New York Conference Reports

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14,000 Attendees

GENERAL NOTES:

- Large conference, estimated at 14,000 attendees, but with many being rank & file members of the New York fire service; retirees; and fire district commissioners. Those who were chief fire officers were from mostly fully volunteer and smaller combination departments.
    - Knowledge of FirstNet was extremely low, or almost non-existent, among attendees. I did encounter only one attendee who was informed and was seeking additional information on FirstNet.
    - Knowledge of FirstNet, and even basic name recognition, was surprisingly low among communications / radio vendors who were exhibitors. Of the 5 radio vendors spoken with, only 1 seemed to know 'what' FirstNet was, while all others largely didn't even recognize the term.
    - Spoke with several leaders and staff of the New York Chiefs Association. Board members did not demonstrate an understanding of FirstNet and suggested I speak with staff. Staff, while having varying degrees of name recognition, had little working knowledge of the national effort or timing.
- Many of the expected or typical vendors expected as exhibitors were not present. For example, not even Motorola was among the 300+ exhibitors.
- The exception was AT&T Public Safety Solutions. I spoke with Fred Scalera who was staffing the AT&T booth and he seemed to indicate similar findings to that above. Though, he claimed to have spoken with a few attendees who stopped by and seemed fairly well informed about FirstNet. It appears these few were outliers.
    - Fred shared his sense that New York was likely an 'Opt-In' state.
    - Fred also believed that since this conference moved to an upstate location, the demographics of attendees has changed significantly.
- The educational program had nothing related to communications generally – or FirstNet specifically.
- When briefly discussing FirstNet with attendees, the feedback was largely that their personal communities have largely weak/poor cell coverage and FirstNet will likely not be of much use.

ISSUES / QUESTIONS IDENITFIED:

- Perceptions of poor coverage (currently) with all cellular carriers, including AT&T. This was focused on rural communities.
- Poor knowledge of, and about, FirstNet by this group of fire service personnel. Little desire was identified to address this deficit.

- Surprisingly, the state association did not seem to be engaged on FirstNet.
    - Perhaps a strategy to make greater efforts towards key organizations may be more beneficial. It is likely end users will seek information from, and take the advice of, their state professional organizations.