieutenant; Captain; and Battalion Chief. As Deputy Chief, he led several Support Services Chief Smith has also implemented strategic plans, and managed facility and apparatus acquisition processes, as well as serving as the city and department representative on many regional boards.

In 2013, Chief Smith was appointed Fire Chief for the City of Redmond, Washington where he served for nearly seven years. As the Fire Chief, he provided comprehensive leadership and directed 160 firefighters and 9 support personnel within an all-hazards fire department, providing fire suppression and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to the City of Redmond and unincorporated King County Fire District 34.

Chief Smith recently served as the Deputy Administrator of Public Safety for Dorchester County. In this role he supervised the Emergency Management Department, Emergency Medical Services, Fire-Rescue and Consolidated Dispatch.

Chief Smith holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Management with an emphasis in Human Resources from Colorado Christian University. Throughout his nearly 30-year career Chief Smith has been a member of many professional associations which includes IAFC, Colorado State Chiefs and Washington State Chiefs Associations. He currently resides with his wife Andrea in Dorchester County, South Carolina.



RENEE M. GORDON, MBA, SHRM-CP, CPE, ENP

*Director, Department of Emergency and Customer Communications,
City of Alexandria, Virginia*

Renee Gordon has served as the Director for the Alexandria Department of Emergency Communications since 2015. Renee is an appointed Commissioner for the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Previously, she was the Director of 911 and Emergency Communications in Baltimore, Maryland. She began her public safety career as a member of the Prince George's County (MD) Police Department and transitioned to public safety communications in 2008.

Director Gordon holds a Master of Business Administration from Trinity University and is a graduate of the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center, Public

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Safety Senior Executive Institute. Director Gordon is also a graduate of the University of Richmond Professional Executive Leadership School and is an industry leader empowering her organization as a certified professional in the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). She holds several International Public Safety Certifications to include the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO), International Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL), Certified Public-Safety Executive (CPE) and the National Emergency Number's Association (NENA), Emergency Number Professional (ENP).