

## **State and Local Input Essential to Nationwide Network Success, Say Federal Officials (3/6/11)**

*By Sandra Wendelken*

Two federal officials reiterated the importance of state and local involvement in the nationwide public-safety broadband network during a Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) meeting Tuesday.

Anna Gomez, deputy administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, said that although the recently passed legislation gives the main governance responsibilities to federal agencies such as NTIA and the FCC, it “does not mean first responders will lose control of the network.”

She said the state and local grant program in the bill and state participation in the nationwide buildout, along with state and local representatives on the 15-member First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) board will ensure the process will allow a local voice. “Local input is a must,” said Gomez.

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 [established the FirstNet board](#) to consist of the secretary of Homeland Security, the U.S. attorney general and the director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), along with 12 individuals appointed by the secretary of Commerce. Three of the board members must be public-safety officials and three members must represent states, localities, tribes and territories, ensuring geographic and urban and rural representation.

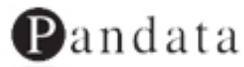
“The feds are the least important players,” said Dr. David Boyd, director of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate. “We’re the facilitators.”

Boyd said even with the additional 10 megahertz of spectrum and \$7 billion of funding that public safety gets in the bill passed last month, mission-critical voice technology

won't be available for some time. And even with the use of Long Term Evolution (LTE) commercial technology, the technology alone isn't a silver bullet.

"We still have all those critical components that we had before, including standard operating procedures (SOPs), training and exercises, usage and governance," Boyd said. "Governance will be with us through everything we do in LTE."

"We have the same blueprint and goal toward interoperability," Gomez said. "It's up to us to make this network a vision for the country."



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