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## Press Release

### **The FirstNet Network Expands in Berkeley County to Advance Public Safety Communications Capabilities**

*New Infrastructure Will Also Improve Connectivity for Area Residents and Visitors; Public Safety's Network Supports COVID-19 Emergency Response*

Monks Corner, S.C. , September 29, 2020 – Berkeley County's first responders are getting a major boost in their wireless communications with the addition of a new, purpose-built [FirstNet](#) cell site and other network enhancements. This new infrastructure is a part of the FirstNet network expansion taking place across the state, bringing increased coverage, capacity and capabilities for public safety.

"Whether in small towns or large cities, communication is essential when an emergency happens," said Col. Chris Williamson, Commander of the South Carolina Highway Patrol. "FirstNet and new cell sites like this are all about keeping first responders connected so they can better serve their communities."

FirstNet is the *only* nationwide, high-speed broadband communications platform dedicated to and purpose-built for America's first responders and the extended public safety community. It's built with [AT&T](#)\* in a public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) – an independent agency within the federal government.

That's why AT&T has a [responsibility](#) unlike any other network provider. And unlike commercial networks, FirstNet provides real, dedicated mobile broadband when needed with always-on priority and preemption for first responders. This helps ensure South Carolina first responders connect to the critical information they need – every day and in every emergency. Plus, it's giving first responders unthrottled access to the nation's fastest overall network experience.<sup>1</sup>

Building upon [AT&T's current and planned investments](#) in South Carolina, we're actively extending the reach of FirstNet to give agencies large and small the reliable, unthrottled connectivity and modern communications tools they need. Currently well ahead of schedule, the FirstNet build has already brought Berkeley County first responders:

- **Purpose-built network enhancements** – Located in Cross, this new [FirstNet cell site](#) joins other new sites in other South Carolina counties, including Colleton, Hampton, Kershaw and Spartanburg. These sites were identified by state and public safety stakeholders as priority locations. With FirstNet, it's about where first responders need



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connectivity. That's what is driving our FirstNet build. These sites were constructed using Band 14 spectrum, as well as AT&T commercial spectrum. Band 14 is nationwide, high quality spectrum set aside by the government specifically for FirstNet. AT&T also deployed Band 14 in nearly 150 towns across South Carolina, including McBee, Bennettsville, Landrum, Reevesville and Dog Bluff.

- **Public safety-specific advanced capabilities** – FirstNet is the only nationwide platform that gives first responders entire communication ecosystem of unique benefits including mission-centric devices, certified applications and *always-on*, 24-hours-a-day priority and preemption across voice and data. This is like giving public safety communications the “lights and sirens” treatment so that they stay connected, no matter the emergency.
- **Unparalleled emergency support** – South Carolina agencies on FirstNet also have 24/7 access to a nationwide fleet of 76 land-based and airborne deployable network assets. These portable cell sites can either be deployed for planned events or in [emergencies](#) at no additional charge. FirstNet Response Operations – led by a group of former first responders – guides the deployment of the FirstNet deployable assets based on the needs of public safety.
- **Free smartphones for life for public safety agencies** – We've also expanded the benefits of FirstNet for South Carolina agencies – spanning law enforcement, fire, EMS, healthcare, hospital emergency departments, emergency management and 9-1-1 operations. Now, they can stay up-to-date with [free smartphones for life](#) at no additional cost on their FirstNet Mobile—Unlimited plans.<sup>2</sup> This means first responders across agencies of all sizes will have affordable access to *their* network for decades to come.

“South Carolina’s first responders deserve reliable coverage across the state to help them effectively and efficiently address incidents. And with FirstNet, that’s exactly what they’re getting,” said Jane Sosebee, president, AT&T South Carolina. “We couldn’t be more pleased to support the public safety mission and bring the state’s first responders – and residents – greater access to the connectivity they need. Working with public safety we’ve made FirstNet nimble, adaptable and ready to scale for even the most severe situations as we’re seeing currently with COVID-19.”

The [COVID-19](#) health crisis illustrates precisely why public safety fought for the creation of FirstNet. Where public safety goes, we go. We’ve answered the call for tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, floods and other natural disasters. But with COVID-19, it is like experiencing a perpetual emergency in every community across the country. Public safety’s network is being tested in a completely new way, and it’s hitting the mark.



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“FirstNet is a dedicated broadband platform for public safety, by public safety,” said FirstNet Authority CEO Edward Parkinson. “We worked hand-in-hand with South Carolina’s public safety community to understand their needs for the network. And these network enhancements are a prime example of how that input and feedback is becoming reality. We look forward to supporting Berkeley County’s first responders’ use of FirstNet to help them save lives and protect communities.”

In addition to further elevating public safety’s connected experience in support of their emergency response, this new infrastructure will also help improve the overall coverage experience for AT&T wireless customers in the area. Residents, visitors and businesses can take advantage of the AT&T spectrum bands, as well as Band 14 when additional capacity is available.

For more about the value FirstNet is bringing to public safety, check out [FirstNet.com](https://www.firstnet.com).

<sup>1</sup>Based on AT&T analysis of Ookla® Speedtest Intelligence® data median download speeds for Q2 2020. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.

<sup>2</sup> Available only to FirstNet first responder public safety entities for Primary Agency Paid User lines of service. Requires a new FirstNet Mobile - Unlimited for Smartphone line or eligible upgrade on a two-year service agreement or AT&T installment 30-month agreement. For two-year agreement, upgrade your smartphone with a new eligible smartphone every two years at no additional cost for as long as your service plan is in effect and in good standing. Pay \$.99 for eligible smartphone at purchase, credited back within three billing cycles. Upgrade requires new two-year agreement. For AT&T Installment 30-month agreement, upgrade your smartphone with a new eligible smartphone every time you satisfy your current AT&T Installment agreement and sign a new one for no additional cost for as long as your service plan is in effect and in good standing. For both plans, tax on full discount price (two-year agreement) or full retail price (AT&T Installment agreement) due at sale. Activation and other fees, taxes, charges and restrictions apply. See [firstnet.com/agencyoffers](https://firstnet.com/agencyoffers) for offer details.

### **About the First Responder Network Authority**

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Chartered in 2012, its mission is to ensure the building, deployment, and operation of the nationwide, broadband network that equips first responders to save lives and protect U.S. communities. Learn more at [FirstNet.gov/mediakit](https://FirstNet.gov/mediakit) and follow the FirstNet Authority (@FirstNetGov) on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

### **\*About AT&T Communications**

We help family, friends and neighbors connect in meaningful ways every day. From the first phone call 140+ years ago to mobile video streaming, we innovate to improve lives. We have the nation’s fastest wireless network.\*\* And according to America’s biggest test, we have the nation’s best wireless network.\*\*\* We’re



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building [FirstNet](#)<sup>®</sup> just for first responders and creating next-generation mobile 5G. With a range of TV and video products, we deliver entertainment people love to talk about. Our smart, highly secure solutions serve nearly 3 million global businesses – nearly all of the Fortune 1000. And worldwide, our spirit of service drives employees to give back to their communities.

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*\*\*Based on analysis by Ookla<sup>®</sup> of Speedtest Intelligence<sup>®</sup> data median download speeds for Q2 2020. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.*

*\*\*\*GWS OneScore, September 2020.*

**For more information, contact:**

Clifton Metcalf

AT&T Public Affairs

Phone: 704.802.6008

Email: [clifton.metcalf@att.com](mailto:clifton.metcalf@att.com)