



# F-M AMBULANCE SERVICE

# VITAL SIGNS



August 2007

Compassion, Excellence, Community Service

## New Executive Director for F-M Ambulance Service

F-M Ambulance Service will soon be getting a new executive director. Mike Hall, executive director for the past 11 years, has relocated to Citrus County, Florida. Citrus County is located 60 miles north of Tampa and 60 miles West of Orlando. Mike is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Nature Coast EMS. Nature Coast EMS transports approximately 17,000 patients per year. Mike says that he and his wife Linda have always wanted to live near the ocean, so when the opportunity arose at Nature Coast EMS, they decided to make the big move.



Mike Hall started at F-M Ambulance as executive director in June of 1996. Since then, there have been many significant achievements he has led F-M Ambulance through. Some of these include the addition of two stations, which has helped improve response times, and helping F-M Ambulance become a regional and national leader in the EMS field. Mike helped lead F-M Ambulance through the CAAS (Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services) Accreditation process in 2003. CAAS accreditation signifies that F-M Ambulance has met the "gold standard" determined by the ambulance industry. He helped implement the road safety system for F-M's fleet of ambulances, which has helped promote safe driving, reduced fleet maintenance costs, and served as an on-going driver training program to help keep our personnel and patients safe. In 2006, F-M Ambulance started using emergency medical dispatching, which has helped create a more effective and efficient use of emergency medical service resources.



An appreciation lunch was held for Mike on Tuesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>. At the lunch, Mike was presented with an F-M Ambulance plaque which said "Your leadership has made us understand the joy the journey to excellence brings". Mike was also given a picture of the Fargo Theater sign, which was one of his favorite landmarks from the area. We all know Mike will be thinking of us in the middle of January when we are stuck in the middle of a blizzard and he is sipping ice tea under the sun in his backyard! We will all miss Mike and want to wish him and Linda the best of luck in Citrus County, Florida!



## Run Across North Dakota

November is typically not the warmest month of the year in North Dakota, but Wade Mitzel, who is the clinical coordinator for operations at F-M Ambulance, is hoping for some nice weather. Wade plans on running 360 miles across the state of North Dakota in November to support Operation Christmas Child.

Operation Christmas Child is an annual project that enables caring individuals, families, schools, churches, businesses, and other organizations to fill ordinary shoe boxes with small toys, school supplies, sweets, and other gifts for needy children in more than 100 countries suffering from war, natural disaster, poverty, terrorism, and disease.

Wade's family has contributed shoe box gifts to Operation Christmas Child for the past few years. "Operation Christmas Child is a project that is near and dear to my family. We've seen videos of



children receiving shoe boxes filled with gifts, and we know how happy they are to get them. We have even received letters from the children expressing their joy after receiving our shoe boxes."

"While North Dakota's weather is quite cool in November, I have seen children living outdoors in worse conditions. Running in the cold is the least I can do. I hope my run reminds people of how fortunate we are and how many children can find joy in a simple shoe box filled with gifts."

Wade will start his run on the western end of North Dakota near the town of Beach on Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. He will run about 25 miles every day, finishing in Fargo around November 10<sup>th</sup>. Everyone from F-M Ambulance will be following Wade's run on his website, [www.runacrossnd.com](http://www.runacrossnd.com). We hope Wade stays warm and safe!!

## F-M Ambulance Responds to Mercury Spill

Approximately 15 supervisors, paramedics, EMT's, and education staff from F-M Ambulance responded to Minnesota State University Moorhead on June 19<sup>th</sup> after a report of a mercury spill at the university. There were no injuries, and all precautions were taken to ensure that no one was exposed to harmful levels of mercury. The MCI truck, Incident Command bus and many ambulances were all used at the site. EMS personnel had just taken part in a mock school shooting a few weeks before the incident, which helps them prepare for events like the spill.



## Did You Know...



F-M Ambulance sent four trucks to help in Northwood, ND after the tornado on Sunday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. At 9:00 PM, an all page went out asking for volunteers to go to Northwood to help. Ken Krupich, Don Martin, Ryan Hiatt, Tom Tomaino, Darcy Kasprick, Kyle Janssen, Chad Mickelson, George Gerhardt, Steve Siedschlag, Josh Weber, and Steve Rud all responded that they would be available to help. Greg Glood, Marcel Sim and Rick Cameron also came in to help. They crews took ambulances, the Major Incident Response Unit and the Incident Command Bus and stayed in to help until early Monday morning.

