

FirstNet names Bratcher as permanent CTO

Urgent Communications By Donny Jackson

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[FirstNet](#) today announced that Jeff Bratcher—the organization’s longtime deputy chief technology officer (CTO) and acting CTO—has been named as the new permanent CTO as FirstNet prepares to release its final request for proposal (RFP) as soon as this month.

FirstNet board member Barry Boniface, chairman of the organization’s Technology Committee, made the announcement this morning during the joint board committee meeting in Houston.

“As many of you know, Jeff has been acting for a while, but finally his acting career is over. We’ve now made Jeff the permanent CTO at FirstNet, and [it’s] a much deserved promotion,” Boniface said during the committee meeting, which was webcast. “We are delighted with that. Jeff has done a terrific job of not only marshaling technical efforts as it relates to this RFP but also building a world-class team of experts to help us in that endeavor.”

Bratcher thanked Boniface.

“I appreciate the kind words and look forward to pushing this across the goal line with the RFP,” Bratcher said.

Bratcher joined FirstNet early in 2014 and served as the organization’s acting CTO until May 2014, when Ali Afrashteh was named as CTO. Afrashteh resigned during the second half of 2014, and Bratcher has served as FirstNet’s acting CTO for more than a year.

Prior to joining FirstNet, Bratcher was the operations manager at [Public Safety Communications Research](#) (PSCR).

During his presentation, Bratcher also noted nine new personnel hires made for the CTO office in Boulder, Colo., during the past few months, which he said results in the CTO staffing being at the desired level as the RFP release date approaches.

“We are at what I feel is a comfortable level across all the lanes—applications, devices, radio access network, core and system engineering and technology planning—to have that key federal staff in place,” Bratcher said. “We do have the flexibility, with our contract support that’s existing, [to add staff] for the evaluation that will be coming up.

“But I do think we have a core base of staff. We won’t know for sure until we have an award what the rest of this should look like ... Then, after that award is made, we can have those discussions on, ‘What do we need now?’”

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