Governor Opts In to FirstNet / AT&T Plan

After nearly five years of data collection, community outreach, and planning, the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) plan to build a broadband network in Idaho has been approved. On 12 September 2017, Governor Otter signed a letter addressed to FirstNet, partnered with AT&T, accepting a 5 year state plan to build, operate, maintain, and continually improve a wireless public safety broadband network. This network is dedicated to the first response community. This plan was reviewed by the Idaho Public Safety Communications Commission (IPSCC) in summer 2017 with a recommendation to "Opt In" immediately. With the Governor's decision comes significant federal funding that has already been set aside for the buildout. The plan includes an ongoing collaborative effort between Idaho, FirstNet, and AT&T.

In 2013, the Department of Commerce / National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) awarded a federal grant to each state known as State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP). This grant was awarded to assist state planners in the FirstNet consultation process. Over the course of the SLIGP grant, the IOEM team has diligently provided timely, accurate, and on-going community outreach and education on FirstNet to all of Idaho's first response community and multiple stakeholders within the region to include all Tribal Nations within the region. This outreach has spanned a four year period (2013-2017). This outreach included community involvement, education, data collection, and scientific consultation regarding the communications needs within Idaho. Of additional significant note this year, was a Listening Tour dedicated to gathering grass roots data directly from Idaho's first responders. This data assisted in the analysis of FirstNet as well as providing critical operational data directly to the FirstNet innovation laboratory. The data will be used to develop a robust software applications system leading to safer and more efficient response operations.