# West Fargo National Night Out

West Fargo's National Night Out was held on Tuesday August 7<sup>th</sup>. Beautiful weather let approximately 3,000 people enjoy the festivities in Elmwood Park that evening. Many kids enjoyed touring the ambulance and getting "Junior Paramedic" stickers.



## Safety Safari at the Red River Valley Zoo

On Thursday July 26<sup>th</sup>, the Red River Valley Zoo held a Safety Safari to educate parents and their children about how to avoid accidental injuries. The event included animals, displays, prizes, and a variety of safety activities. F-M Ambulance helped children learn how to stay safe by talking to the children and their parents. North Dakota and Minnesota rank 42<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup>, respectively, in accidental injury death rates in the nation.

### Get To Know...

*A close up on our new F-M Ambulance Employees*

#### Brendan Krupich EMT

***Where are you from?***

I am from around the Wolverton area.

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

I worked for Deck Builders Inc.

***What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?***

I like to hunt, fish, and spend time with my family and friends.

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

I really enjoyed the ride alongs during paramedic school, and EMS has always been an interest of mine.



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#### Ryan Hiatt EMT

***Where are you from?***

I am from Fargo, ND. My family lives in Germany.

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

I was a manager at McDonalds.

***What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?***

I like to fish, cook, read, and relax!

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

I've gotten to know a lot of the crew members through paramedic school and they have made it seem like a very fun place to work.



## Did You Know...

- As of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 F-M Ambulance is a tobacco-free facility. Congratulations to all employees and students who have quit using tobacco!

## Get To Know...

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### Jerry Zwetow Ready Wheels



#### *Where are you from?*

I was born in Ashland, WI. I have a wife and four kids. I have lived all over the world, including places like Turkey, Vietnam and Australia.

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

I have been a truck driver for Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch for the past 5 years. I have also worked as a dietary service manager at a nursing home, a limousine driver, a cook, and in logging construction.

#### *What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?*

I enjoy traveling, hunting, fishing, walking, and making people laugh!

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

I always like to learn new things and meet new people and thought this would be a good job to do those things.

## Get To Know...

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### Dan Suhr EMT



#### *Where are you from?*

I grew up on a small farm near Valley City, ND. I have lived in Hope, ND for the past 11 years until I recently moved to Fargo.

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

I owned a trucking company with my father; for the last six years I have been employed by the grain elevator in Clifford, ND. I was a volunteer on the Hope Ambulance Service for the last four years.

#### *What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?*

I don't have much spare time! I am a paramedic student in the N08 class, and my three boys keep me busy watching all of the sports they play – baseball, football, and basketball. That doesn't leave me much spare time!

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

After doing ride-alongs for paramedic school, I have an enormous respect for the people that work at F-M Ambulance. I really wanted the opportunity to work with all of the great people at F-M Ambulance.

## F-M Ambulance Holds Annual Appreciation Banquet

On Wednesday May 23<sup>rd</sup> F-M Ambulance Service employees gathered at the Avalon for the annual Appreciation Banquet. Congratulations to Kelly Wanzek, Janet Crudo-Sayler and Dave Partlow for receiving the "Achievement in Excellence" award. Everyone had a great time laughing at Ken impersonating Dave and enjoying the food and camaraderie.



## Paramedic Classes of 2008

The day 2008 (D08) paramedic class started on Monday, August 20<sup>th</sup>. There are 26 students; 20 of them in the Fargo class and 6 of them in the Rugby, ND class. These students will finish their paramedic training in July of 2008.



# F-M Ambulance Explorers

## *What are F-M Ambulance Explorers?*

Explorers are high-school aged students who are interested in a shadow career program in which they can obtain valuable medical experience through observation and participation with professional and successful paramedics and EMTs that strive for excellence in patient care, community service, and compassion.

## *As an Explorer, what do I get to do?*

Participants in the Explorer program get to attend monthly meetings at F-M Ambulance where they learn about the medical field and the types of injuries and illnesses that they may see “in the field”.

