

Newsletter

March 2021

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Volume 5, Edition 3



Connecting first responders in Eagle County, Colorado

When public safety agencies in Eagle County, Colorado, tested Band 14 during a 2015 ski competition, communications went so smoothly that when FirstNet was launched several years later, they immediately signed up. Hear about their experiences. [WATCH VIDEO](#)

Band 14 test set the stage for Vail, Eagle County, Colorado, to join FirstNet

By Dwight Henninger
Chief of Police, Vail, Colorado

The resort community of Vail, CO, is a tourist-oriented place. People come to ski and enjoy the summer activities. We probably get 2 million visitors a year here. Plus, with I-70, a major corridor, we have all the issues of an interstate running through the community.

We have about 30 officers to deal with those problems – with another 6 uniform code enforcement officers. We also run the 9-1-1 center for Eagle County.

In the mountains of Vail Valley and the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, we have



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Supporting vaccine distribution efforts in U.S.

FirstNet is helping those charged with vaccine distribution across America

As the U.S. accelerates vaccinations in anticipation of meeting the President's goal of being ready to open up availability to all adults by May 1, a cross-industry response has been deployed to meet the logistical needs, safety concerns and scale of the mammoth operation.

Public safety agencies, local and state governments, and healthcare organizations using FirstNet are helping to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine efficiently and effectively. And FirstNet is providing a common, interoperable platform to easily communicate across agencies, jurisdictions and state lines. And the true interoperable communication of FirstNet is critical during the vaccine rollout.

From coast to coast, FirstNet is helping those charged with coordination of the vaccine distribution across America to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Western States

- In California, Palomar Health set up a resource clinic in Escondido equipped with

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Health & Wellness Spotlight: Finding balance – How women first responders manage stressors of work, family and career

By Dr. Anna Courie

Director, Responder Wellness, FirstNet Program at AT&T

The bus didn't come today. I'd just come back from my daily exercise and was preparing for my workday. I was running through a mental checklist of what needed to happen at home, at work, and with the kids for things to run smoothly. My husband and I were



juggling schedules. A winter snowstorm had already shifted the schedule by two days. An unexpected dinner with old friends rearranged our meal planning. And the school decided it was time for the kids to return to hybrid learning in the middle of COVID.

And then the bus didn't show. So, as I was trying to get things in order for the day, the week, the minute, it was time to pivot. And right before I was due to leave for work and get the kids to school.

I've lived this story before, just a different day. That's the case for many working women – especially those in public safety.

Donna Black, Fire Chief with the Duck, N.C., Fire Department, says finding balance is one of the things she struggles with daily. "I have this desire to be there for everyone and I often put myself last as a result," she adds. "I never want to fail my firefighters. I've had to learn as a leader that taking care of myself can help me take better care of my people."

Juggling priorities

All first responders experience a mental burden from the work they do in public safety. But there is a special burden on women public safety servants. Juggling work, career, family, and now COVID is exhausting.

We see you desiring to serve your communities and families and career. We see you exhausted. We see you



Leadership can take a toll. And while public safety is stressful, leadership in public safety can be exponentially more so.

frustrated. We see you questioning. We see you stepping up anyway.

About 22% of women career firefighters and 39% of women volunteer firefighters are at risk for depression. About 60% drink more than the *American Dietary Guidelines* for alcohol intake. And many women in public safety report discrimination and social pressures from working in a male dominated profession.¹ Suicidal ideation is slightly higher in women law enforcement officers than men.

Dr. Sara Metz, a clinical psychologist from Denver, Colorado, and owner of Owner of Code Four Counseling, says there's a "gap in the research when it comes to female public safety servants." But, she adds, "We know from a study of post 9/11 female veterans that there are differences in the male/female experience." Some of these may be comparable to the women first responder experience:

"In terms of positive effects, a significant portion of women veterans' report feelings of pride for having served their country. They recognize benefits of having served, communicating they gained both personally and professionally through their military affiliation. For example, being a service member assisted

them in achieving a sense of self-improvement, and self-confidence, and excelling in life. Impressively, the majority of female veterans reported that they would strongly encourage and guide a young individual they cared about to join the military...[however], a percentage of women...report struggling with posttraumatic stress disorder (42%)."²

Turning off at day's end

Margie Moulin, Director for Emergency Communications in Southern Oregon and current president of APCO International, is a former 9-1-1 telecommunicator. She says listening to difficult calls all day and then going home and trying to be there for family – emotionally, as well as physically – was difficult.

