Missouri Conference Reports

Contents

Missouri Sheriffs' Association, Columbia, MO (July 16-20, 2017)..... 2

Missouri Sheriffs' Association, Columbia, MO (July 16-20, 2017)
Attendance = 100

Other than the first day which is vendor time, the MSA is actually a busy training conference. I had a very long and good conversation with **Roger Wespe** and **Bob Bloomberg** who were manning the Sonim booth. It was the best conversation I've had so far at a conference.

Roger works for Sonim and is the National Public Safety Strategy & Technology Manager at Sonim Technologies. He was at the conference demonstrating the Sonim new push-to-talk device. While he wasn't specifically pushing AT&T, which was the carrier for the three phones he was demonstrating. One phone was totally submersed in water while he demonstrated the durability of the other two. Roger also stated he had actually helped get the FirstNet legislation passed while working for APCO International and had worked as a lobbyist in Washington during that time frame (2010-2015). He really liked talking FirstNet, and did so at length very positively. When I shared with him what I'd heard in Boston about T-Band users, and how they thought they might try to get the legislation changed, he agreed that was a possibility.

Bob is a retired Missouri State Trooper. He retired in 2012 as part of the Superintendant's staff and was hired immediately by **Bryan Courtney** who is in charge of the Missouri Statewide Interoperable Radio Network. Bob said Missouri was sending out an RFI only "to confirm for the Governor AT&T was competitive". He thought it would be back by Labor Day, and that Missouri's decision would be made before the holidays. He thinks Missouri will definitely opt-in. Bob also thought Bryan would be attending the conference. Bob also mentioned **Brad Stoddard** and asked if I knew him. He went on to say how much Michigan had helped Missouri when Missouri was building their radio system due to Michigan's experience.

I spoke to the acting-Executive Director of the MSA, **Kevin Merritt**. (Apparently the previous Executive Director was fired/resigned under suspicious circumstances involving Association funds). Kevin said that FirstNet had reached out to the MSA and provided an overview to the Board. He grew a little evasive as I asked if the MSA was in support or not. He did not say the MSA had been asked to serve in any advisory capacity or take an official position.

Overall, I heard nothing negative about FirstNet during any of the conversations I had. It does appear the decision will be handled at the state level with little local input after the RFI has been returned and dissected. With that being said, they are keeping the local's informed.