As well as ambulance ride alongs, Explorers get to experience many other aspects of EMS, including seeing the SWAT team in action, talking with law enforcement personnel, and touring a fire department, Lifelight, and a funeral home.



2006 – 2007 Explorers with the Red River Valley SWAT Team

## *If I want to be an Explorer or know someone who would, how can they get involved?*

If you or someone you know is interested in the Explorer program, please have them visit our Explorer web page, found on [www.fmambulance.com](http://www.fmambulance.com), under “education”. They can also call Kristi for more information (701) 364-1759. The first meeting of the 2007 – 2008 Explorer program is on Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> – we hope to see you there!



Moorhead had several block parties to celebrate National Night out on August 7<sup>th</sup>. Marcel stopped by one of the block parties to show them the F-M Ambulance Major Incident Response Vehicle. The kids loved seeing all of the equipment in the MIRV and talking to Marcel.

## Citizen's EMS Academy

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The fourth F-M Ambulance Citizen's EMS Academy will be holding their first session on Wednesday September 19<sup>th</sup>. The Citizen's Academy will meet for 8 weeks, having their completion celebration on Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>.

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 will also educate 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 will 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.

If you know anyone who is interested in the next Citizen's EMS Academy or if you would like more information on the EMS Citizen's Academy, please contact Kristi at (701) 364-1759 or [kristi.rasmussen@fmambulance.com](mailto:kristi.rasmussen@fmambulance.com).



**Citizen's Academy members practice taking their "patient" down a flight of stairs using the stair chair.**

## Wellness Committee Update

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We are excited about our September event!

- Monday September 24<sup>th</sup> at 1900 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual F-M Ambulance flag football game at Mickelson Park in Fargo

Please check the Wellness board in the kitchen for more details or to sign up!

## Did You Know...

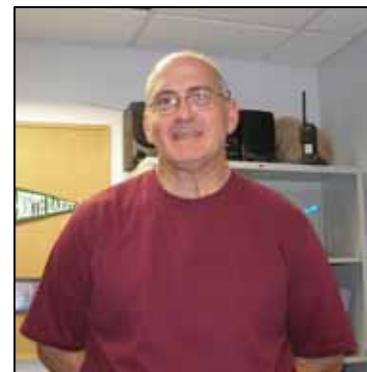
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Nathaniel Dutt and Samantha Krumweide were the recipients of the 2007 F-M Ambulance Explorers Scholarship. They have both been active members of the F-M Ambulance Explorers for two years. They both plan on taking the EMT-Basic class in the fall of 2007. Congratulations to both Nathaniel and Samantha, and hopefully they will continue past EMT class with their EMS careers!

## Tom Tomaino Joins the EMEC Team

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There is a new face in EMEC at F-M Ambulance. Tom Tomaino has joined the EMEC team as an educator. He will help teach many classes, including paramedic school, EMT-B, First Responder, CPR, First Aid and Workplace Responder. Tom has more than 15 years of EMS experience, including working at Lifeflight as a flight medic and at Innovis in the ER as a paramedic. Tom has worked on a crew for F-M Ambulance for a total of nine years before moving to the education department.



# The Clinical Corner

By Wade Mitzel, Clinical Coordinator



## Does EMS Backboard Patients Securely?

One recent study<sup>1</sup> says no! This study measured fifty non-critically injured patients brought into an academic trauma center with Pre-hospital Spinal Immobilization (PSI). They measured the number and location of restraining straps and their degree of tightness. The results are interesting:

### Quality of Head Immobilization

Tapped Subjects	43
Strapped Subjects	5
Headblocks Out of Place	1
No Immobilization	1
Method Not Recorded	1
C Collar Absent	1
C Collar Not Recorded	2
Subjects With One or More Strip/Strap Failures	21 (42%)
Subjects with Two or More Strip/Strap Failures	6 (12%)



