FirstNet Could Influence RACES

FirstNet is a broadband interoperable network dedicated to public safety. As a result of 9/11, when agency-to-agency communications were a severe problem, interoperability has been a most important issue, finally resulting in the concept of FirstNet. Recent developments in FirstNet are of interest to RACES members. The following information has been provided by FirstNet and ARRL, which I have directly quoted. I especially thank Mike Corey, KI1U, and Ralph Haller, N4RH, the chairman of the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC), for much of the following information provided through ARRL.

On March 30, 2017, FirstNet and the U.S. Department of Commerce announced a 25-year partnership with AT&T as the primary contractor to make FirstNet a reality. "The ability to communicate seamlessly across jurisdictions is critical for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) when securing large events or responding to emergencies and disasters," a Commerce Department news release said. "In those instances, networks can become overloaded and inaccessible, limiting responders' use of vital communication technologies, such as smartphones and applications dedicated to public-safety services."

Public-safety agencies already use commercial wireless networks, such as AT&T and Verizon, to supplement their own radio systems and networks, although such communication is not point-to-point. FirstNet is initially targeted primarily to provide video and data, with mission-critical voice communication at least a decade away. EMS is likely to become a heavy user of the network, which will employ voice command functions a la Sin or Alexa.

On June 19, 2017, FirstNet and AT&T took an important step to provide U.S. states and territories with individual State Plans to deliver the first nationwide high-speed data and voice network for first responders. The network will modernize public-safety communications and will drive innovation, security, and interoperability for public safety.

At this point, we are awaiting California’s steps on opting into the State Plan. The governor’s decision to opt-in will open the door to FirstNet and AT&T to immediately begin delivering services to California’s public-safety community. According to FirstNet, the decision will:

- Transfer the financial, operational, and technical risks of building, maintaining, and upgrading the FirstNet network in California to AT&T for the next 25 years.
- Launch key network features that public safety has fought for, like quality of service and priority access to voice and data across the existing AT&T LTE network.

Continued on page 2
Captain’s Corner  Continued from page 1

- Provide preemption over the AT&T LTE network—expected by year end. This means fire, police, and EMS will have dedicated access to the network when they need it.
- Deliver feature-rich services at competitive rates for first responders.

As an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA), FirstNet’s mission is to build out, deploy, and operate an interoperable nationwide broadband network dedicated to first responders. NPSTC Chairman Ralph Haller, N4RH, told ARRL that the advent of FirstNet “will likely be as significant as when public safety first began using radio.”

“The nationwide network will be hardened, so that it will be more likely that many of today’s public-safety systems remain operational in emergencies,” Haller said, pointing out that amateur radio should not expect to have access to FirstNet. He cautioned, “The endurance of amateur radio systems in disasters has been a big selling point in the past for incorporating amateur operators in emergency plans, but perhaps not so much in the future.”

NPSTC is a federation of organizations that work toward improving public-safety communications and interoperability, and ARRL has a seat on NPSTC’s governing board. Haller predicted that amateur radio’s role in emergencies will not disappear. “There is no substitute for eyes and ears on the ground in an emergency,” he said, adding that radio amateurs “can and should continue to play an important part” in supporting emergency communications.

“Amateur operators can continue to provide valuable information to emergency operations centers in the recovery phase of disasters,” he said. “Whether that intelligence gathering is reporting on storm clouds, power outages, or road closures, amateurs can help provide critical, real-time information about conditions over a vast area. While first responders are treating the injured or protecting life and property, the amateur community can concentrate on assessing the overall picture.”

Inevitably there will be coverage gaps in FirstNet, and the development of “deployables” is critical. These devices can expand the network to areas it doesn’t cover but where it may be needed for a specific incident. Deployables could include satellites—Inmarsat is a member of the AT&T team. Network security and encryption is a high priority. The Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) now uses encryption on its data nets.

