



F-M AMBULANCE SERVICE

VITAL SIGNS



Spring 2009

Compassion, Excellence, Community Service

F-M Ambulance Service Celebrates 50 Years

From F-M Ambulance Service Executive Director, Dean Lampe (printed in the Fargo Forum 2/6/09):

“As F-M Ambulance Service approaches our 50th year of service to the Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo and Dilworth communities as well as Cass and Clay counties, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has helped this service grow in the past 50 years.”

“F-M Ambulance started in 1959 and has steadily grown to become one of the top-notch ambulance services in the upper Midwest. In this special anniversary year, I feel that it is important to recognize the outstanding job done by EMTs and paramedics that have worked at F-M Ambulance Service in the past and those that work here today. These men and women have together saved thousands of lives in our community. They have worked countless hours in wind, rain, snow and blizzards on very little sleep. They have been there to comfort family members on the worst day of their lives. These emergency responders aren’t seeking money or glory. They chose this profession because they have a commitment to make a difference in people’s lives on a daily basis.”

“F-M Ambulance will be hosting an employee reunion and appreciation event in May 2009 to honor those who have worked here in the past. If you or someone you know has worked at F-M Ambulance, I would like to personally thank you for your dedication to helping others. Because of the professionalism and a passion to help others, the past and present employees of F-M Ambulance Service are true heroes.”

Reunion plans (open to past employees and past students who have completed paramedic school at F-M Ambulance Service):

- Saturday, May 16th (day) – open house (open to the public)
- Saturday, May 16th (evening) – F-M Ambulance will be open for the employee/paramedic student reunion. There will be dinner, door prizes and fun reminiscing with past co-workers!
- We are currently working on a contact list for past employees. If you or someone you know has worked at F-M Ambulance Service, please have them contact Kristi (kristi.engelstad@fmambulance.com or (701) 364-1759) with their current contact information.
- We also need help with our “F-M Ambulance Service – 50 Years in EMS” video. This video will feature past and present employees of F-M Ambulance Service answering questions about when they worked here, such as “what was your first day of work like” or “tell us about a funny memory you have while working here”. Please contact Ron (ron.lawler@fmambulance.com or (701) 364-1745 if you would like to help us with this project.



Local Hero Given Lifesaving Award

Peter Lovas and a friend were enjoying a meal at the Texas Roadhouse on December 31, 2008. Little did he know that skills he had learned over twenty years ago would help to save a life that evening.

As Lovas was eating his dinner, he noticed a man at a nearby table stand up. He looked like he was in need of help – he couldn't breathe, and the other person at the table looked panicked. Lovas immediately jumped up and went to help. He grabbed the man under his arms and started performing abdominal thrusts. Unfortunately, whatever was blocking the man's airway didn't come out, and he went unconscious. An employee of the Texas Roadhouse called 9-1-1, and helped lead Lovas through the next steps. Lovas continued to perform abdominal thrusts on the man while he was unconscious, laying on the ground. Suddenly, the man started to breathe on his own. The food was dislodged right before firefighters and ambulance personnel arrived. The patient was transported to a hospital and later returned home. Lovas returned to his seat at the Texas Roadhouse, but was unable to finish his dinner after such an adrenaline rush.

On Wednesday February 11th, Peter Lovas was awarded the F-M Ambulance Service Lifesaving Award during a ceremony at the ambulance service. Don Martin, F-M Ambulance Field Supervisor, said, "Mr. Lovas played an instrumental part in the resuscitation of the patient. Without Mr. Lovas's help that day, there is a good chance that this patient may not be alive today".

The F-M Ambulance Service Lifesaving Award is presented to individuals who are instrumental in helping during an emergency. F-M Ambulance would like to extend their sincere appreciation for what Peter Lovas did that day. "Oh, it was really nothing. I just jumped in to help because no one else was doing anything", states Lovas. "Everyone should know the Heimlich maneuver. It's easy to do and can help save a life. You never know when you are going to need to use it".



Don Martin presents Peter Lovas with the F-M Ambulance Service Lifesaving Award.



A representative from the Texas Roadhouse also presented Peter Lovas with a certificate of appreciation – a gift certificate for a free dinner at their restaurant.

Know the Heimlich Maneuver – Save a Life



Would you know what to do if you were in a situation where someone was choking? The Heimlich maneuver is very easy to learn and can save a life. It is a series of under-the-diaphragm abdominal thrusts that are recommended for a person that has a foreign body airway obstruction.

