

# Vermont Receives First SatCOLT



**Terry LaValley**  
FirstNet Single Officer &  
PSBC Chair

The presence of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) in Vermont is growing. Vermont was the first state in New England to receive one of the new SatCOLTs built by AT&T under the FirstNet contract. The SatCOLT (Satellite Cell Site on Light Truck) was on display at the Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference in September. Seventy members of the public safety community attended the FirstNet demonstrations on deployable technology at the conference and had a chance to see the new unit. The SatCOLT is owned and operated for public safety by AT&T and is housed at the company's facility in South Burlington.

"As part of our agreement with FirstNet, Vermont will receive two more similar deployable units that will be installed on Department of Public Safety vehicles," said Terry LaValley, DPS FirstNet single officer and chair of the Public Safety Broadband Network Commission. "DPS will own those SatCOLTs and will deploy them as needed."

The mast antenna is 60 feet high and has a range of 1.5 miles. There can be up to 300 concurrent users. The unit can broadcast a signal over Band Class 14 or the existing commercial spectrum, depending on what is needed. There is no charge to request or use any of the SatCOLTs. However, the requesting agency must be a FirstNet participating organization and the first responders must use a FirstNet subscriber device to process a Band Class 14 signal. If the SatCOLT is transmitting on the commercial LTE spectrum, first responders can use any typical AT&T cellular device to communicate. The remaining two SatCOLT units are slated for delivery to Vermont by the end of the year.

"DPS will have a cache of phones that will be available for use in a deployable situation. However, the cache is limited and we would also rely on the responders having their own devices in a response situation," said LaValley.



**Vermont was the first state in New England to receive an AT&T SatCOLT built for public safety under the FirstNet contract. The unit is stationed at the AT&T facility in South Burlington.**

*(Photo by Grant Clarke)*

Coverage in Vermont remains a primary concern for the public safety community. First responders who are now in AT&T coverage areas are subscribing to the service. AT&T reports that as of the end of August there were more than two dozen different public safety organizations in Vermont with subscribers for a total of 975 FirstNet subscriber lines.

AT&T continues work on new site builds in Vermont. Under the FirstNet contract, AT&T is committed to building more than 35 new sites. A part of Vermont's opt-in process was to identify those areas of the state most in need of coverage and press for new infrastructure. That resulted in the identification of general site locations.

AT&T has contacted landowners at all of the new tower sites and they have begun the engineering process. More than half of the new tower sites are being built at locations where there currently is no cell tower. AT&T has until 2022 to fulfill its commitment for site builds in Vermont or the company will face federal fines. Beyond 2022, AT&T will continue to expand its nationwide network.

"While the Public Safety Broadband Network Commission identified specific areas for sites, we anticipate that a range of barriers could prohibit some of the towers from going up at the targeted locations," explained LaValley. "The commission urges anyone with suggestions for site locations to contact us. There could be areas where a viable alternative might be identified for a location AT&T is having difficulty building on. The PSBC will actively monitor progress made in this area."

**To contact the PSBC, go to the commission web site at [www.PSBC.Vermont.gov](http://www.PSBC.Vermont.gov).**