While images in the form of digital amateur radio television (DATV) and a plethora of digital modes are available to RACES/ACS and other emergency communications groups such as ARES, FirstNet could nudge RACES to more quickly adopt a similar approach. A new generation of radio amateurs steeped in data, image, and video technology is likely to drive RACES and ARES to think beyond analog.

Haller advised that the amateur radio community should continue to work closely with public-safety organizations at all levels to assure that they remain a part of emergency plans.

“The hype about broadband should not result in amateurs inadvertently being swept under the rug,” Haller stressed. “Be sure the public safety organizations never forget how valuable the amateurs are!”

FirstNet will use spectrum at 700 MHz—no immediate threat to amateur radio allocations, although there is no guarantee that this won’t change as the network approaches the shift to 5th generation (5G) technology. Amateur radio has access to significant spectrum above 700 MHz that could be coveted by commercial interests.

The expectation is that, within a couple of years, a nationwide “core” network will be ready to roll out, and the first public-safety users will be on board. Some regional networks have been set up for proof-of-concept purposes and to work out wrinkles, according to Mike Corey, K11U, and Ralph Haller, N4RH.

The new FirstNet radios will resemble smartphones and tablets. Examples, pictured here, are the Xplore XSLATE R12 tablet and the Sonim XP7 LTE/Wi-Fi/Android smartphone. Other examples include the Apple iPhone 7, Kyocera Duraforce PRO, and Samsung Galaxy S8 smartphones.

The cornerstone of Sonim’s Mission Critical Solution is the XP7 LTE/Wi-Fi/Android smartphone with a touchscreen that can be viewed in direct sunlight and used with dirty or wet work gloves. Features include an extra loud speaker, noise cancellation, powerful battery, and resistance to drops and water. It is AT&T Enhanced Push-to-Talk compatible.
Next OCRACES Meeting: August 7th

The next County of Orange RACES meeting will be on Monday, August 7, 2017, at 7:30 PM, at OCSD Communications & Technology Division, 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, in Orange. Assistant Emergency Manager Bryan Hovde, KD7CRA, OCSD Emergency Management Division, will give a class on how to use the completely redesigned WebEOC Incident Management System. This tutorial will include log-in procedures, activity logs, and the Jurisdictional Information Management System (JIMS 8.0 version).

OCRACES Exhibits at Ham Jam

Ham Radio Outlet in Anaheim held its 6th Annual Ham Jam on Saturday, July 8, 2017. Local clubs, RACES units, HDSCS, and communications specialists were hosted in the store parking lot. OCRACES set up a booth in the middle of the parking lot. Our participation was coordinated by RACES Sgt. Jack Barth, AB6VC. Fran Needham, KJ6UJS, provided a canopy for our display, which included a 2-meter/70-centimeter station and an HF station. RACES Sgt. Bob McFadden, KK6CUS, set up his homebrew 20-meter magnetic loop for demonstrating our HF capabilities. Also at the booth promoting OCRACES activities and capabilities were Martin La Rocque, N6NTH, Tony Scalpi, N2VAJ, Robert Stoffel, KD6DAQ, and Ken Tucker, WF6F.

HRO/Anaheim Manager Janet Margelli, KL7MF, sent a big “Thank You” to OCRACES for participating in Ham Jam this year. She said HRO was understandably concerned about the heat, and was gratified to see “the splendid turnout of hams.” Single entries into the drawing box numbered a bit over 200. Janet hoped OCRACES was able to further the EmComm cause at Ham Jam.

HAMCON 2017: September 15-17

The 2017 ARRL Southwestern Division Convention (HAMCON 2017) will be held on September 15-17, 2017, at the Torrance Marriott Redondo Beach Hotel, 3635 Fashion Way, in Torrance. “Ham Radio for Everyone” is the theme, with much to see and do, including a full range of talks by experts on radio equipment, operating techniques, public service, DXing, technical subjects, and more. The 10,300-square-foot exhibit hall will include 63 booths. Also included are extensive prize drawings, ARRL forums, and a Sunday Swap Meet. For more info, go to http://www.hamconinc.org/. OCRACES members are encouraged to set up a publicity table outside the exhibit area to recruit new members.

