



# F-M AMBULANCE SERVICE

# VITAL SIGNS



Fall 2009

Compassion, Excellence, Community Service

## 25 Years at F-M Ambulance Service

When EMTs and paramedics at F-M Ambulance Service tell “back in the day” stories, many of them may go back five or ten years. Very few employees can say they’ve been here for more than 25 years. On May 1, 1984, Todd Hockert was hired at F-M Ambulance Service. Twenty-five years later, he has decided to hang up his F-M jacket and accept a position with Nature Coast EMS in Lecanto, Florida as their quality improvement director.

When Todd started at F-M Ambulance in 1984, he was at the bottom of the seniority list of about 50 people. Todd worked 24 hours shifts and was paid \$4.50/hour with no overtime. He says that some of the biggest changes over the years have been leadership styles, the change from private ownership to hospital ownership, and the implementation of the union. He says the biggest improvement has been the equipment that EMTs and paramedics have in the trucks now compared to what they used to carry in the 80’s.

It is a tradition at F-M Ambulance to hose down employees before they leave, so on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup> Todd put up a small fight, but was eventually hosed down in the ambulance garage. We all hope Todd enjoys his new job in Florida and sends lots of the warm weather back this way!



## NAEMSE Symposium



Ron Lawler and Kristi Engelstad attended the National Association of EMS Educators Symposium at the Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida in August. Approximately 600 EMS educators attended the conference.

Ron and Kristi attended general session and workshops and were able to network with hundreds of other EMS educators from around the world. They brought back presentations, pictures, lectures and other ideas that they will implement into the paramedic course, EMT-Basic course and First Responder course.

On Friday night Ron and Kristi got to attend a special social for EMS Educators at the Epcot Center and see the Epcot fireworks. The next NAEMSE symposium will be in Chicago, IL in 2010.

## New Employees

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Welcome to the F-M Ambulance team!

- Jacquelin Bentler – Paramedic, Thief River Falls
- Timothy Cook – Paramedic, Thief River Falls
- Ryan Eisenzimmer – EMT, F-M
- Ben Horner – Paramedic, F-M
- David Kimber – Paramedic, Thief River Falls
- Dwayne Mattson – EMT, F-M
- Robert Meyer III – Paramedic, F-M
- Taefe Morton – EMT, F-M
- Rhonda Poucher – EMT, Thief River Falls
- Justin Rosenfeldt – Paramedic, F-M
- Kari Schwab, Paramedic, F-M
- Michael Sylstad, EMT, F-M

## Student Honored

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Travis Booke, a paramedic student in the day 2009 paramedic program at F-M Ambulance Service, was recently honored by Bismarck State College as an 'Outstanding Student'.

Booke completed his paramedic schooling at F-M Ambulance in July 2009 and is now working in the Dickinson, ND area. Ron Lawler, paramedic school coordinator, says, "Travis was a great student. He was very enthusiastic about learning and you could tell that he enjoyed paramedic school. Paramedics that he rode with often said that they enjoyed having him as their student."

The award is sponsored by the BSC Foundation.

## Summer Events

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F-M Ambulance has been busy this summer with tours, parades and other summer events.

- On June 4<sup>th</sup>, a Safety Safari was held at the Red River Zoo. The Safety Safari featured animal and safety-related educational displays, interactive games and prizes for all children. The annual event has proven to be a popular way for area families to have fun while learning how to avoid accidental injuries—the No. 1 killer of America's children.
- On June 19<sup>th</sup>, F-M Ambulance attended the Midwest Kids Fest. Kids and adults had a blast with interactive and educational booths, games, and entertainment at Island Park.
- On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Fargo Police Department held their annual neighborhood picnic. F-M Ambulance had many people stop by for a tour at Island Park.
- On August 4<sup>th</sup>, the West Fargo Police Department hosted Night to Unite at Elmwood Park. Over 3,000 people came to visit with the police department, fire department, F-M Ambulance Service and many other local groups.