Abdominal thrusts lift the diaphragm and force enough air from the lungs to create an artificial cough. The cough is intended to move and expel the object in the airway.

Dr. Henry Heimlich is the surgeon who is credited with introducing the Heimlich maneuver in 1974. Soon a columnist in the medical industry wrote about the maneuver, and people around the world were using it to help save lives of those who were choking. Tens of thousands of people around the world are alive today thanks to the Heimlich maneuver.

This article is not intended to teach you the Heimlich – only to make you aware that knowing the Heimlich maneuver could possibly save a life. If you are interested in learning how to do the Heimlich, please call the F-M Ambulance Service Education Center at (701) 364-1750 or visit our website, www.fmambulance.com.

F-M Field Supervisor Deployed to Iraq

Rick Cameron, a field supervisor for F-M Ambulance Service, is serving a tour in Iraq. Rick was deployed in February 2009 and is expected to return February 2010. While Rick is gone, Deann Krupich will be assuming his responsibilities as field supervisor. Care packages will be sent from employees at F-M Ambulance throughout his deployment. At the January company meeting, employees thanked Rick for his service to our country and made sure he knew he would be missed while he was gone.



Welcome F-M Ambulance New Employees

Welcome to the F-M Ambulance team!

- Nathaniel Dutt – EMT-Basic
- Ashlie Melland – EMT Basic
- Ben Summer – EMT Basic
- Nikky Johnson – EMT Basic
- Paul Bekkerus – EMT Basic
- Trevor Fisher – EMT Basic

Did You Know...

Seven employees from the Emergency Medical Education Center along with three paramedic students traveled to the Gladstone Inn in Jamestown, ND on Sunday February 22nd for the 2009 Southeast Regional EMS Conference. There were about 60 participants there from all over ND eager to learn about EMS!

The educators led five scenario-based groups, each dealing with a different aspect of EMS or prehospital care. Steve and Tom Tomaino covered cardiology. Kelly, with the help of four paramedic students, demonstrated different types of airway care. Jodi and Kristi covered obstetrics and medical emergencies. Ron had help from his participants acting out neurologic emergencies. Scott and Bob brought the MCI trucks and taught about triage and let the participants tour the trucks.

Each group had First Responders, EMT-Basics, Intermediates and Paramedics that went through the scenario as if they were the ambulance crew. Some of the scenarios were fairly simple, while others tested even the most experienced responder. All of the educators who attended had a great time leading the groups, and it certainly looked like the participants in the group had fun and learned at the same time!

Career Fair

In December, over 2,000 high school students attended a Health and Technologies Career Fair at the Fargodome. Paramedic student helped showcase the EMS career field to these students, who had an opportunity to get their blood pressure taken, learn CPR and how to use the AED, and tour the inside of an ambulance.



The Clinical Corner

By Kathy Lonski, Clinical Coordinator

Scene What?

As I write this, members of area police, sheriff, and swat departments are surrounding a Mahanomen home in a standoff with a man that has already shot a deputy. I wonder... what is the world coming to when a possible DUI turns into attempted murder? Is there anything that could have been done to make the scene safe? Some of you might say, "but that is law enforcement. They are trained for that. EMS deals with sick people."

But what about our scene safety? When we tested our assessment stations, we all said, "BSI, scene safe" and didn't even wait for an answer. Is that how we approach our calls, as a passing thought but nothing more? It is easy to take scene safety for granted since we live in the friendly Midwest. But the Mahanomen incident is right here in our area.

In the last few months, there have been two in-the-line-of-duty deaths in EMS. One was a volunteer EMT in Cape Vincent, NY that was shot while treating a respiratory distress patient. But that was New York, that's what happens out there, right? Cape Vincent is a little smaller than Casselton, ND. The second death, was a volunteer EMT in Glasgow, MT that was cleaning the ambulance outside the emergency department when a sniper opened fire killing her and wounding 5 others that tried to help.

The unfortunate reality is that we need to make safety a habit, always present in our thought process. We need to be vigilant in watching for subtle movements that may clue us in to changes in the patient's or bystander's behavior. We look for dangers on every call, not just "psych" ones and throughout the entire time. Safety is a way of life of each of us.