OCSD Family BBQ: October 1st at Irvine Lake

Along with all sworn and professional staff (full or part-time and retirees), Explorers, Reserves, and OC Sheriff’s Advisory Council, OCRACES members and immediate families are invited to the OCSD Family BBQ on Sunday, October 1, 2017. The event will be held from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Lakeside, 5305 Santiago Canyon Road, Silverado. Food and drinks are provided (no alcohol allowed). The price is $10 per person including children (immediate family only). Cash or check is acceptable. Make your check payable to “OC Sheriff Advisory Council” and mail to PO Box 28, Santa Ana, CA 92702, or pay in person at OCSD Headquarters, Community Programs, Marilyn MacDougall. Free parking is available. Fun activities will be provided for all ages. Reservations must be made in advance by September 18, 2017. For more information, contact Marilyn MacDougall at 714-647-4135 or e-mail mmacdougall@ocsd.org.
Peter Gonzalez, KC6TWS, was the fox on Monday, July 17, 2017, on the monthly cooperative T-hunt. He turned on the fox box immediately following the 2-meter OCRACES ACS net, hiding in Newport Beach near the southeast corner of Bonita Canyon Drive and MacArthur Boulevard, where Ford Road ends near a statue of President Ronald Reagan by an area of Bonita Canyon Sports Park.

First to find the fox was Ron Allerdice, WA6CYY. Ron happened to start near the fox and was able to get a good bearings right into the fox’s den. Coming in much later were Ken Bourne, W6HK, and his son Bob, K6RBI. They started on Back Bay Drive west of Jamboree Road and were foiled by reflections off of the tall buildings at Newport Center. Then the fox-box battery failed, but Ron Allerdice came to the rescue with a spare battery. Jack Barth, AB6VC, was also on the hunt. He started with a good signal at a 100-degree bearing from Bob Henry Park and tracked the signal to the Back Bay area. He lost the signal and started driving around, and never found a strong signal again.

The next cooperative T-hunt will be held on Monday, August 21, 2017, immediately following the OCRACES 2-meter net (approximately 7:20 PM). The fox will hide on paved, publicly accessible property in a city or sector of Orange County to be announced a few days before the hunt. No fees will be required to drive directly to the fox. He will transmit on the input (146.295 MHz) of the 146.895 MHz repeater. Hunters will compare bearings via the 448.320 MHz repeater (while the 449.100 MHz repeater is down), and are encouraged to beacon their positions via APRS throughout the hunt. We are looking for a volunteer to be the fox.

The cooperative T-hunts are usually held on the third Monday of each month (second Monday in October). The hunts provide excellent practice in working together to find sources of interference quickly. The hunts are not official RACES events, so DSW (Disaster Service Worker) coverage does not apply. Please drive carefully!

Fox-hunt loops and beams are available from Arrow Antenna and HRO, including the Arrow Model FHL-VHF fox-hunt loop (covers 1 MHz to 600 MHz) and the Arrow Model 146-3 three-element portable hand-held yagi. The Arrow OFHA 4-MHz offset attenuator can be useful when close to the fox, to prevent receiver overload. An all-mode transceiver is quite useful, allowing hunters to switch to the SSB or CW mode for detecting extremely weak signals, or to switch in a built-in attenuator, reduce RF gain, or tune slightly off frequency when dealing with extremely strong signals. Some hunters use the DF2020T radio direction finder kit, which is a Doppler system available from Global TSCM Group, Inc. (http://www.kn2c.us). A very similar system is the MFJ-5005 Doppler direction finder. Other useful tools are the Fox-hunt app for iPhones and the Triangulate app for Android phones. For some excellent information on T-hunting, see http://www.homingin.com.