### Quality of Body Immobilization

Total Subjects Immobilized	50
Subjects with 1 or More Failing Straps (2cm)	44 (88%)
Subjects with 2 or More Failing Straps (2cm)	38 (76%)
Subjects with 3 or More Failing Straps (2cm)	33 (66%)
Subjects with 4 or More Failing Straps (2cm)	24 (48%)
Average Number of Failing Straps	3.4
Subjects with 1 or More Failing Straps (4cm)	35 (70%)
Subjects with 2 or More Failing Straps (4cm)	25 (50%)
Subjects with 3 or More Failing Straps (4cm)	18 (36%)
Subjects with 4 or More Failing Straps (4cm)	8 (12%)
Average Number of Failing Straps (4cm)	1.7



The conclusion states that many of the patients brought to the ER were not well immobilized upon arrival to the facility. Patients had an average of 3.4 loose straps of greater than 2 cm and/or 1.7 straps at 4 cm.

### What Does This Mean For Us

I think this study is an excellent example of a skill we “assume” we all do well and can do correctly in EMS. I think it shows us that we need to be always looking and reviewing the different skills we use on a regular basis. PSI is something EMS prides itself in being able to perform quickly and efficiently. Now a study of 50 patients in North Carolina does not necessarily mean the results would be the same in our region, but it does pose some questions I think we should look at:

1. Are our patients secured sufficiently to the backboard?
2. Are there conditions that influence our effectiveness to provide proper PSI? Like weather, cold, types of straps/backboards?
3. Are our people given all the tools needed and trained properly?

I don't have all the answers now, but this study will challenge all of us to look at our care and keep raising the bar in EMS Quality.

# Bringing Emergency Care into the Business Environment

Medical emergencies and traumatic injuries can occur anywhere at anytime. When we hear of injuries in the workplace, our thoughts usually drift towards high-risk occupations such as construction work. While certain injury patterns exist among certain jobs, medical emergencies such as seizures and insulin shock can occur in any workplace.

Over the past year, Noridian Mutual Insurance, which includes Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota and Noridian Administrative Services, has taken steps to assure that if a medical emergency or traumatic injury should occur in their workplace, their workforce will be ready to care for their sick or injured colleagues. More than 100 of their employees have now been trained in the new Workplace Responder course.

The Workplace Responder course was designed to be an intermediate course positioned between the American Heart Association (AHA) basic life support courses and the 40 hour First Responder course. Upon successful completion of the course, participants receive AHA certification in First Aid, AED and CPR and an additional eight hours of advanced training in dealing with the most common medical emergencies. Participants of the course are trained using scenario-based training that allows them to apply the assessment and procedural skills they have learned in a simulated patient contact experience.

Although the Workplace Responder course was designed for the office environment, it has obvious value to any employer or person who wants to learn more about how to manage emergency medical problems. Noridian Mutual Insurance has had to call 911 in the past for medical help. This should surprise no one when the size of their workforce is taken into account. During their peak hours of operation, their local workplace population consists of more than 1,350 people; that's more people than many of the small bedroom communities in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

Officials at Noridian Mutual Insurance have recognized that they have a highly skilled and valued workforce. They have made the decision to help protect the health and well being of their team by training them how to help each other out when one of them suffers injury or illness. Courses like the Workplace Responder course empower people to help themselves and others before an ambulance arrives on the scene. This training, along with the purchase of fully equipped medical response bags and Automated External Defibrillators from Merigen Medical, makes for a very safe working environment for employees and customers.

Contributed by Sherm Syverson



## Did You Know...

- Dave Reihe took part in the one mile in-line skating competition in the Prairie Rose Games in July. He finished in about 5 minutes – good job Dave!

# Honor Guard Receives National Award

The F-M Ambulance Service's EMS Ceremonial Unit has been awarded the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge for their service as official honor and color guards in areas of great need in North Dakota, Northeast South Dakota and West Central Minnesota.

Since 1949 Freedom's Foundation's National Awards Program has honored exceptional work. Through a selection process based on quality and content, recipients are chosen to become part of a historically prestigious group of American citizens that advance the American ideal.

The George Washington Honor Medal will be presented to the unit at an awards ceremony in Omaha, NE sometime this fall/winter.

Since the F-M Ambulance Service EMS Ceremonial Unit was formed it has participated at over 45 events ranging from sporting events, conferences, graduations, conventions and most importantly funerals of current or retired EMS personnel.

For more information about the unit please visit the website located at [www.fmambulance.com](http://www.fmambulance.com).

