



F-M AMBULANCE SERVICE

VITAL SIGNS



February 2007

Compassion, Excellence, Community Service

F-M Ambulance Purchases Two New Ambulances

F-M Ambulance recently purchased two new ambulances with some advanced safety features and a new design.

The new ambulances have two new features to help with backing:

- Hindsight back-up assist – an audible alert that can be heard by the driver as the vehicle approaches objects.
- Back-up camera – this camera is on the outside in the rear of the ambulance. It shows a view of the rear of the ambulance on a color monitor as the driver is backing. The device also has sound so it is able to broadcast verbal directions from a spotter.

They ambulances also have new lighting and reflective designs:

- L.E.D. compartment lights – any open compartment door flashes a red L.E.D. light. This helps to create visibility on roadways.
- High visibility reflective “checkerboard” design – the day-glo and blue checkerboard pattern increases visibility during the day and night at accident scenes and roadways.

There are also new features within the ambulance:

- Turn and brake alerts for care providers – three L.E.D. lights located in the patient care compartment will help notify care providers when turn signals or brakes are applied. This allows providers to anticipate the need to brace themselves or hold off on a procedure.
- “In-reach” switches – providers can turn on oxygen, lights, or other equipment from two locations in the back of the ambulance. This reduces the need to move while the vehicle is in motion.
- Cargo net – found at the rear of the bench and CPR seat. This will “catch” a provider in the event of a sudden stop, and help prevent the person from striking sharp corners and walls.



F-M Ambulance “University of Excellence”

By Wade Mitzel, Clinical Coordinator

Wouldn't it be great if your employer offered classes that would help you be better at your job, advance up the ladder if you wish, and provide classes that would make you job easier? This is the plan that F-M Ambulance has with its new University of Excellence.

The University of Excellence is an internal program that is designed to empower its team members. The University has classes that deal with many different topics. Examples include various computer classes, advanced 12-lead ECG, budgeting, and even self defense courses. Over 75 classes will be offered at various times of the year. The University of Excellence will have something for everyone. F-M Ambulance sees the importance of continually helping team members grow and advance their careers. We think this program is a “win/win” for everyone.

The University of Excellence has had classes already started with ACLS, PALS, ECG Interpretation, and an Introduction to Statistics class. More information will follow on this unique program.

F-M Ambulance Spring Citizens Academy

The Spring 2007 F-M Ambulance Citizens Academy met for the first time on Wednesday February 21, 2007. The Citizen's EMS Academy is a program that offers a hands-on opportunity for community members to learn what F-M Ambulance paramedics and EMT's do every day. It also educates participants about F-M Ambulance Service and emergency medical services, along with teaching skills that they will be able to use in actual emergencies. Participants have the opportunity to ride along with paramedics and EMTs and go on actual emergency calls.

The academy focuses on hands-on training, showing and teaching the skills that an ambulance crew may use. Participants get to practice starting IV's, intubations, defibrillation, reading heart rhythms, and doing a full "code" on our SIMMAN manikin.

The next Citizen's EMS Academy will take place in the fall of 2007. If you know anyone who is interested in being a part of the fall 2007 Citizen's EMS Academy, please have them check our website for more information, www.fmambulance.com.

Casselton Ambulance Receives CPAP Training

On Monday February 19th F-M Ambulance joined Casselton Ambulance to train personnel on their new CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) machines. Casselton Ambulance is planning on starting to use CPAP in late March.

CPAP is designed for any patient that is suffering from severe shortness of breath. It works by forcing air into the lungs at a high pressure when the patient breathes. CPAP makes the work of breathing easier and gives better oxygenation for the patient who can't breathe well themselves due to CHF, pneumonia, or even asthma. New technology has made the equipment smaller and is now able to be implemented in the pre-hospital setting.

The State of North Dakota has approved CPAP for the EMT-Basic level standard of care. With somewhat longer transport times from the county, CPAP can prove to be a very useful device for patient with respiratory distress. F-M Ambulance hopes to train other squads on how to use CPAP and have it more available in the rural setting.

Do You Have a File of Life?

What is a File of Life?

- A File of Life is a magnetic card holder that is usually placed on a person's refrigerator or in their purse or wallet.
- Emergency responders such as ambulance personnel, firefighters and police officers know to look for this holder.

What does the File of Life have in it?

- It contains information such as your name and address, doctor and phone number, emergency contacts, medical conditions, medications and allergies. This information is very important for emergency responders to have when they are taking care of a patient.

How much does a File of Life cost?

- They're free! Files of Life are paid for by a group called TRIAD, which is a group of seniors, service agencies and law enforcement working together to keep seniors in our community safe.



Where can I get a File of Life?

- If you or anyone you know is interested in picking up a File of Life, please call the Cass County Sheriff's Office at 241-5800.