Farewell to Kenan Reilly, KR6J

“With great regret,” Kenan Reilly, KR6J, tendered his resignation from County of Orange RACES on July 5, 2017, effective July 31, 2017. Kenan said, “My work schedule and family commitments have become such that I cannot continue to volunteer the time necessary to do my job with the thoroughness that I like.” Kenan thanks us for allowing him the opportunity to become a member and “to serve with such a wonderful group of individuals.” He extended his best wishes to OCRACES members going forward. In return, we extend our best wishes to Kenan, and thank him for his service to OCRACES and the Sheriff’s Department. Kenan has been an inspiration to all of us, with his knowledge of radio-electronics and his willingness to work hard on many OCRACES projects. Kenan is an excellent radio operator and handled net-control duties with high professionalism. He is a Communications Technician II, OCSD Communications & Technology Division, Mobile Systems Unit—Service.
FCC Form 605 Will Ask “the Felony Question”

A revised FCC Form 605—Quick-Form Application for Authorization in the Ship, Aircraft, Amateur, Restricted and Commercial Operator, and General Mobile Radio Services—going into effect in September 2017 will ask all applicants to indicate if they have been convicted of or pled guilty to a felony. The Communications Act obliges the Commission to ask “the felony question,” as it did on the old Form 610 and still does on other applications. This action will correct its omission on Form 605, which has existed for years. Applicants’ responses and explanations will be used to determine eligibility to be a Commission licensee. The FCC told ARRL that it’s still deciding whether to issue a public notice on the change.

“The Commission is revising the basic qualifications section of the form to include a question regarding whether an application has been convicted of a felony in any state or federal court,” the Office of the FCC Secretary explained in a May filing with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which must okay the revision. “Applicants answering YES must provide an explanation regarding the conviction. This item enables the FCC to determine whether an applicant is eligible under sections 310(d) and 308(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, to hold or have ownership interest in a station license.”

The revision also will apply to NCVEC Form 605—the unofficial Amateur Radio-specific version of the application that is completed and filed at volunteer examiner coordinator (VEC) examination sessions. VECs will have to start using the revised form on September 7. Responding to VECs’ questions, the FCC offered some guidance, with a particular focus on NCVEC Form 605.

ARRL VEC Manager and NCVEC Vice-Chair Maria Somma, AB1FM, thanked the FCC for honoring a request to amend the effective date of the change, initially in early August. “At the urging of the NCVEC leadership, the FCC took into consideration the undertaking to change and distribute all affected forms and update software and agreed to push back the execution date by one month,” she said. The NCVEC will create a revised NCVEC Form 605 and release it to VE teams before September 7.

Once the Form 605 update has been implemented, assuming all other information is correct, negative felony question responses will result in a license grant, the FCC said. A YES will place the application in the “pending file for review” category. Applicants answering YES would have to, within 14 days, provide the FCC with a statement explaining the circumstances, and a statement “giving the reasons why the applicant believes that grant of the application would be in the public interest, notwithstanding the actual or alleged misconduct,” the revised Form 605 instructions state. The FCC said an applicant’s answer to the felony question and explanation will be public via ULS, unless a separate request is made to the FCC that the applicant’s explanation be kept confidential. The FCC will review applications on which the felony question has been answered in the affirmative and decide whether to grant the applications or designate them for hearing.

“The applicant must provide sufficient information for the FCC to determine whether there exists any material and substantial question of fact regarding whether the applicant has the character qualifications to be a Commission licensee,” the FCC said. There is no set checklist of items, but useful information would include such information as details regarding the conduct that resulted in the conviction or guilty plea, including time and place; the date of the conviction or guilty plea; the penalty imposed and whether it has been satisfied, and “any efforts taken to remedy the wrongs committed and ensure that the applicant will not engage in such conduct in the future,” the FCC said.

The FCC said the only additional information that VECs will have to collect is the response to the felony question; any explanatory exhibits and confidentiality petitions will go directly to the FCC, and VECs will have no information as to the status of such applications.

The FCC said the felony question must be answered every time—even if previously answered—for New, Modification, Renewal/Modification, and Amendment applications. “Assuming that nothing has changed, the attachment to the subsequent applications can simply reference the file number of the application where the complete explanation was given, rather than having to set forth the complete explanation each time,” the FCC memo said. “Clubs are not exempt from the felony question. The question applies to the club as an entity and to the trustee, but not to any other individual officers.”

