

FirstNet putting together two key network RFPs, solicits possible board members

Fierce Wireless Tech By Tammy Parker May 7, 2014

The First Responders Network Authority is preparing two future requests for proposals (RFPs) related to the rollout of the national public-safety broadband network, according to TJ Kennedy, FirstNet's acting general manager.

During his keynote presentation at the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Broadband Summit in Washington, D.C., Kennedy said one RFP will be for a comprehensive network solution while the other will address network equipment and services. The LTE-based network will use FirstNet's 700 MHz spectrum.

Discussing his presentation, Kennedy wrote in a blog entry on the FirstNet website: "I explained how FirstNet was conducting market research to better understand the assets that all partners can bring to the table in support of the planning and deployment of a nationwide public safety broadband network."

Kennedy also told APCO attendees that FirstNet hopes to clarify rules and legal interpretations of the authority's enabling legislation, according to his prepared remarks, which were obtained by IWCE's *Urgent Communications*.

Further, he indicated that FirstNet intends to solicit outside input regarding whether access to the FirstNet network should be restricted to fire, emergency medical services (EMS) and law enforcement or should be extended to critical-infrastructure entities such as utilities, which desire broadband spectrum to enable smart-grid technologies.

"Some topics we anticipate putting out for public comment include eligible users and state opt-in/opt-out," Kennedy said.

In other news, FirstNet's overseer, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), issued a notice seeking expressions of interest from people who would like to serve on the FirstNet board. Four of the 12 appointments of non-permanent members to the FirstNet Board are expiring in August 2014. One appointee whose term is expiring is FirstNet Chairman Sam Ginn, who was appointed to a two-year term starting in August 2012.

The Secretary of Commerce may reappoint individuals to serve on the FirstNet board provided they have not served two consecutive full three-year terms. Expressions of interest from those who would like to fill any board vacancies will be accepted until May 23, 2014.

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