

Florida releases FirstNet RFI

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The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) was first envisioned as a federal initiative as part of the 2012 Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. It was created and charged with the creation of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN); however, each state will be required to create and maintain its own radio and data networks. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released numerous [RFIs](#) for FirstNet technologies in July 2013, and it now appears that states are following its footsteps.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles recently released a [request for information](#) (RFI) for Florida's FirstNet project. The goal of the RFI is to gather information and help the state effectively plan for the deployment of the NPSBN within the state's borders. The state's system will be required to "support fully interoperable, mission-critical, 700 MHz LTE wireless broadband data communication for all public safety agencies throughout the state of Florida and those that may respond from outside of the state to assist during times of crisis."

Florida consists of 67 counties with a total population exceeding 19 million. All told, there are thousands of public safety and critical infrastructure (i.e. public works and transportation) agencies that will be utilizing the network, and the state is keen to ensure complete coverage.

Analyst's Take

As the federal process moves forward, it is likely that we will begin to see more RFIs and consulting and system solicitations released in the future. Vendors should work to keep on top of not only these projects, but also on top of the steps taken by FirstNet through meetings and legislation. It is also worth noting which entities are in receipt of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) or other relevant grant recipients, as those are most likely to move forward first with these projects. The result of the Florida RFI should be telling for government officials and vendors. Those interested in pursuing any portion of these projects, in Florida or elsewhere, would be well advised to pay close attention.

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