Files of life are a great help to emergency workers. They help responders instantly know the medical history of the patient so that corrective treatment can begin immediately. Upon arrival to the emergency room, data is immediately available to the medical staff. There is no wasted time getting information from a confused, injured or critically ill patient. Individuals who have a File of Life will have peace of mind knowing they will have prompt and quality care.

FILE OF LIFE	
	Name: _____
	Address: _____
Doctor: _____	Phone#: _____
EMERGENCY CONTACTS	
Name: _____	Phone#: _____
Address: _____	
Name: _____	Phone#: _____
Address: _____	

Get To Know...

A close up on our new F-M Ambulance Employees

Mike Bruce EMT-B



Where are you from?

I'm from Williston, ND but moved to Fargo in 1999 – I consider Fargo my home.

What did you do before working at F-M Ambulance Service?

I have been a trainer for new employees at a variety of different customer service companies.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy spending time with my wife, Nikki, and my dog Gus. Nikki and I also like taking short or long trips on our Harley Davidson Electra Glide Classics.

What made you want to work at F-M Ambulance?

EMS (emergency medical services) is a field that I have always been interested in. I'm currently a paramedic student at F-M Ambulance – I can't think of a better way to give back to this community!

Go Red for Women

The American Heart Association has once again launched their "Go Red for Women" public awareness campaign. This campaign is aimed at making people aware of the fact that heart disease is the #1 killer of American women.

Cardiovascular diseases claim the lives of more than half a million females annually, and half of those are under age 65. Less than 10% of women recognize heart disease as their leading cause of death.



Locally, the Go Red for Women event was held on Wednesday February 7th at 6:30 PM at the Holiday Inn. More than 750 women took part in the event, enjoying three heart-healthy desserts while learning how to cook heart-healthy meals and enjoying a style show.

Did You Know...

- Brain death starts to occur 4 – 6 minutes after someone experiences cardiac arrest if no CPR and defibrillation occurs during that time.

"New" Ready Wheels

By Mike Hall, Executive Director

ReadyWheels, F-M Ambulance's special transportation service, has been providing quality professional transportation for over 20 years. This service started in 1987 as a need for transportation for wheelchair bound customers was identified. Over twenty years we have provided approximately 100,000 rides.

We feel after 20 years it is time to freshen up and seek out new services that would assist our customers. The first step of our re-launch is to provide service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Currently all after-hours calls are handled by ambulance team members. Additionally, ReadyWheels will begin a stretcher only service. This will provide non-medical transportation to customers unable to ride in a wheelchair and/or confined to bed. This service will primarily be offered Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

We will also be adding a third service, Mental Health Transportation. This will transport mental health patients in a safe, secure specially equipped vehicle. This vehicle is a plain unmarked van that will be able to transport customers discretely and with dignity.

To signify this change the ReadyWheels brand will be receiving a fresh new look. All of the vehicles will be converted to the new modern logo. The team members will also be sporting the new logo on their shirts, hats and coats.

We anticipate our new services to start on or about March 1, 2007.



EMS Rendezvous

The North Dakota EMS Association will be holding the 32nd Annual EMS Rendezvous April 12th – 14th, 2007 in Bismarck, ND.

This conference is designed for the EMT-B, EMT-I, EMT-P, Nurses, First Responders, Physicians, EMS Instructors and Coordinators, Law Enforcement Officers, Military Emergency Personnel, Fire/Rescue Personnel, EMS Dispatchers, and other emergency personnel. The conference is approved for continuing education hours.

The Rural Roundup

By Bob Klein, Liaison Coordinator

Greetings from Bob Klein, a.k.a. "Farmer Bob"

Brrrr! So much for a mild winter! I used to enjoy winter (snowmobiling, snow skiing, snowman making etc.); now it seems that I really dislike it. Maybe it's from so many years of shoveling snow, or it might be age. Probably age! My wife told me that I might have to start sending her to Arizona for the winters – she doesn't know how many more winters she can take here. I told her that if she goes I go!

We have been quite busy in the county these past three months with refreshers for recertification. After talking to quite a few people in the county, F-M Ambulance has decided to re-vamp its refresher system. We will be launching a pilot program on a modular, or "block" system for refresher training for EMT's and First Responders during the next two years. This system looks very promising – it will make refreshers more interesting and a little more "user-friendly".

The Mobile Incident Command Post will be making its rounds in the counties in the near future. Some squads and departments have already received a tour of the command post. Hopefully this summer we will do some training with it in Cass and Clay counties.

Recently, Davenport Fire Department has become licensed as a Quick Response Unit (QRU). They currently have 3 members, Wayne Flom, Dave Johnson and Bob Jostad. They will receive monthly training with Kindred Ambulance Service. There may be more training, including an initial first responder course, in the future.

Looking forward to spring – "Farmer Bob "

F-M Ambulance Wellness Committee

Approximately 70 employees from F-M Ambulance are currently taking part in the F-M Ambulance Spring Challenge. Participants were given pedometers to start keeping track of their daily steps. Weekly totals for eight different teams are being kept through April to see which team averages the most steps. The team with the highest average will be awarded the F-M Ambulance traveling trophy for the spring. All team members participating in the challenge will receive a "Team Wellness" t-shirt in April.