Recertification

As recertification 2009 draws to a close, we all breathe a sigh of relief. Thank goodness it's over! I've got two more years! This year F-M Ambulance was able to participate in the National Registry's beta test of a new online recertification program. Our team members created an account at www.nremt.org. In their account, they were able to enter all of their refresher and continuing education hours. The online program has a nice tracking system that is easy to read and use. Once an applicant completed their hours, they submitted the recertification. The online system automatically set the application to the training officer and/or medical director for verification. Once the hours were verified the applicant had their new card within approximately 2 weeks. The National Registry hopes to have this system available to everyone this summer.

EMS Rendezvous 2009

The North Dakota EMS Association will be holding the 35th Annual Spring Conference – EMS Rendezvous April 2nd – 4th, 2009 in Bismarck, ND.

This conference is designed for the EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate, EMT-Paramedic, RN's and LPN's, First Responders, Physicians, EMS Instructors and Coordinators, Law Enforcement Officers, Military Emergency Personnel, Fire/Rescue Personnel, EMS Dispatchers, and any other emergency personnel. The conference is approved for continuing education hours. For more information or to register please visit the ND EMS Association website.

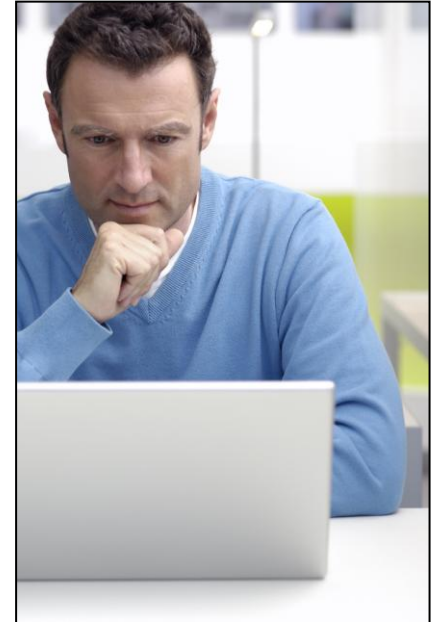


Tom Tomaino and Wade Hockert were recognized at the January company meeting for 9 years of service to the Red River Valley SWAT Team.

Am I Going To Pass This Class?

“How hard is this class... how hard is the National Registry exam?” These are questions that the F-M Ambulance Service education department gets from both EMT-Basic and Paramedic students often. The education department works very hard to make sure a positive learning environment is provided for all students. Classes in emergency medicine are tough – many students come into EMT-Basic class thinking it’s just an advanced first aid class, when truthfully they have about three months to learn how to save someone’s life. Paramedic school is even harder yet. We routinely encourage students to ask questions about the classes they will be taking when they are looking at different education programs in our area, including questions about the National Registry pass rate at that program.

So... how many of the F-M Ambulance Service students pass the National Registry Exam? For both the EMT-Basic and Paramedic National Registry exams, students get three chances at passing the exam. If they do not pass within three attempts, they then need to go to a refresher course, and then they have three more attempts to pass the exam. If they cannot pass after that they would need to re-take the entire course before being allowed to take the exam again.



	1 st Time Pass Rate	Overall Pass Rate
FMA EMT-Basic	89%	90%
National EMT-Basic	67%	77%
FMA Paramedic	81%	97%
National Paramedic	68%	81%

- In 2008, the EMT-Basic first time pass rate was 89.2% (58 out of 65). The overall pass rate was 90.4%.
- In 2008, the EMT-Paramedic first time pass rate was 80.6% (57 out of 63). The overall pass rate was 96.8%.
- These numbers all came from the National Registry report maker (on the NREMT website).

Why do our students do so well (compared to national results)? We like to think it is a number of things! In addition to our excellent instructors, in 2005, the paramedic class started taking an exam called the OSPE (Online Summative Paramedic Exam). This exam is a multiple-choice, 200 questions exam that is divided into topic categories. Paramedic student must pass this exam in order to pass paramedic school. The OSPE exam is a great predictor of how the paramedic student will do on the National Registry exam. In 2006, the EMT-Basic classes started taking the ERE (EMT Readiness Exam). F-M Ambulance instructors helped write questions for this exam. In 2008, after about 2 years of nationwide data collection on the results of the ERE exam, F-M Ambulance Service EMT-Basic students were required to pass the ERE before successfully completing the EMT-Basic course at F-M Ambulance Service. Since using the OSPE and ERE, we have seen the pass rates for F-M Ambulance Service students increase dramatically.