Individuals convicted of a felony and later pardoned or whose record has been sealed should answer YES, and include information regarding the pardon, “as that will be relevant to whether the conviction still presents any material and substantial question of fact regarding whether the applicant has the character qualifications to be a Commission licensee,” the FCC told VECs. “An overturned conviction need not be disclosed — but a conviction still on appeal must be disclosed.”
RACES/MOU News from Around the County

**Laguna Beach RACES**

The Laguna Beach Emergency Communications Team (LBECT) intends to participate in a Great Shakeout Exercise on Thursday morning, October 19, 2017. Using the Shakeout phrase, “Drop, cover, hold on,” in conjunction with the call sign of the Laguna Beach RACES Chief Radio Officer John Kountz, W01S, LBECT invites as many other City RACES units as are active to respond over a half-hour period. Responses will be logged, including time, call sign, and City, and will be available to prepare a list of potential direct contacts should an emergency occur. The LBECT mobile solar-powered radio station will establish contact with as many emergency stations within a 50-mile radius as possible. Once made, members of LBECT will be encouraged to make contact with the responding station from their homes to affirm their ability to reach outside Laguna Beach. In addition, contacts so completed will be logged and compiled into a reference document and provided to the responding stations and LBECT members for use in the event of an actual earthquake. Two frequencies will be used: 145.510 MHz and 446.000 MHz, both FM simplex. This exercise will begin at 10:00 AM and end at 10:30 AM. CERT communicators are also welcome; provision of GMRS/FRS frequencies and subchannels is requested.

**Seal Beach RACES**

Seal Beach Police Corporal Julia Clasby has replaced Sergeant Dave Barr, N6BMA, as the City’s RACES Program Coordinator. Dave will continue to be involved for the next few months to assist with a smooth transition.

**Tri-Cities RACES**

Tri-Cities RACES will participate at the Emergency Expo in Dana Point on Sunday, August 6, 2017, at Sea Terrace Park. The City is combining two other events with the Expo—National Night Out and one of their Summer Concerts—to promote emergency preparedness to a larger and more diverse crowd. The event will run from 10:30 AM until 8:00 PM. It will include large equipment displays by OCFA and OCSD, with specialty response units such as SWAT, Bomb Squad, K9 and bloodhounds, boats, and helicopters. OCSD Emergency Communications Manager Lee Kaser, KK6VIV, will bring the OASIS trailer for use with the Samantha Command Post. Other participants will include Dana Point CERT, ReadyOC, National Weather Service, FBI, Care Ambulance, Orange County Vector Control District, OC Lifeguards, numerous emergency/safety equipment vendors, food trucks (from which you can buy lunch and dinner), and many more. The public will be able to sit in and explore most of the vehicles and equipment. CHOC Children’s Hospital will be showing some simple first-aid measures that can be used in a disaster and a fun challenge for compression-only CPR. Live entertainment will be provided by Redneck Rodeo and others.

**Hospital Disaster Support Communications System (HDSCS)**

HDSCS will have a booth in the exhibit hall at the upcoming ARRL Southwestern Division Convention (HAMCON 2017), September 15-17, 2017. They will offer their best practices at the convention, and will share their experiences over 35 years with over 30 different hospitals in over 120 emergency callouts, plus over 200 drills. Although there are different amateur radio organizational structures, as well as varying County Emergency Medical Service protocols, HDSCS has learned many lessons about activation procedures, equipment preparations, and training that can apply to all groups interested in supporting hospitals.