"By the end of the day, and all of the responsibilities, a woman frequently feels like all of the pieces have been taken. And there is nothing left for her," Margie said.

Michelle VanDeren, a section chief with the FirstNet Program at AT&T and a former 9-1-1 emergency dispatcher, said balancing single parenthood and "turning off" after a day in public safety is tough.

"The most important thing I did was
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How women first responders manage stressors of work, family, career

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go talk to someone when I needed it and nurture my spiritual values," she stressed. "Public safety is changing where they see the benefit of mind, body, and spiritual wellness."

Prioritizing your health

We want you to continue to manage work, life, family, and COVID and see it as business as usual. We know you are wonder women. It's also okay to be fragile. It's okay to be tired. And it's okay to be frustrated and maybe a bit burned out.

Being wonder woman isn't about having it all – or having it all together. It's about recognizing that it's a balancing act. You **can** do it all. Just not all at once. That requires you to forgive yourself when you burn supper; or family dinner night turns into family cereal night. And it's about prioritizing your health needs.

In all the different stories of trying to do it all in my life, there are three critical habits that got me through the valleys:

- 1) I exercise daily. My exercise is a scheduled component of my day. I treat it like a requirement of my work, and I know it makes me better at the work that I do. My exercise is non-negotiable.
- 2) I pray daily. My day starts in prayer and meditation. My prayer life cultivates gratitude, meaning, and purpose in all that I do. My prayer life is non-negotiable.
- 3) I talk to a therapist when I need help. I have experienced trauma – both personal and professional. And there were times I just needed to talk to someone to get through it. Getting help is non-negotiable.

So, when people ask me "how do you do it all?" I pray, I exercise, I seek help, and I work hard. Just like you. In their book, "[Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle](#)," Doctors Amelia and Emily Nagoski reflect that:

Physical activity is the single most efficient strategy for combating the stress cycle. It makes you feel incrementally better than you felt before



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you started. You can notice that something in your body has changed, shifted in the direction of peace after physical activity...Wellness is not a state of being but a state of *action*.

It is the freedom to move fluidly through the cyclical experiences of being human...Connection-with friends, family, pets, the divine, etc.- is as necessary as food and water...Self-Compassion and gratitude empower us to recognize the different between who we are and who the world expects us to be, without beating ourselves up or shutting ourselves off from the world."³

So, identify the non-negotiables in your life that enhance your wellness and help you do it all. We need women first responders.

On International Women's Day and every day, we see you and we thank you. Public safety is better with you.

Acknowledgements: Dr. Courie would like to gratefully acknowledge the expertise and input of Dr. Sara Metz, Owner of Code Four Counseling; Chief Donna Black, Duck Fire Chief; Ms. Margie Moulin, Director of Emergency Communications Southern Oregon

and current President of APCO International; Kathy O'Toole, former Chief, Seattle PD and Boston Commissioner; Debora Courtright, public safety consultant; and Ms. Michelle VanDeren, FirstNet Section Chief and former 9-1-1 emergency dispatcher.

Dr. Anna Fitch Courie, Director of Responder Wellness, FirstNet Program at AT&T is a nurse, Army wife, former university faculty, and author. Anna holds a Bachelor's in Nursing from Clemson University; a Master's in Nursing Education from the University of Wyoming; and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Ohio State University.

Anna is a passionate Clemson football fan; loves to read, cook, walk, hike; and prior to COVID19, was an avid traveler.

¹<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/supplementalresearchbulletin-firstresponders-may2018.pdf>

²Patten, E. & Parker, K. (2011). Women in the US military: Growing share, distinctive profile. Washington, DC. Pew Research Center.

³Nagoski, E. and Nagoski, A. (2020). Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle. Ballantine Books.

Supporting vaccine distribution efforts across the U.S.

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FirstNet enabled tablets and smartphones where commercial coverage presented a connectivity issue. The “triple threat” site offers drive-thru testing, vaccination and monoclonal therapy, an antibody therapy that could keep symptomatic patients away from the hospital.

