



F-M AMBULANCE SERVICE

VITAL SIGNS



Summer 2009

Compassion, Excellence, Community Service

50 Years of Emergency Medical Services

On a typical Saturday at F-M Ambulance you might find our dispatcher in his/her office and a crew or two that stop by during the day. Saturday, May 16th, was definitely not a typical Saturday. That day there were over 300 people at F-M Ambulance, and nearly 100 that stayed later into the evening for dinner, stories and reminiscing.

Saturday, May 16th, was the 50 years in EMS celebration at F-M Ambulance Service. From 1:30 to 4:30 there was a public open house. There were many things for families to do, including police, fire and EMS vehicles to tour and the Lifelight helicopter, which landed in the middle of the parking lot. There were coloring books, stickers, tattoos and a large bouncy cage for kids to play in. At 6:00 PM Paul Tinjum from the Buffalo Quick Response Unit brought his catering skills and served pulled pork sandwiches with all of the fixings to nearly 100 past employees and paramedic graduates. During dinner stories were told – some from all the way back when F-M Ambulance started in the 1950's. Everyone seemed to enjoy the slideshow with past and present pictures. After the celebration at F-M Ambulance, many people gathered at Dave's Southside Tap in Moorhead and continued the celebration there.

Everyone at F-M Ambulance Service would like to say thank-you to the past employees and paramedic graduates that came to enjoy the celebration with us. There are a few "50 Year" t-shirts left; if you are interested in purchasing one, please contact Kristi.



Fargo Flood 2009

March 25th, 2009 is a day many people at F-M Ambulance will never forget. On that day, F-M Ambulance put out a call for all area ambulances to come help with a possible evacuation of our community. Here are a few facts from the standby:

- 167 total vehicles responded; crews were from ND, MN, SD, WI and even Canada.
- One ambulance drove 464 miles – 12 hours – in a blizzard to get here.
- Evacuations started on the morning of the 26th – as soon as a new ambulance service arrived, they were sent out to help evacuate hospitals and nursing homes or standby at evacuation sites.
- On the evening of March 27th there were over 100 EMS personnel trying to find a spot to sleep at F-M Ambulance Service. Many slept in classrooms and offices; some slept in their ambulances or in the garage. Luckily, after that evening, hotel rooms were secured.
- 455 EMS personnel were here during the 130 hour event.
- Other than patient transfers, mutual aid crews spent 441 hours doing standbys at evacuation sites.
- We evacuated 4 hospitals, 5 nursing homes, one assisted living facility for a total of 386 patients.
- Crews ate:
 - 40 lbs. of BBQ pork
 - 300 tacos-in-a-bag
 - 50 lbs. of potato salad
 - 2,280 cups of coffee
 - More Red Cross sandwiches than we could count



Before the flood



Ambulances start arriving



More ambulances in staging



Bob and Don



Evacuating Eventide



The only ones left in MeritCare



Kelly and Stef – supply officers



Supply room



Temporary Moorhead station



Staging in the F-M parking lot



Ken briefing the crews



Briefing in garage



Governor Hoven briefing



Having some fun



Part of the food crew



Ken briefing the media



Sleeping quarters



Almost done... then a blizzard



Familiar faces came to help



Brendon, Megan and the mascot

F-M Ambulance Appreciation Banquet

F-M Ambulance held the Employee Appreciation Banquet on Thursday, May 21st at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead. There was a Hawaiian theme, and a DJ played after the banquet. Everyone seemed to have a lot of fun and enjoy themselves!

Congratulations to:

- Chad Mickelson – “Best Dressed” award
- Brett Wigglesworth – “Best Dressed” award
- Tom Dobrzynski – National Society of Sons of the American Revolution Medal for the Honor Guard
- Dean Lampe – F-M Ambulance Medal of Merit for Superior Performance
- Josh Weber – Achievement in Excellence Award
- Jason Smith – Achievement in Excellence Award
- Ken Krupich – Achievement in Excellence Award and 20 Years at F-M Ambulance Service
- Todd Hockert – 25 Years at F-M Ambulance Service



Brett Wigglesworth and Chad Mickelson, winners of the “Best Dressed” award



F-M Ambulance members enjoyed the evening at the Courtyard by Marriott



Jason Smith, Don Martin and Chad enjoying the night



Cody Kappenman and Juanita Gorder



Sam Welle and Jason Smith



Sondra Peterson and Deann Krupich



Chad, Brett and Sherm Syverson partying Hawaiian style



Ashlie Melland and Ken Krupich dancing



Ashlie, Bob Klein and Shawn Hanson enjoying some dancing

F-M Ambulance Citizens Academy

The 2009 Spring F-M Ambulance Citizens Academy came to an abrupt halt in late March due to the flood. The participants were able to attend five weeks before class was cancelled.