In the past three months, team members have taken part in events such as floor hockey, badminton and volleyball. Watch the Wellness Committee board, located in the kitchen, for upcoming event dates and times.



Pedometers were given to team members interested in keeping track of their daily steps. George uses his spoon to get some extra steps for the week.

Santa Visits F-M

On Wednesday December 20th, F-M Ambulance had a special visitor – Santa Claus! Santa visited with many employees and families at F-M. Everyone who came to see Santa got to enjoy Christmas cookies and other snacks while the children received books and other gifts. Thanks Santa!



Merigen Medical Signs Contract with Welch Allyn

By Sean Quinn, Merigen Medical Manager

Merigen Medical, a service of F-M Ambulance, has announced that it has signed a distribution agreement with Welch Allyn to become the region's only locally based supplier for the company's emergency medical equipment. As part of the agreement, Merigen Medical will supply ambulance services throughout the Midwest with Welch Allyn vital sign monitoring and defibrillation equipment as well as other products designed for emergency medical services.

Merigen Medical became a Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) supplier for Welch Allyn AEDs in early 2006 and quickly established itself as the second largest AED distributor in the nation for the company. This led to discussions and agreement by Merigen Medical to expand its Welch Allyn relationship to include the entire emergency medical services product line. "This is a strategic move for us; Merigen Medical has proven itself as a highly effective, professional organization with a keen understanding of the challenges specific to this part of the country in emergency medicine," said Brian Davis, National Sales Manager for Welch Allyn.



Sean Quinn of Merigen Medical commented, "As a biomedical equipment company, our goal is to bring the highest quality solutions possible to EMS organizations throughout the region. Welch Allyn delivers that quality both in the equipment they manufacture and integrity of the company. We look forward to working with ambulance services throughout our region to improve care for our communities." For more information on Merigen Medical or any Welch Allyn medical equipment, please call Merigen Medical at (701) 364-1777.

F-M Ambulance Explorers

The F-M Ambulance Explorer Post has had a very busy winter!

In January, the Explorers learned about cardiology – they attached each other to cardiac monitors and learn about what different heart rhythms looked like. They also learned about pharmacology – the study of medication, their sources, characteristics and effects. Some of the Explorers chose to try out activated charcoal, one of the medications that is commonly carried on an ambulance.

The highlight of the January meeting was when the Red River Valley SWAT team came to tell Explorers about Tactical EMS (TEMS). Dave Reihe is a paramedic with F-M Ambulance and also is on the TEMS team (part of the SWAT team). Dave and other SWAT members showed the students some of the equipment used by SWAT team members. Explorers also got to learn how to "raid" a room in search of a suspect.



Explorers drink their activated charcoal



Get To Know...

A close up on our new F-M Ambulance Employees

Lisa Davis EMT-B



Where are you from?

I am from Barnesville, MN.

What did you do before working at F-M Ambulance Service?

I worked at Blue Cross/Blue Shield for 3 years, then at Fercho Cataract and Eye Clinic for 13 years.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy spending time with my family – my husband Jody and three girls – Kristin, Alysha, and McKenzie. I like spending time doing yardwork, biking, or anything outside. I also have 4 dogs and 3 cats that keep me busy!

What made you want to work at F-M Ambulance?

I am currently in paramedic school at F-M Ambulance, and I have really enjoyed the ride alongs I've done during class. Getting to know the people that work here has made this a very good experience for me. The people that work here are great, and that has made me want to be part of this team!

New Evening Paramedic Course

On Tuesday, January 8th, 28 students started the "N08" (night 2008) paramedic course. The students have lectures on Monday and Wednesday nights from 6-10 PM with the second Saturday of each month reserved for practical lab. They will complete the paramedic course in July of 2008.

If you're wondering why there is a screen in the back of the picture with people on it, those are our 'satellite' students – two from Cavalier, ND, five from Brainerd, MN and six from Walker, MN. These students thought "telecommuting" would be a lot easier than the drive each way for class. They watch the lectures on an interactive video network and complete most of their clinical experiences in their hometown.



Eli Muchow and Alec Syverson had a good time playing with Andy the Ambulance at the company Christmas party in December.

Did you know...

- *Coronary heart disease* accounts for about 550,000 of the 927,000 adults who die as a result of cardiovascular disease.
- Approximately 335,000 of all annual adult *coronary heart disease* deaths in the U.S. are due to sudden cardiac arrest, suffered outside the hospital setting and in hospital emergency departments. About 900 Americans die every day due to sudden cardiac arrest.



We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of "Vital Signs", a quarterly on-line newsletter distributed by F-M Ambulance.

If you have any ideas, questions, or comments about "Vital Signs", please contact Kristi at (701) 364-1759, or email kristi.rasmussen@fmambulance.com.