

# Local & Regional EMS News

by Kathy Clayton

## Hotter 'N Hell Hundred medical care



Medics from AMR prepare patient Rob Stork for transport during the Hotter 'N Hell Hundred in Wichita Falls. Photo by Bradley Wilson.

Even at the starting line, it is evident that providing prehospital health care is not a goal of organizers of the Hotter 'N Hell Hundred race in Wichita Falls, the largest sanctioned century bicycle ride in the United States. For the nearly 14,000 riders, Executive Director Ben “Chip” Filer said the goal is to eliminate the need for any hospital care at all.

“One of our primary goals is to ensure that everyone who comes to the race goes home vertical,” he said. With more than 1,000 medical volunteers at 15 stops along the 100-mile route, he said the medical staff, doctors, EMS personnel, nurses and others “can do a lot of stuff out there that would normally send people to the hospital.”

Their efforts paid off. Although medical staff saw many people

throughout the August day in 2012, only 14 ended up in local emergency departments.

This year it wasn't the heat that caused problems for riders, it was the wind. Kim Stringfellow, a nurse working at the final rest stop before the finish, said, “The temperature is milder than in past years, but the wind is worse. (The bikers) are coming in more tired.”

Despite the wind and heat, the medical team, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, EMTs, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and others, staffing the medical tents all along the route, was prepared. The on-site staff, along with American Medical Response ambulances that provide prehospital care in Wichita Falls and Air Evac Lifeteam that provides

helicopter support, provided routine medical care including suturing wounds, IV fluid therapy and massages for muscle cramps. But they worried most about the potential for life-threatening, heat-related injuries.

Keith Williamson, university physician at Midwestern State University and medical director for the race, said the race was a tremendous learning opportunity. He said the medical staff members would see illnesses and injuries that they had not seen before.

While the bruises, broken bones and scrapes occupy most of the medical staff's time on race day, Williamson and the other medical staff members, all volunteers, spent most of their time prior to the race discussing how to treat heat-related injuries. Kenny Hoffman, operations supervisor for AMR, said he began watching the weather forecast a couple weeks before the race.

Despite temperatures on race day that average 95°F and have reached 109°F, this year it cooled down—down to a high of 96°F, fully 10 degrees lower than in 2011.

Medical staff members were on the look out not only for dehydration but also for hyponatremia, also called water intoxication, which results from drinking excess amounts of plain water, causing the blood serum level of sodium to go down. Hyponatremia is becoming more prevalent as participation in endurance races such as the Hotter 'N Hell Hundred increases, particularly by inexperienced or unacclimated athletes. As part of the medical protocols for the race, Williamson has a specific protocol for hyponatremia. In contrast to the protocol for dehydration and overheated riders, both of which call for which call for IV therapy, “hyponatremia can be worsened by hydration,” Williamson states even in the IV protocol.

*Submitted by Bradley Wilson, PhD, EMT-I*

## Former student becomes medical director at San Jacinto College



*Dr. Mark Escott attended San Jacinto College in 1993 and now serves as medical director of the North Campus' Emergency Medical Technology program. Submitted photo by Agapito Sanchez.*

San Jacinto College alumni Dr. Mark Escott says he is “coming full circle” as he returns to his alma mater to serve as the medical director of the North Campus' Emergency Medical Technology (EMT) program.

Escott attended San Jacinto College in 1993 as an EMT student and went on to attend Rice University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in religious studies. He holds a master's in public health from the University of Texas Health Science Center at

Houston School of Public Health and an MD from Flinders University. He served his emergency medicine residency at Penn State University, where he was also an assistant professor of emergency medicine.

Escott is currently an assistant professor of emergency medicine at Baylor College of Medicine's Houston campus. He also serves as the medical director for Rice University EMS, the Montgomery County Hospital District and as the associate medical director for Cypress Creek EMS. He serves on the board of directors of the EMS section of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

In his new role as the medical director at San Jacinto College North, Escott will provide curriculum evaluation, quality improvement, classroom instruction and clinical evaluation of students.

When he attended San Jacinto College in 1993, Escott never imagined he would some day return to serve as medical director at the College. “I knew that I would be an emergency medicine physician, but had no idea that I would come full circle,” he said. “But such has been the case in other areas of my career. I started as an EMT volunteer at Cypress Creek EMS, and now I am one of the medical directors. I founded the EMS service at Rice, and now I am the medical director there as well.”

## New station for Azle fire department

The City of Azle hosted an Open House and statue unveiling for Azle Fire Station No. 52 in December. The city constructed a new, 17,000 square-foot fire station at the corner of Denver Trail and Lakeview Drive. The new station will house all current fire and ambulance services as well as the fire administration. The location was chosen because it provides quick access to Highway 199 as well as immediate access to some of the more densely populated areas of the city. A sizable green space will remain between the station and the near-by homes. The more than \$4 million construction budget was funded using bonds that were issued in 2011 and 2012.