## Did You Know...

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That F-M Ambulance offers high school students and adults a chance to learn what it's like to work on an ambulance? F-M Ambulance has an **Explorer** post for high school students who are interested in a career in the medical field. We also offer adults a chance to attend our **EMS Citizens Academy**, an 8-week course in which participants learn skills that EMTs and Paramedics do every day on the ambulance. Both programs offer participants a chance to ride along in the ambulance and experience emergencies with EMTs and paramedics that are working in the field. For more information on either program, please call (701) 364-1750.

# Summer MCI Drill

There were hundreds of “people” lying in the grass at the Fargo National Air Guard training center on June 11<sup>th</sup> after a mock airplane crash. These “people” were actually cardboard cut-outs that were used to help emergency responders triage them according to how badly injured they were. Police officers secured the scene while firemen worked on making the scene safe from fuel and other chemicals. Paramedics and EMTs from F-M Ambulance triaged the patients and helped load them into ambulances and other vehicles for transport to local hospitals. The crash was used to help train and prepare local response agencies who would work together in the event of a real mass casualty event.



## TRIAD

F-M Ambulance has been actively involved in TRIAD for many years. TRIAD is a group of seniors who work with local law enforcement agencies and other groups that are interested in the health and well-being of seniors in our community. TRIAD's goal is to reduce crime against the elderly and to reduce the unwarranted fear of crime that seniors often experience.



F-M Ambulance plays an active role in many TRIAD activities by hosting and helping with Senior Academies and speaking at different functions, including Coffee with a Cop. The F-M area TRIAD group meets at 10:00 on the last Tuesday of the month at F-M Ambulance Service.

If you or anyone you know is interested in joining TRIAD, please contact Deb at the Cass County Sheriff's Department at (701) 241-5800 or Kristi at F-M Ambulance Service (701) 364-1759.

## F-M Ambulance Helps Keep Our Community Safe

F-M Ambulance has been an active member of the Safe Communities Coalition of the Red River Valley for about 7 years.

The Safe Communities Coalition of the Red River Valley is a nonprofit organization devoted to traffic safety and limiting youth access to alcohol.



Safe Communities members include medical professionals, law enforcement personnel, businesses and nonprofit groups. Projects that the Safe Community Coalition has been involved in include Buckle Up with Bucky presentations, server training for local liquor establishments, the victim impact panel, which uses personal stories to hammer home the consequences that can result from drinking and driving, and alcohol compliance checks.

# 2009 Fargo AirSho

Approximately 25,000 people gathered in north Fargo on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> for the 2009 Fargo AirSho. F-M Ambulance provided medical coverage and a cooling tent at the show. Many employees enjoyed working and watching the great show at the same time!



## Did You Know...

That F-M Ambulance Service will do 15 – 20 minute presentations on things such as:

- CPR and AED – what you need to know
- What to do before an ambulance arrives
- A day in the life of an F-M Ambulance paramedic
- Recognizing strokes and heart attacks
- Emergency response to seasonal injuries
- Anatomy of a 9-1-1 call – what happens when I call 9-1-1
- Setting up a workplace response program
- Opportunities and careers in EMS

F-M Ambulance Service also does 10 – 15 minute tours for groups like daycares, businesses, special events, block parties and assisted living facilities.

If you or anyone you know is interested in having F-M Ambulance present or you would like a tour, please contact Kristi at (701) 364-1759.



# Health Highlight

## What is a seizure?

- A seizure is a sudden attack of brain activity that causes a loss of control over movement. The attacks last anywhere from a few seconds to several minutes. People of any age can be affected.

## What causes a seizure?

- There are many things that can cause people to have a seizure. Some of them are:
  - Epilepsy (a seizure disorder)
  - High fever, especially common in kids
  - Withdrawal from alcohol or drugs
  - Head injury
  - Brain tumor
  - Infection

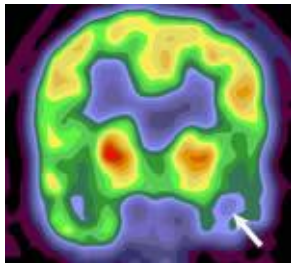


## Signs and Symptoms

- When a seizure starts, often times people will lose consciousness.
- Their face, arms and body may begin to jerk.
- The victim may lose control of their bladder or bowels without knowing it.
- After the episode, the victim may be irritable, confused or sleepy.
- Some people may experience an “aura” or feeling that they are going to have a seizure.