**ARRL Orange Section ARES**

ARRL Orange Section Emergency Coordinator Bob Turner, W6RHK, advised that an ARES Seminar will be held on Saturday, August 5, 2017, at 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, at Alvord Unified School District, Board Room, 9 KPC Parkway, in Corona. Lunch will be provided. RSVP to W6RHK@yahoo.com.
### Upcoming Events:
- **August 5:** ARES Seminar, Alvord Unified School District, Board Room, 9 KPC Parkway, Corona; 0900-1500 hours; RSVP W6RHK@yahoo.com
- **August 7:** OCRACES Meeting (WebEOC Training), 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, Orange, 1930 hours
- **August 18:** Orange County Amateur Radio Club Meeting, American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive, Santa Ana; 1900 hours
- **August 21:** Cooperative T-Hunt on input of 2-meter repeater, 1920 hours
- **August 28:** ACS Nets on five bands and Cal OES Nets from OC EOC
- **September 15-17:** HAMCON 2017, Torrance Marriott Redondo Beach Hotel, 3635 Fashion Way, Torrance
- **October 1:** OCSD Family BBQ, Lakeside, Silverado, 1100-1500 hours
- **October 7:** City/County RACES & MOU ACS Exercise, 0900-1100 hours
- **October 19:** Great Shakeout
- **November 14:** Radio Rodeo (no RACES/ACS track)

### County of Orange RACES

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### County of Orange RACES Frequencies

40 m: 7250 kHz SSB (City/County/MOU Net—Saturdays, 1000 hours)
10 m: 29.540 MHz output, 29.540 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL
6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL
2 m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 Hz PL*
2 m: 146.595 MHz simplex
6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL
1.25 m: 223.760 MHz output, 222.160 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL
70 cm: 446.000 MHz simplex
70 cm: 448.320 MHz output, 443.320 MHz input, 141.3 Hz PL (private)
70 cm: 449.100 MHz output, 444.100 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (out of service)
70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (private)
23 cm: 1287.650 MHz, 1287.675 MHz, 1287.700 MHz, 1287.725 MHz, 1287.750 MHz, and 1287.775 MHz outputs, –12 MHz inputs, 88.5 Hz PL

*Primary Net—Mondays, 1900 hours

### County of Orange RACES

**Mission Statement**

County of Orange RACES has made a commitment to provide all Public Safety departments in Orange County with the most efficient response possible to supplement emergency/disaster and routine Public Safety communications events and activities. We will provide the highest level of service using Amateur and Public Safety radio resources coupled with technology, teamwork, safety, and excellence. We will do so in an efficient, professional, and courteous manner, accepting accountability for all actions. We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership with the Public Safety community to professionally excel in the ability to provide emergency communications resources and services.

**RACES Program Coordinator**
(Emergency Comm’s Manager)
Lee Kaser, KK6VIV
714-704-8080

**Chief Radio Officer (Captain)**
Ken Bourne, W6HK
714-997-0073

**Radio Officer (Lieutenant)**
Scott Byington, KC6MMF

**Assistant Radio Officers ( Sergeants)**
Jack Barth, AB6VC
Ernest Fierheller, KG6LXT
Bob McFadden, KK6CUS
Tom Tracey, KC6FIC

**County of Orange RACES**
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Visit Our Web Site
http://www.ocraces.org
It’s Where It’s @!

Meet Your County of Orange RACES Members!

Ken Bourne
W6HK

Scott Byington
KC6MMF

Harvey Packard
KM6BV

Jack Barth
AB6VC

Ernest Fierheller
KG6LXT

Bob McFadden
KK6CUS

Tom Tracey
KC6FIC

Randy Benicky
N6PRL

Roger Berchtold
WB6HMW

David Corsiglia
WA6TRF

Jim Dorris
KC6RFC

Nancee Graff
N6ZRB

Ray Grimes
N9RG

Walter Kroy
KC6HAM

Martin La Rocque
N6NTH

Matt Luczko
KM6CAO

Fran Needham
KJ6UJS

Tom Riley
K6TPR

Brad Russo
KB6GPM

Tony Scalpi
N2VAJ

Joe Selikov
KB6EID

Robert Stoffel
KD6DAQ

Ken Tucker
WF6F

Tom Wright
KJ6SPE

Lee Kaser
KK6VIV

“W6ACS … Serving Orange County”