Currently, the Azle Fire Department protects about 30,000 people and covers 8.2 square miles of city limits and approximately 20 square miles in unincorporated Tarrant County and additional response area in Parker County. Under the direction of Chief T. (Will) Scott, the Azle Fire Department has 16 paid professionals on staff, 10 volunteer professionals, and 15 part-time professionals for a total of 41 personnel. Fire crews consist of four personnel per day that work a 24 hour on/48 hour off shift. Their duties include fire suppression, rescue, hazmat, fire prevention, inspection services, Fire Code enforcement, investigation and safety training.

## Dallas Fire-Rescue paramedic division celebrates 40 years of service

In November 1972, the Dallas Fire Department made its first ambulance rescue call, leaving Station 6 in south Dallas to assist an assault victim. That was the

first of 12,000 calls for that fiscal year. By fiscal 2012, the number had climbed to 182,000 total rescue calls.

In 1972 there were 12 fire department ambulances and today

there are 46 available for use; 83 percent of Dallas Fire-Rescue calls are now EMS related; and there are currently 800 Dallas Fire-Rescue paramedics.

## Friendswood VFD EMS receives national award

Friendswood Volunteer Fire Department EMS was recently named Volunteer EMS Service of the Year as part of the National EMS Awards of Excellence program established by the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) and EMS World, in conjunction with the National EMS Management Association (NEMMSA) and the National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE).

Founded in 1972, Friendswood Volunteer Fire Department Emergency Medical Service has always been a true community enterprise. Local EMS Hall of Famer Van Williams convinced the city council an ambulance was needed and a used Ford Fairlane station wagon was purchased and outfitted. In 1974, with trained EMT volunteers working shifts on evenings and weekends, the ambulance was sitting idle by day. So the women

of Friendswood—mainly the wives of volunteer firefighters—went to school, got trained and took over the day shift until the men finished their jobs and could take over the night shifts, according to EMS Chief Lisa Camp. From that point, the service has continued to innovate and stay at the forefront of emergency medicine.

Friendswood VFD EMS provides service to the city of Friendswood and its 38,000 residents. The service responds to approximately 2,600 calls—primarily medical—per year in a 27.5-square-mile service area. Out of about 105 total fire department volunteers, there are 58 volunteer EMS providers, as well as about 12 paid part-time staff who help cover day shifts while the regular volunteers are at work. Friendswood is licensed as a mobile intensive care unit (MICU) with BLS capabilities and operates three Chevy C4500 ambulances.

Established to recognize outstanding achievement in the EMS profession, other recipients of the EMS World awards included NAEMT Paramedic of the Year, Kenneth Davenport of Marion, Kentucky; NAEMT EMT of the Year, Dean Darling, EMT-I, of Sauk City, Wisconsin; Dick Ferneau Paid EMS Service of the Year, New Orleans EMS; and National EMS Management Association EMS Executive of the Year, Tim Hearn, Executive Director, Fort Smith Emergency Medical Services, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Award recipients received \$1,000, three conference registrations, plus \$1,000 for travel and lodging at the EMS World Expo/NAEMT Annual Meeting in New Orleans. They were recognized at the opening ceremony and at the corresponding association meeting at EMS World Expo/NAEMT Annual Meeting.

## Pedi-STEPPs a giant step for pediatric prehospital emergency care training

Pediatric emergencies in the prehospital setting are relatively rare, making up about 10 percent of all EMS calls. Providing care for the most critically ill or injured children among them is rarer still. Therefore, EMS providers have few opportunities to practice high-risk/high impact skills between such calls. With this in mind, Dr. Paul Sirbaugh, Assistant Medical Director for the Houston Fire Department (HFD) and Section Head of Pediatric Emergency Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, teamed up with Dr. Jennifer Arnold, Medical Director of the Simulation Center

at Texas Children's Hospital, and emergency medicine physicians Drs. Manish Shah, Cara Doughty and Nadia Pearson to create Pediatric Simulation Training for Emergency Prehospital Providers (Pedi-STEPPs). Using state-of-the-art simulation equipment, the Pedi-STEPPs team developed a curriculum focusing on high-risk/low frequency pediatric emergency scenarios and communication/team skills training. This gives EMS providers the opportunity to practice rarely used skills in a realistic yet safe simulated environment. What makes simulation training effective is not

simply the use of life-like manikins to run through critical scenarios or practice rarely used skills. The key is effective scenario debriefing, which is facilitated by HFD and pediatric instructors. Using video of the team's performance, the team discusses each scenario, reinforcing what is done well and highlighting areas of potential improvement. Scenarios incorporate a wide range of technical skills. Through a grant from the Cullen Trust for Healthcare, Pedi-STEPPs will be provided to 500 members of Houston Fire Department over two years at the Simulation Center at Texas Children's Hospital.