## What can you do for someone having a seizure?

- Stay calm.
- Move any potential hazards out of the way (things that the person may fall on or get hurt by during the seizure).
- Do not force anything into the persons mouth or try to open their jaw.
- Turn the victim on his or her side when the violent movement stops, or if they start to vomit.
- When the seizure is over, the person may feel confused or sleepy. They will need reassurance that everything is all right. Help him or her to rest and relax.



## Call 9-1-1 if:

- You do not know the person or know their medical history.
- The person does not wake up shortly after the seizure.
- Has other problems such as difficulty seeing, speaking or moving.
- You are uncomfortable with the situation.

# It's Refresher Time Again!

It's time again to start thinking about scheduling your refresher course. F-M Ambulance has dates set for two EMT-Basic/First Responder Refresher courses and the Paramedic Refresher course. If you would like to schedule a refresher course for your own squad, please contact Kristi as soon as possible – dates are filling quickly! Please check our website, [www.fmambulance.com](http://www.fmambulance.com), for registration information.

## EMT-B / First Responder Refresher Course:

Block 1	10/2/09 2/5/10	18:00 – 22:00 18:00 – 22:00
Block 2	10/3/09 2/6/10	08:00 – 12:00 08:00 – 12:00
Block 3	10/3/09 2/6/10	13:00 – 17:00 13:00 – 17:00
Block 4	10/9/09 2/12/10	18:00 – 22:00 18:00 – 22:00
Block 5	10/10/08 2/13/09	08:00 – 12:00 08:00 – 12:00
Block 6	10/10/08 2/13/09	13:00 – 17:00 13:00 – 17:00

## Paramedic Refresher

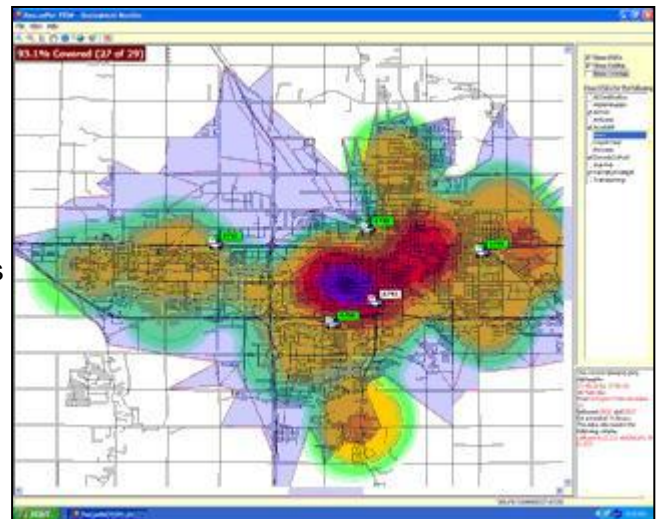
• OB/Peds II	9/29/09 9/30/09	08:00 – 12:00 18:00 – 22:00
• Med. Emerg.I	10/7/09 10/8/09	18:00 – 22:00 08:00 – 12:00
• Trauma II	10/19/09 10/20/09	18:00 – 22:00 08:00 – 12:00
• Med. Emerg. II	10/27/09 10/28/09	08:00 – 12:00 18:00 – 22:00
• OB/Peds I	11/4/09 11/5/09	18:00 – 22:00 08:00 – 12:00
• Airway/Resp.	11/16/09 11/17/09	18:00 – 22:00 08:00 – 12:00
• Cardiology	12/2/09 12/3/09	15:00 – 19:00 15:00 – 19:00
• Trauma I	12/14/09 12/15/09	18:00 – 22:00 18:00 – 22:00



# F-M Ambulance Dispatch

Approximately two years ago F-M Ambulance installed a new component to our Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. The software consists of three parts: Demand Monitor, Deployment Planner, and Impedance Monitor. Each of these three powerful tools takes information from past calls and helps us, in a way, predict the future.

