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FirstNet Board Approves Spectrum Lease Agreements with Adams County, Colo. and New Jersey

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DENVER – The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) Board today approved separate agreements with the State of New Jersey and Adams County, Colo. allowing them to lease access to FirstNet’s spectrum. With the approval of these agreements, FirstNet has entered in to four separate spectrum lease agreements with public safety Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grantees.

“I’m really pleased that we were able to reach agreement with these two additional public safety projects,” said FirstNet Board Chairman Sam Ginn. “These projects will provide FirstNet with a prime opportunity to gather key information and share lessons learned with FirstNet and the public safety community.”

The agreements between FirstNet and New Jersey and Adams County mark the first step in the process towards restarting these important projects. They each now will submit a request to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to lift their partial suspension, and FirstNet will submit a letter in support of that action. NTIA, which is the grant administrator, will make a recommendation to the grants office on whether to lift the funding suspension.

The ADCOM 911 project will be one of the first systems to have the capability to provide advanced mobile data services to a major airport complex and link adjacent public safety entities to airport public safety operations. Its proximity to the Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) center in Boulder, Colo. enables it to serve as a pilot demonstration project to test interoperability with FirstNet’s nationwide network.

New Jersey revised its original project plan to focus on procuring deployable assets — 37 cell sites on wheels. New Jersey will use these mobile cell sites to expand network coverage in the state and help inform FirstNet's deployable strategy.

This past summer, FirstNet reached spectrum lease agreements with the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System Authority (LA-RICS) and the State of New Mexico. NTIA, upon review, determined that the funding for these projects should be reinstated, allowing them to proceed.

In February, FirstNet began negotiating with the seven public safety BTOP projects on spectrum lease agreements. FirstNet began the negotiations under the premise that each project featured special characteristics that FirstNet potentially could leverage as it builds and operates a nationwide public safety broadband network that meets the needs of first responders. These included things like how a project would address rural or wide-area deployments, in-building coverage issues, development of public safety applications, billing and provisioning.

FirstNet was not able to reach agreements with the City of Charlotte, N.C., the Executive Office of the State of Mississippi, and the Bay Area Regional Interoperable Communications Systems Authority (BayRICS)/Motorola Solutions, Inc.

Separately, the Board voted today to extend negotiations through February 24, 2014 on a spectrum lease agreement with the State of Texas for Harris County. Harris County has been operating on the spectrum licensed to FirstNet under the terms and conditions of a Special Temporary Authority (STA) granted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC recently extended the STA until February 24, 2014.

About FirstNet

FirstNet will provide emergency responders with the first high-speed, nationwide network dedicated to public safety. FirstNet is designed to improve communication among local, state, regional, tribal and national emergency services personnel. The broadband data network will help save lives and protect the health and safety of all Americans. It will be built using LTE, the most advanced wireless technology available today. FirstNet fulfills a fundamental need of the public safety community for a single, mission-critical communications system enabling force multiplier effectiveness. Overseen by representatives of public safety, government and the wireless industry, FirstNet is an independent entity within the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (www.firstnet.gov [4]).

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

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