All of the '09 Spring participants were invited to come back to attend the 2009 Fall Academy, which will start in mid-September. Over an 8-week period, participants will have the opportunity to learn about what paramedics and EMTs do every day. Participants will also have the opportunity to go on ride alongs with paramedics and EMTs. Please check our website, www.fmambulance.com, for more details if you or anyone you know is interested in the academy!



Preceptor of the Year

Preceptors have a very tough job. Above and beyond what their normal job duties are, they are constantly being followed, asked to explain things, and questioned about every move that they make. Being an EMS preceptor is especially difficult because when you are explaining things, you are usually in a chaotic and stressful situation. An emergency situation is confusing for many people, and sometimes having someone watching you that closely isn't easy.



Todd Neumann received the F-M Ambulance Service 2008 – 2009 "Preceptor of the Year" Award for many reasons. Todd is excellent at taking time to answer students' questions and explain his answers to them. When a student asks a question, Todd never makes them feel stupid, and will explain the answer in different ways until the student understands. He has a lot of patience and his obvious concern for students is demonstrated when he is with someone who is eager to learn.

Todd is excellent at communicating his observations, praises and concerns regarding students with paramedic instructors. He is in contact with the instructors on a regular basis and lets them know what skills the students are doing well on and what they need improvement on.

Preceptors are an integral part of our team, and with a team effort we have a better chance of helping all students succeed. Congratulations to Todd, the F-M Ambulance Service 2008 – 2009 Preceptor of the Year!

New Employees

Welcome to the F-M Ambulance team!

- Paul Bekkerus – EMT-B
- Nathaniel Dutt – EMT-B
- Sherri Easterday – Supervisor (Thief River Falls)
- Nichole Johnson – EMT-B
- Kelli Kourajian – Administrative Assistant
- Ashlie Melland – EMT-B
- Nicole Milbrett – Dispatcher
- Paul Near – Paramedic (Thief River Falls)
- Amy Nickoloff – EMT-B (Thief River Falls)
- Jon Rude – IT Specialist
- Benjamin Summer – EMT-B

New Paramedics

The F-M Ambulance Paramedic Program has two classes that are nearly done – the N09 night class that started in January of 2008 and the D09 day class that started in August 2008.

There are 30 students currently going through the final internship process; finishing their required skills and testing; and moving on to National Registry testing.

These students came from all over North Dakota and Minnesota, along with one from Washington. These students have had 700 hours of classroom instruction and averaged over 1,200 hours of clinicals at our 90+ clinical sites. These sites were at ambulance services and hospitals from Minot, ND to Oklahoma City, OK.

Thank you to the clinical sites and preceptors for preparing them to be competent entry-level paramedics. Congratulations to the upcoming graduates and good luck as Paramedics!

The Rural Roundup

By Bob Klein, Liaison Coordinator

Greetings from Bob Klein, aka Farmer Bob,

Well, I hope that summer has finally arrived, as of this writing the temperature outside is 84 degrees, so it sure is feeling like summer. After the spring we have had we are definitely ready for summer.

Back in March, Ulen Rescue was dispatched to a woman in labor. To make a long story short, it was an imminent birth, which means the baby was ready to be born. With the assistance of F-M Ambulance, a baby girl was born in the back of an ambulance in Ulen, Minnesota. Congratulations on a job well done, Ulen Rescue members, along with Brett Wigglesworth and Jason Smith of F-M Ambulance and of course to the mom, who also participated!!!



In December 2008, Ulen Rescue honored Diane Bentley for over 20 years of service with the rescue squad as a First Responder. After 20 years, Diane is retiring and we want to thank her for her many years of service. (Top picture)



In April, while we were all busy fighting the flood, our Cass County Medical Director, Dr. Sauter, was awarded the Medical Director of the Year for North Dakota. He was awarded this at the North Dakota EMS Conference but was unable to attend to accept the award because he was busy working extra hours at the Innovis Emergency Department during the flood. Dr. Sauter has definitely earned this award. I personally see him countless times a month. He attends Kindred and Hunter ambulance meetings on odd months and Page and Casselton ambulance meetings on the even months. He is very involved and committed to the training that takes place at these meetings. EMS responders in Cass County should be proud and honored to have a medical director so involved. I know that I am. I enjoy having him take part in the training and monthly run reviews. Good job, Dr. Sauter! (Second picture)



On April 23, Flint Kasowski was awarded the Jerry Decker award. This award is given annually to an EMS provider for outstanding dedication and service. Flint has been a member of the Buffalo Quick Response Unit for over 25 years. The award is given in memory of Jerry Decker, who died suddenly and unexpectedly while on an ambulance call. Congratulations to Flint. (Third picture)



On April 19, Felton Rescue hosted their annual Swedish Pancake feed. There were close to 400 people who were served Swedish pancakes with proceeds going to Felton Rescue. On February 15, Buffalo also hosted their annual pancake feed. They also had around 450 people in attendance. It is so good to hear of the community support these rescue squads have! (Bottom picture)

Explorers Scholarship

Cami Kaspari was the recipient of the 2009 F-M Ambulance Explorers Scholarship. Cami has been an active member of the F-M Ambulance Explorers Post 2243 for two years. She will receive a full scholarship to the F-M Ambulance EMT-Basic program. Congratulations, Cami!