- In Washington, the [Seattle Fire Department's](#) mobile vaccination teams are using FirstNet mobile devices to help coordinate their efforts across the city and maximize efficiency. They're supplying vaccinations to those living in adult family homes, permanent supportive and affordable housing, as well as pop-up clinics throughout the city.

Southern Region

- In Texas, FirstNet is providing primary and backup connectivity for drive-thru vaccinations for the [Galveston County Health District](#) in partnership with the [Galveston County Office of Emergency Management](#), and [League City Office of Emergency Management](#). Clinicians use mobile devices to log-in to the patient portal and manage the entire process from registration to release after vaccine.

And law enforcement is using cameras powered by FirstNet to monitor the drive-thru vaccination site as vehicle traffic moves through from registration to release. Lastly, the [League City Fire Marshal's Office](#) command trailer is using FirstNet to assist in connecting devices for general use and video conferencing.

Midwest

- [Spectrum Health](#) is using FirstNet on smartphones at the West Michigan Vaccine Clinic in Grand Rapids. The healthcare provider also used Portable Data Network (PDN) kits at COVID-19 testing sites. A PDN is an all-inclusive mobile suitcase equipped with a



Information is everything for first responders in an emergency.

- modem and FirstNet connectivity that provides highly secure internet access – think ultimate Wi-Fi hotspot – wherever you take it.
- In rural Illinois, [Perry County Health Department](#) is using FirstNet connected tablets and hotspots to operate remote COVID-19 clinics. Additionally, home health nurses in Perry County are using FirstNet connected tablets to manage scheduling and electronic paperwork.
- using FirstNet on tablets and smartphones to check in patients at its Trenton and Hopewell inoculation sites, while [Inspira Health Network](#) is using FirstNet for stand-alone hotspots and smartphones with hotspot capability at its vaccination site.

We know our first responders and the extended public safety community count on FirstNet. FirstNet stands above commercial offerings as it is shaped by the vision of the first responder community and Congress following the 9/11 terrorist attacks,

FirstNet is built with [AT&T](#) in public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority ([FirstNet Authority](#)) – an independent agency within the federal government.

The FirstNet network is providing public safety with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it, unique benefits like *always-on* priority and preemption for first responders, and high-quality Band 14 spectrum. These advanced capabilities help fire, EMS, healthcare workers and law enforcement save lives and protect their communities.

East Coast

- [Howard County Fire & Rescue Services](#) is using FirstNet on tablets and smartphones with their Mobile Integrated Community Health team delivering COVID-19 vaccinations to individuals who are developmentally disabled or who live in group or congregate living facilities. The vaccine distribution team is comprised of personnel from Howard County Fire and affiliated agencies.
- In New Jersey, [Capital Health](#) is

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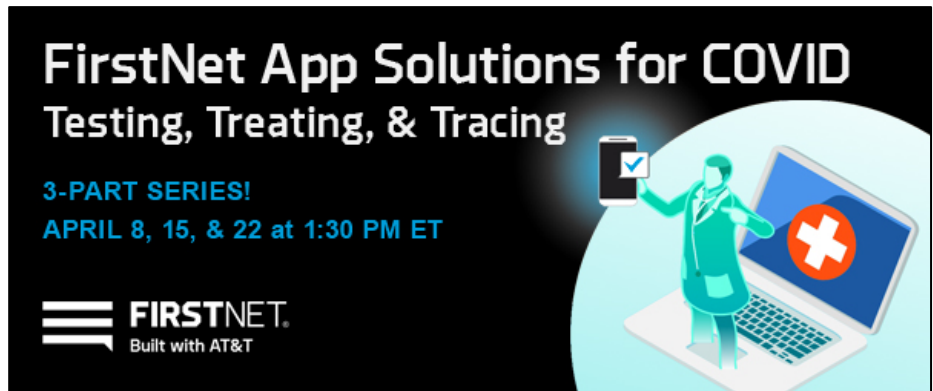
Webinars to feature FirstNet-approved apps helping test, trace COVID-19

Your agency has faced one new challenge after another in response to the pandemic. COVID-19 testing. New engagement and treatment protocols. Contact tracing. And now, the huge task of vaccinating the public. No one challenge is more important than another. And until the threat is gone, you'll need to continue the processes and resources you've implemented.

