

Verizon CEO declines to comment on potential FirstNet role

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Just days after AT&T formally announced that it has submitted a bid to lead a team seeking to build and operate [FirstNet](#)'s nationwide public-safety broadband network, Verizon's CEO today declined to comment on the possible role that his company might play in a FirstNet bid.

When asked whether Verizon is participating on any of the offeror teams vying for the FirstNet contract, Verizon CEO Lowell McAdam did not provide any information about the request for proposals (RFP) process.

"As far as FirstNet, under federal contracting rules we really can't comment about that while there's an RFP in process," McAdam said today during Verizon's quarterly conference call. "So, I'm sorry. I can't make any comment there."

Verizon has been conspicuously silent about its interest level in the FirstNet opportunity even before the procurement process started, so McAdam's no-comment statement was not a surprise.

Most industry observers believe that Verizon is monitoring the FirstNet situation closely, because a FirstNet deal would provide the carrier with an opportunity to gain access to 20 MHz of valuable 700 MHz Band 14 spectrum without having it count against the carrier's spectrum-cap total during regulatory proceedings.

Verizon currently owns the spectrum license to 22 MHz of 700 MHz Band 13 spectrum that is the spectral foundation for its [LTE](#) offerings. FirstNet's Band 14 airwaves are adjacent to Verizon's 700 MHz spectrum. As a result, Verizon would have access to an unprecedented swath of low-band spectrum, if it is the carrier partner on FirstNet's selected contractor team. If not, Verizon will have a new spectral neighbor building out a nationwide network.

Thus far, there are three announced bidding teams seeking the FirstNet contract, led by Rivada Mercury, pdvWireless and AT&T, respectively. There has been considerable industry speculation that Verizon is participating on the Rivada Mercury or pdvWireless teams—perhaps both, according to some sources—but there has been no public confirmation that Verizon has any role in those bidding initiatives.

Offeror teams were required to submit their FirstNet proposals by May 31, and those bids are being evaluated now. FirstNet officials have expressed a desire to sign a 25-year contract with the selected RFP winner by Nov. 1.

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