

EMS Profile: Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS



Standing, left to right: Leslie Madden-Hernandez, Mechelle Salmon, Chief Scott Wilkinson, Carlos Laurel, Greg Eckert, Bob Tennis, Kathleen Karczewski, Lee Bailey, Stephanie Anderson, David Powell, Duane Hannasch, Stephen Rahm, Veronica Fried, Michelle King and Michelle Ruiz. Kneeling, left to right: Candice Thompson, David Duguid, Miguel Gandara, Jacob Riegelsberger, Captain Andy Fox and Shelly Gass. Photo Courtesy of MarVelez; Veronica Fried, Photographer

Number of personnel: Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS (BSBEMS) has a staff of 50 full time, part time and volunteer personnel. BSBEMS focuses on primary training, continuing education, staff training and quality assurance to help its staff provide prehospital care for residents in the Bulverde / Spring Branch area, north of San Antonio. BSBEMS hosts basic and advanced training every month, and their quality improvement division performs regular audits of personnel skills.

Years of service, number of units and number of calls: Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS reached 30 years of service in September of 2008. Operating five ALS ambulance units, BSBEMS now takes as many as 1,850 calls per year. Of course, BSBEMS started out as a much smaller operation. Prior to 1978, the citizens were dependent on EMS services provided by New Braunfels Fire/EMS located 21 miles east of the area. After the death of a 42-year-old resident suffering chest pain, the EMS volunteers for BSBEMS took out a personal loan to purchase the first ambulance. Volunteers took turns taking it home in order to respond to local emergency calls. In 1980, the ambulance service received a gift of just over two acres of land from the Otto Fromme family. By March of 1982, Bulverde-Spring Branch had a base for EMS operations that included a building to house three ambulances, a training center and sleeping quarters for volunteers on duty.

Current activities: In addition to prehospital care and transport, Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS focuses on area-wide EMS training and community-based programs. Training programs include EMS initial education classes six days per week at three different sites, semi-annual National Registry refresher programs at three sites, beta testing for new EMS education projects, developing protocols for multiple EMS agencies and designation as a National Registry advanced practical site. Community activities include monthly CPR programs, standby service at sports events, support for local projects that help the underserved, participation in heart and stroke alert programs with San Antonio-area hospitals, transportation of injured soldiers, emergency response for local disasters, organization of high school EMT programs at two sites and mentoring programs for young people interested in the medical profession.



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