- Why is this important to you?
  - When each piece of this puzzle is put together, it helps us better position ambulances in areas that we predict calls to occur in. In the end, we achieve greater coverage of our service area with units strategically positioned to reach emergency calls in 7 minutes 59 seconds.
- How does this work?
  - Demand Monitor looks at dispatch information from previous calls. It locates each call on the map and then analyzes information many ways. Some examples are: time of day, day of week, the call priority (whether the call required lights and sirens or not), & even seasonally during the year.
  - Impedance Monitor is another powerful tool that helps us see how long it *actually* takes our vehicles to travel a particular road. Many software systems calculate the time it takes to get from one point to another by the speed limit of the road. Impedance Monitor looks back at actual data from our units as they travel the roads on a daily basis and calculates an average time it takes a vehicle to travel each road segment.
  - Deployment Planner merges information from both the Demand Monitor & Impedance Monitor to give us several results. We are able to see how many ambulances are needed at a given time. Dispatchers can strategically position ambulances throughout the city, in a manner that allows us to reach our calls within the 7 minute 59 second goal.
- What is accomplished?
  - We are better positioned to serve each and every one of you when an emergency occurs.



This picture is an example of what our dispatchers see. Each ambulance's current position is shown on the screen (those with green numbers are available). The colored circular shapes (we call them amoebas) show where we predict higher call volume. The darker the color, the higher the probability for a call. The spiky looking purple colored areas show how far each ambulance can get in our 7 minute 59 second goal.

Contributed by Jason Eblen

## Classes Begin at F-M Ambulance Service

The Education Department has been very busy with classes starting in August.

- First Responder class started on August 25<sup>th</sup> with 26 students.
- EMT-Basic class started on August 25<sup>th</sup> with 60 students.
- The day paramedic course started on August 25<sup>th</sup> with 19 students.
- The night paramedic course started on August 27<sup>th</sup> with 21 students.
- First Aid, Pediatric First Aid and CPR/AED courses are held on Monday evenings every month
- If you are interested in any of our courses, please check our website, [www.fmambulance.com](http://www.fmambulance.com), under "Course Registration"





## AED's: Truths and Myths

**Myth:** AEDs are complex and difficult to use, and should only be used by a trained professional.

**Fact:** Minimally trained rescuers will find today's AEDs much easier to use than those of earlier times, or those that are seen on TV. In addition, the devices are highly accurate in determining if a shock is needed and given.

**Myth:** Using or owning an AED carries too much legal risk (liability).

**Fact:** No known lawsuits have been brought against lay rescuers who attempt and provide CPR and/or AED use. The Cardiac Arrest Survival Act was part of legislation signed into law in 2000 and, among its provisions, provides nationwide Good Samaritan protection, exempting anyone who renders emergency treatment with a defibrillator in an effort to save someone's life. In addition, this covers the owner or acquirer of the AED.

**Myth:** If I'm not a medical professional and I use an AED, I might accidentally shock someone that doesn't need to be shocked.

**Fact:** AEDs are highly accurate in determining if a person needs a shock. When you are trained to use an AED, you will learn that you do not get to choose if the patient needs a shock – the machine does. Once you put an AED on the patient, it will analyze the heart rhythm. If the machine sees a shockable rhythm, it will tell you to push the shock button. If the heart rhythm is not a shockable rhythm, the machine will not let you shock the patient – even if you push the shock button.

**Myth:** AEDs are very expensive.

## Did You Know...

F-M Ambulance Service will be presenting three people with the Citizen Lifesaving Award in upcoming months. The Citizen Lifesaving Award is given to community members who do an outstanding job of helping out at an emergency scene. Since 2008, F-M Ambulance has awarded 6 people the Citizen Lifesaving Award.



We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of "Vital Signs", a quarterly newsletter distributed by F-M Ambulance. If you would like to be on our mailing list for Vital Signs, or if you have any ideas, questions, or comments about "Vital Signs", please contact Kristi at (701) 364-1759, or [kristi.engelstad@fmambulance.com](mailto:kristi.engelstad@fmambulance.com).