Blizzard Coverage



EMS workers know that winter time in North Dakota often times brings bad weather. December 2008 was no exception to this. Fortunately, F-M Ambulance is well-equipped for dealing with blizzard conditions.

During a blizzard, local snow plows are extremely busy and are unable to immediately plow every road. If an emergency call comes in and the road is not plowed, the ambulance crew is unable to reach their patient. When that happens, either the field supervisor on duty or Dave Partlow, our maintenance engineer, drive a vehicle specially equipped with a plow on the front. They drive ahead of the ambulance in route to the call, making sure the ambulance can get through the snow and doesn't get stuck. Then, if necessary, that vehicle will escort the ambulance to the hospital.

Thief River Falls Area Ambulance Service

Thief River Falls Area Ambulance (TRFAA) began operation as a subsidiary of F-M Ambulance on May 15, 2008. TRFAA is an advanced life support ambulance service with a primary service area that consists of approximately 1200 miles, including the cities of Thief River Falls, St. Hilaire, Goodridge, Grygla, Fourtown and Viking, MN. In addition to Pennington County, the primary service area also includes 10 townships in Beltrami County, and parts of 21 townships in Marshall County. Currently the ambulance service is on a pace to run 1250-1300 calls within its first year of operating, serving an estimated population base of 12,000 people.

TRFAA has 20 team members making up the team roster. Treatment and transport protocols are defined under the medical direction of Jawad Khan, M.D. Currently the staff of eight full-time team members works a four day rotating schedule. The first day of the rotation is 24 hours primary call, the second day is 24 hours second call, the third day is 24 hours primary, the fourth day is 24 hours second call. The crews are then off duty for four days, and return to repeat the schedule. Part-time team members are a valuable part of our operation, utilized to fill open shifts, work stand-by events and provide a third crew as needed. The service operates with two full-time crews staffed 24/7, 365 days a year, with a third crew made available as needed.

It is the goal of Thief River Falls Area Ambulance to provide excellent pre-hospital care to the citizens of Thief River Falls and the surrounding area. This is accomplished by practicing regular quality assurance measures and continuous quality improvement, advancements in medical technology and equipment, monthly continuing education for team members, and effective medical direction. We greatly appreciate the input from Dr. Khan as part of our quality assurance and quality improvement process.

Future community education programs for the ambulance service include:

- Implementation of an EMS Explorer Post – intended for students that have an interested in pursuing a career in EMS or the medical field.
- A Community Outreach program – intended for early public detection and treatment of sudden cardiac arrest. This will focus on placement of Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) in businesses and other public venues that host large populations of people.
- Public CPR training – offering CPR training for daycares, businesses and any other person in our service area.
- Bicycle helmet program – provides a new bicycle helmet to children (observed by ambulance crews) seen riding their bicycle without a helmet. Spring is rapidly approaching, so our desire is to see that children observe safety practices when riding bicycles and skateboards.

We encourage you to stop in any time for a tour or just to visit us at Thief River Falls Area Ambulance Service and learn what we're all about!



Fire and Ice

December 21st, 2008 was one of the coldest days of the year. It was also the day that the Taco Bell on 19th Avenue North in Fargo was totaled in a fire. Due to the heavy damage, the cause of the fire was unable to be determined.

About eight EMT-Basics, Paramedics and supervisors from F-M Ambulance worked closely with the Salvation Army to assess the firefighters after they were working in and around the fire. Because it was extremely cold out, ambulance personnel had to closely monitor the firefighter's blood pressure, pulse, respirations, and pulse oximetry readings. If necessary, the paramedics and EMT-Basics would have provided medical treatment to the firefighters.

The Salvation Army provided food and water for the firemen and EMS personnel on scene. Applebee's restaurant, which was next door to the Taco Bell, was used as the rehab center for the firemen, where their vitals were checked and they could grab some food and water before they returned to fight the fire.



On one of the coldest days of the year, F-M Ambulance, along with the Moorhead and Fargo Fire Departments, was outside helping with the Taco Bell fire. Above left, Field Supervisor Don Martin works in the Incident Command Bus with members of the Fargo Fire Department. Moorhead fireman Dan Schoonhoven (above, right) gets his vital signs checked by a paramedic student before he can go back out to the fire.



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 kristi.engelstad@fmambulance.com.