Few responder agencies and supporting organizations have the resources to do it all. But they still have to get the work done. They need practical and reliable solutions to mount a sustainable response to COVID-19. So, public safety agencies are adopting innovative solutions to mobilize their people and modernize their systems.

That's where FirstNet® and the purpose-built FirstNet Verified™ and FirstNet Certified™ apps come in. FirstNet apps are helping agencies test, treat and trace the Coronavirus.

And in **April** agency leaders and solution providers will step away from their important work to share their



experiences with you in a three-part webinar series. Mission Critical Communications will host the webinars, [scheduled for April 8, 15 and 22](#), where executives from Dutchess and Oneida counties in New York, will discuss how:

- New York is using FirstNet and the RumbleUp App to trace COVID infections;
- Baystate Medical Center and American Medical Response (AMR) in Massachusetts use FirstNet and e-Bridge to handle the influx of patients;

- Pulsara and other healthcare apps help agencies conduct testing and distribute vaccines;
- Connected ambulances are using FirstNet, FirstNet Ready™ devices and Corrata to share and safeguard HIPPA-protected data.

You can wrap up the month learning how to take care of yourself and other first responders.

FirstNet and APCO International will host a webinar on responder health and wellness **April 28**. You can [register here](#).

FirstNet Messaging – Your new dedicated messaging service

You no longer need to use commercial texting services for emergency communications. Starting April 1, 2021, FirstNet® customers have access to a new and exclusive messaging app dedicated to public safety. And it gets better. You can get this advanced messaging at no cost for first responders and only \$3 per month for those who offer them critical support.

You can send critical messages and attach files, voice memos, photos, and videos up to 5MB without worrying they'll get stuck in commercial spam filters. Plus, FirstNet Messaging sends you a confirmation when your recipients get and read your messages. So, you can verify every transmission. That is dependability you can see – as

you respond to incidents – and save for your after-action reports. You can also take comfort in knowing your messages will get to the intended recipients.

FirstNet Messaging has end-to-end encryption, which helps protect data in transit and at rest. It has features for the unique needs of first responders. And it adheres to multiple federal regulatory measures.*

With FirstNet Messaging:

- Agencies can integrate FirstNet Messaging and CAD systems
- Send notifications to groups with as many as 20,000 recipients
- Support various messaging protocols, including: TAP, SNPP, SMTP, WCTP, and REST APIs

- Allow recipients to pre-configure response options
- Create address books and user groups with complete visibility into message history through the Agency Notification Center

Go to firstnet.com for more information. Or contact your FirstNet Sales Consultant now to upgrade your messaging services.

*Federal regulatory measures include the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA); Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA); Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA); Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) and Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

Band 14 test set the stage for Vail, Eagle County, CO, to join FirstNet

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passes that go over 10,000 feet. The mountains have a significant impact in the way we use our land mobile radios. We could never really rely on our commercial cellular phones in many parts of the community that are off the interstate. So, we were looking for a solution to fix that problem.

We had an opportunity to test Band Class 14 when we hosted the Alpine World Ski Championships here in Vail and Beaver Creek in 2015.

So, when we had the chance to get on FirstNet – which has exclusive access to the Band 14 spectrum – we jumped on it. So did the Sheriff's department. Since then, many of the other public safety agencies have also joined, because we see that it works when we have these huge shifts in population.

Testing Band 14

In February 2015, the Federation of International Skiing hosted the Alpine World Ski Championships here. That brought people from all over the world here – from many, many countries. And it was a great event.

But we knew that with the limited staff that we have here for fire, police and paramedics, we needed to be very well-organized. For three years, we met, planning how we would deal with the potential public safety issues. This event happened after the bombings in Europe. And that made us really consider how we'd done our work, because we would have grandstands with thousands of people in those stands.

I'd been hearing through IACP for years about Band Class 14. So I asked, "Would that work in our mountain community?" The answer was yes. So, we worked very hard with the folks who were bringing that technology to bear and told them we wanted to try it out here. Because if it worked here, it would work anywhere. For the 21 days of the event here, we were able to use the Band Class 14 equipment to effectively police the event and provide good public safety.

