

FirstNet preparing network policies for nationwide contractor, opt-out states

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December 13, 2016

[FirstNet](#)'s technical staff has established a draft set of network policies that will be followed throughout the United States, whether the radio access network (RAN) is deployed by FirstNet's nationwide contractor or by opt-out states, FirstNet officials said today.

"These [policies] constitute the basis for network [interoperability](#)," FirstNet CTO Jeff Bratcher said during the technology portion of FirstNet's board committee meetings. "They provide the development and operations framework for the network partner and also establish the criteria for the [FCC](#) and the [NTIA](#) to evaluate opt-out states' alternative plans."

Bratcher said the draft network policies include items that cover core and RAN technical requirements, network-management standards, back-office and user requirements, as well as training.

"We initially started out with a list of approximately 150 policies," he said. "We've combined and reassessed some of those down to about 40, as of today. We've removed some of those that we believe will be implemented as a natural progression of the official contract—once that's awarded—and merged some of the similar ones across the working groups."

Bratcher noted that the network policies will not be finalized until the nationwide FirstNet contractor award has been finalized—an event that is not expected to happen until at least March, as Rivada Mercury has filed a lawsuit protesting the selection process. The network policies will be available via governors' online portal when FirstNet's deployment plans for each state and territory are delivered, Bratcher said.

FirstNet officials have expressed a desire for all public-safety users of the network to experience similar performance and reliability throughout the United States, whether a given portion of the broadband system is built by FirstNet's nationwide contractor or an opt-state that chooses to deploy its own RAN. FirstNet CEO Mike Poth emphasized the importance of this philosophy for

opt-out states, using cybersecurity as an example.

“We have been very vocal that we are going to be unrelenting and unforgiving in our approach to an examination of cyber for states as they consider alternative courses,” Poth said during the committee meetings. “[State officials will] be able to dive deeply into that portal and see what the gold standard will be that they are going to have to match.”

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