
Visit is a reminder of vital role of volunteers

I was raised in Dallas and moved to Austin when I was just 20 years old (yes, it was a long time ago). I never really lived in a place that had volunteer emergency medical services, unless you count my mother, who loaded us up in the back of the station wagon to go to the doctor's office when we got banged up.

But I have been spending a week or two in Colorado each year at a family cabin, and this year it occurred to me that we rely completely on volunteers for EMS and fire suppression there. I had gone to the small town of Green Mountain Falls to watch a parade when the fire trucks and first response trucks rolled by. It hit me that these are the folks who would take time out of their own lives to respond if anyone in my family got hurt or fire threatened. And like my mother and her station wagon, they are not compensated nearly enough for their time and effort. So here's a shout-out to all the volunteers who respond to emergencies all across Texas, and the U.S. And a special hello to my new friends in Green Mountain Falls and Chipita Park in Colorado. I am grateful they are there.

Swine flu — now called novel H1N1 — paid the world a visit in the spring, killing hundreds. The first U.S. death occurred in Texas. Now fall is here and many experts predict that another, possibly more virulent, form of the flu may be in the wings. You can find out the latest information at any time by going to the new DSHS website devoted to flu: www.Texasflu.org. And in this issue, Texas EMS Magazine has put together a list of resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others to help you plan. The flu response for EMS will be different from a hurricane response — no mass evacuations of hospitals or nursing homes. What's most important for EMS is to keep emergency systems from exploding with too many patients and too few responders. The best thing EMS providers can do is to keep themselves healthy and to be able to respond.

The conference is just a few months away, and we're getting all the details worked out. As you probably know, we've changed the exhibit hall schedule this year to stretch out the number of hours the hall is open on Sunday. That means we'll move out of the hall on Monday night instead of Tuesday afternoon. On Tuesday, we've reserved a room for an informal job fair so employers and employees can connect. For more information, turn to page 12. Please write or call me if you'd like to participate.

Also, we've added cash prizes for the Valsalva Bowl this year. Last year — and possibly again this year — we had teams travel from other states to compete. Can we show them Texas is the best? To sign up your team, contact Kelly Weller at Kelly.E.Weller@lonestar.edu. The Valsalva Bowl schedule can be found on page 6.

Hope to see you in Fort Worth!

Kelly

FROM THIS SIDE

Kelly Harrell
Editor



Visiting a small town in Colorado reminded Editor Kelly Harrell of the importance of emergency response volunteers. Here, she's standing next to the EMS first response unit for the Green Mountain Falls/Chipita Park Fire Department. Visit their website at <http://www.gmfcpfd.org>.