The officers really liked the ability to



In Eagle County, we respond to all sorts of different things with people recreating and getting in problems. Hunters having problems, ski patrol having people go out of bounds and get involved in avalanches, crashes, crimes. Plus all of the things that happen in a regular community.

have the Sonim phones in their hands and to be able to get pictures and flyers on wanted persons and missing people. And when the event was over, I had a hard time getting those devices back from them.

Using FirstNet

I was really proud we were able to test this technology and show that this was a valuable and well-thought out tool for us.

Because when we had a lot of people here at Christmas or New Year's or Easter or 4th of July, it was hard to use data on your phone.

Having that FirstNet capability, with priority and preemption, has been very helpful for our officers. That's especially true when we have a pass closure and there are thousands of people stopped on the interstate trying to figure out what to do. Or during a concert, when people are all trying to send pictures to their friends. It's super helpful to have that capability for us to be able to do that mission-critical type of emergency communication.

What chiefs worry about

What keeps me up at night is not the communications issues. It's the big one. It's the natural disaster. It's the road closed with a significant traffic collision or crash. It's the crime that has a significant impact on our community. Those things are what keep chiefs and sheriffs and fire chiefs awake at night.

I don't stay up at night worrying about communications capabilities. That's partly due to FirstNet's priority and preemption, and the ability to share data with our officers in a rapid manner. FirstNet has been with me each step of the way to resolve issues or problems that I have identified.

As a chief or a sheriff or a fire chief, we don't do a good job at technology because that's not our area of expertise. So my advice is to make sure the product you select is one that you know will get support beyond the sales team.

The biggest benefit

The biggest benefit for the Vail police department and really for the entire county is our ability to communicate with each other. Reliable communication is critically important to us. And it's in the worst of circumstances that we have to do that.

The data we share between officers is critically important. If we try to give a description of an offender or somebody that's suspicious or a missing person, it's very difficult to see that in your mind's eye. But having the photo quickly to you with good resolution is so much easier.

That wouldn't have happened using the commercial networks. Because there's so many other things going on at the same time that are using up the data.

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My vision for FirstNet is that we have one phone that does everything for us. One phone that gives us access to our data systems, that gives us the ability to share data between folks in the field and maybe real-time video. Officers already have so many things on their tool belt. We need to make that one device that can do everything.

I have the opportunity to work closely with the IACP and be a member of that organization. And I'm excited about the opportunities FirstNet presents for agencies across our country to be more successful in the way we do the work in preventing crime and making our community safer.

Customer service

In Eagle County, we respond to all sorts of different things with people recreating and getting in problems. Hunters having problems, ski patrol having people go out of bounds and get involved in avalanches, crashes, crimes. Plus all of the things that happen in a regular community.

So, when people ask me about FirstNet and how we use it, I routinely tell them that I have been so impressed with the customer service I have received. And that's really the key point. They've been with us, dealing with the continued issues that we have with our mountainous environment. And I've been really excited about the partnership we have. I hear regularly from our elected officials and from community members that they feel like they don't have good commercial cell service. I don't hear that from the officers. So, whether it's the priority and preemption, or Band Class 14, it's working really well for us and we're excited about that opportunity.

Dwight Henninger is Chief of Police for Vail, CO, and has more than 24 years of experience in law enforcement and serves as the 1st Vice President for the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Before moving to Colorado, he served with the City of Laguna Beach, CA. Chief Henninger is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, the Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police and the California Police Officer Standards Training Command College. He has also served as the former Director of the Colorado Regional Community Policing Institute and the Colorado Police Corps in Golden.



Smart technology for Fire Service

State of the art technology through a single point of service is one reason why Gypsum Fire Protection District is on FirstNet. Hear from Chief Justin Kirkland about his hopes for the future of FirstNet. [WATCH VIDEO](#)

Take the FirstNet Virtual Tour



Take a "walk" through the FirstNet virtual experience, a 3D world you can navigate at your own pace, 24/7. See how FirstNet helps first responders and those who support them in the aftermath of a hurricane, a pandemic, and a hazardous fire situation. Plus, see how the Emergency Operations Center brings everyone together.

[TAKE THE TOUR.](#)