For more information about the Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge please visit their website at [www.ffvf.org](http://www.ffvf.org).



Contributed by Don Martin

## Paramedic Refresher Dates

It's time again to start thinking about refresher hours. The 2007 – 2008 Paramedic refresher dates have been set. Please call Shawna at (701) 364-1750 to register for any of the sessions.

- |                  |          |               |
|------------------|----------|---------------|
| • Trauma I       | 9/4/07   | 08:00 – 12:00 |
|                  | 9/5/07   | 18:00 – 22:00 |
| • Trauma II      | 9/12/07  | 08:00 – 12:00 |
|                  | 9/13/07  | 18:00 – 22:00 |
| • Airway / Resp. | 10/2/07  | 08:00 – 12:00 |
|                  | 10/3/07  | 18:00 – 22:00 |
| • Cardiology     | 10/10/07 | 08:00 – 12:00 |
|                  | 10/11/07 | 18:00 – 22:00 |
| • OB/Peds I      | 10/30/07 | 08:00 – 12:00 |
|                  | 11/1/07  | 18:00 – 22:00 |
| • OB/Peds II     | 11/7/07  | 08:00 – 12:00 |
|                  | 11/8/07  | 18:00 – 22:00 |

## 2007 Paramedic Classes Graduate

Graduation for the N07 and D07 Paramedic classes was held on July 26<sup>th</sup> at the Doublewood in Fargo. Twenty eight students graduated from the two classes. Brendan Krupich and Jon Yeske were named paramedic Students of the Year (chosen by preceptors) and Tom Tomanio was named Preceptor of the Year (chosen by the students). Congratulations to everyone!



# 2007 Air Show a Success

Approximately 25,000 people gathered in north Fargo on June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> for the Fargo Air Show 2007. F-M Ambulance was at the show for medical coverage. The weather was warm, so F-M's "misting tent" was used by many spectators. Employees were lucky enough to be able to work and watch a great show at the same time!



## Get To Know...

*A close up on our new F-M Ambulance Employees*

### Chris Neu EMT



#### **Where are you from?**

I am from Wadena, MN, but currently live in Fargo. I have two younger brothers that live in the area – they attend Concordia College.

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

I have worked for the City of Fargo and Fargo Cass Public Health.

#### **What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?**

I enjoy spending time at the lake, fishing and golfing.

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

I have gotten to know a lot of the people while attending paramedic school and wanted to be a part of the team and give back to the community.

## Get To Know...

*A close up on our new F-M Ambulance Employees*

### Danielle Dracy Ready Wheels



#### **Where are you from?**

I grew up in Yankton, SD.

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

Through college I worked as a park ranger at Lewis & Clark Recreation area. I have also worked in the NDSU EOC, with the ND Department of Health, and as a server.

#### **What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?**

Between school and work I don't have very much free time, but I am currently pursuing my private pilots' license, and I enjoy riding motorcycle and playing trivia games.

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

This schedule works well while I continue to be a full-time student and I enjoy working in customer service.

# The Rural Roundup

By Bob Klein, Liaison Coordinator

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

In the last edition of Vital Signs, I wrote about the Cass County Deputies completing the First Responder Training. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, a media event was held at the Cass County Jail in which the deputies were each given their own First Responder bag. A total of thirteen First Responder bags were distributed to the deputies with one bag also going to the Bomb Squad. These bags were purchased through the Rural Cass County Ambulance and Rescue Association. The total cost of the First Responder bags was \$6,500.



Also, on July 9<sup>th</sup>, Meritcare Lifelight conducted a Landing Zone class in Felton for Felton Fire and Rescue. Glyndon Fire and Rescue and Ulen Fire and Rescue also participated in the class. Hunter Ambulance and Fire hosted a Landing Zone class on July 10<sup>th</sup> with Harwood, Gardner and Grandin Fire and Rescue squads also attending. The landing zone was set up at Northern Cass School. Despite rain showers on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup>, over 40 people attended the classes. Nate Tiedeman, a nurse with Lifelight, conducted the classes both evenings.



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, [kristi.rasmussen@fmambulance.com](mailto:kristi.rasmussen@fmambulance.com).