Want to learn more about Explorers? Check out our website, www.fmambulance.com for more information!

Did You Know...

- The “thank-you” video that F-M Ambulance made and distributed to all ambulance service and rescue squads who helped out during the flood is available to watch online.
- All of the pictures taken by F-M Ambulance service during the flood are available online.

Just go to www.fmambulance.com and scroll to the very bottom. Thanks to everyone who helped us!

F-M Ambus

The Medical Ambulance Evacuation Bus, also known as an Ambus, arrived at F-M Ambulance Service at 10:00 PM on April 3rd and was ready for service by midnight. The next morning it left on its first mission – returning 12 nursing home evacuees to the region. The Ambus is capable of transporting 20 stretcher patients using up to six Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers. Trying to do that with traditional ambulances would take 10 or more ambulances and 20 EMS providers.

F-M Ambulance Service has been working with state and local government entities to identify funding for this vehicle for several years. Recently, federal Homeland Security funds were approved for the Ambus through the ND Department of Emergency Services (ND DES). Although the process for ordering the vehicle normally would have taken several months, F-M Ambulance was able to work with the manufacturer (Sartin Services, North Carolina) to have immediate delivery of its demo model for use with flood evacuations and repatriation of nursing home and hospital patients. ND DES put funding for the project on the fast track to allow the vehicle to arrive in just 48 hours.



Local Hero Given Lifesaving Award

Griffin Offerdahl, a volunteer firefighter from Davenport, ND, was awarded the F-M Ambulance Service Medal of Merit on March 18th, 2009 for assisting in the successful resuscitation of his neighbor, Lynndell Haugen.



Griffin played an instrumental role in the resuscitation of Lynndell, who went into cardiac arrest at his house on the evening of December 3rd, 2008. Lynndell was home with his wife when she heard a “thump”. She looked into the kitchen and saw her husband lying on the floor. Mrs. Haugen knew that her neighbor, Griffin, was a volunteer firefighter and called him immediately. Griffin had just completed his CPR recertification class the previous evening. Griffin ran to the Haugen residence and together with Lynndell’s wife started CPR – Griffin doing compressions and Mrs. Haugen doing the breathing. When Davenport First Responders arrived with the defibrillator, Lynndell was shocked several times. He was then transported to Innovis Hospital by Kindred Ambulance and F-M Ambulance Service and is doing well today, thanks to the quick actions of his neighbor and his wife.

The F-M Ambulance Service Medal of Merit is presented to trained rescue personnel who are instrumental in helping during an emergency. F-M Ambulance would like to extend their sincere appreciation for what Griffin did that day.

Many members of both the Offerdahl family and Haugen family, as well as Davenport community members and the CPR instructor that taught Griffin his course were able to attend the award ceremony to help congratulate Griffin on a job well done.



VFW Awards

Congratulations to Mike Schultz and Chad Mickelson.

- Mike Schultz was awarded the VFW Gold Medal Award for EMS for playing an integral part in the organization, education, and training of the F-M Ambulance Service Disaster Committee.
- Chad Mickelson was awarded the State of North Dakota VFW Gold Medal Award for his dedication to the community, state, region and nation. Chad has spent countless hours dedicated to disaster training and response.



Retirement

Larry Wild, who has been with F-M Ambulance Service for 7 years, has decided to retire.

Larry started his career at F-M with Ready Wheels in 2001 as a special transportation driver. Larry enjoyed his job with Ready Wheels, but in 2007 he learned that there would be an opportunity to be a driver for Merigen Medical. In March of 2007 he decided to become the first part-time route driver for Merigen.

His duties included re-stocking and filling all of the customer's first aid cabinets, deliveries to customers and keeping the Merigen vans washed and ready to go. Larry also checked on the customers to make sure that their batteries and pads for their AED's were not expired. He worked with the Fargo school system to keep track of all the epi-pens for the entire district.

Larry has a very likeable and warm personality/character which was a valued asset for Merigen Medical. F-M Ambulance and Merigen Medical will greatly miss having Larry as part of our team and wish him the best in his new adventure! Thanks you, Larry, for your years of service and all that you have done. We hope you enjoy your retirement and remember to stop by to visit every once and awhile!



H1N1 Preparedness



Not long after the 2009 flood was finally over, F-M Ambulance received word that we needed to be prepared for another threat – the “Swine Flu”. A special mandatory company meeting was held to inform employees of special preparations that were taking place.

Dr. Baird, the Fargo Cass Public Health Officer pictures on the left, attended the company meeting and briefed everyone on the specifics of the H1N1 virus and what we could do to protect ourselves and our families.

F-M Ambulance Service is prepared if the virus hits our community. Fortunately, at this time, the Fargo/Moorhead area has not had a large outbreak of the virus.



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.