

# FirstNet Core Launched

This spring's launch of the FirstNet core gives subscribers to the AT&T built network access to new security features and functions. The Evolved Packet Core (EPC) is a framework for providing converged voice and data on a 4G Long-Term Evolution (LTE) network. As the technology partner for the federal First Responder Network Authority, AT&T is building out the high-speed cellular network for public safety. The core operates like the brain and nervous system of the network. Early adopters of FirstNet subscriber plans have had their communication and data traveling through AT&T's commercial core. With the launch of the EPC, public safety traffic now can be separated from commercial traffic and be able to take advantage of the following functions.

- End-to-end encryption to allow public safety users to transmit data securely across LTE enabled devices.
- Creation and control of the FirstNet experience that includes priority and pre-emption calling and contractually mandated quality of service measures to ensure network reliability.
- Around the clock security monitoring of the network.
- Support for mission-critical functions that enables next-generation applications such as Mission Critical Push-to-Talk, enhanced location-based services and more.
- Creation of local control functions that allow incident commanders and eligible first responders to unlock different levels of priority to ensure that needed personnel are able to communicate in an emergency situation.

The launch of the core will not change a public safety subscriber's access to the spectrum bands now commercially available to AT&T customers. Using a FirstNet SIM card, the EPC will apply the new security and functions without limiting the bandwidth the voice and data will travel on. AT&T pledged this "all bands" approach in reaching its 25-year agreement with FirstNet. This is enabling the rollout of the public safety network much more quickly than if it was confined to a single bandwidth, such as Band 14. A SIM, or subscriber identification module, is a smart card inside a mobile phone that carries an identification number unique to the owner, stores personal data and prevents operation if removed.

Only AT&T can implement Band 14. The original law creating FirstNet allocated portions of the nationwide 700 Mhz spectrum, Band 14, and \$7 billion for construction of the public safety network. As FirstNet's private partner, AT&T will also build-out Band 14 and increase coverage and capacity for first responders in every state and territory, including rural areas. All network functions and developments by AT&T must be certified by FirstNet to ensure accountability and performance. The FirstNet core will continue to undergo testing and validation of the overall performance and resiliency of network components. AT&T will begin to move FirstNet subscribers to the new core in the coming months.