
Conference finished, time to get busy on next one

Thanks to everyone who attended Texas EMS Conference 2009. I was worried about attendance given the state of the economy, but it turns out we were down only 150 attendees or so. I was much relieved, as the conference supports itself entirely from fees collected — no money comes from the state except salaries. We move to Austin in 2010, where we'll celebrate the 25th anniversary of Texas EMS Conference. This was my 18th year with Texas EMS Conference, and the first time I'd ever ridden in a helicopter (see photo). Is it too late for me to go to school to become a flight medic?

And speaking of conference, it wasn't sugar plums dancing in our heads after conference, it was hotel rates. Late in the 2009 session, the Legislature tied the state hotel rates to the federal rates — great news for hotels, not so good news for us. Although we negotiate contracts for the conference and GETAC years in advance, the rate is always based on the prevailing state rate. (This is a way for the hotels to protect themselves in the event rates rise.) The federal rates, which vary by county in Texas, are based on an average rate for that county. For instance, the hotel rates in Tarrant County shot up from \$85 to \$149 this year. Even so, most of the conference hotels honored the \$85 rate because the week before Thanksgiving is pretty darn quiet for them, which is why we get such low rates on the best hotels. We got lucky this year. I can't guarantee the same for next year.

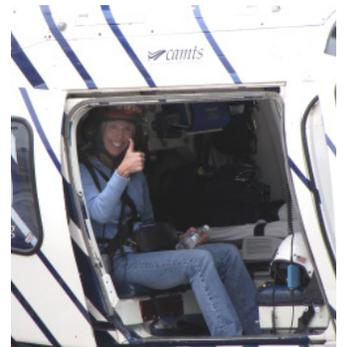
The 2010 rate for Travis County (Austin) is \$115. Although we are already contracted for prevailing state rates, we are negotiating with the conference hotels to see if we can bring that down some. It won't be \$85, but we're hoping to get it down from \$115. No promises — some hotels aren't budging — yet. As soon as we get the rates sorted out, we'll post information on how to book your hotel rooms for conference.

Which brings us to GETAC for the coming year. We managed to negotiate a \$94 single rate at the Marriott South, which will host our May and August meetings; and a \$94 single at the Omni Southpark, which hosts our May meeting. The double rate is \$124. GETAC meets February 24-26, 2010. Please check our website for specific committee meeting times. Committee chairs recently chose new members to replace those whose terms expired. New committee members are listed on page 12; for a complete listing of each committee, go to our website.

From all of us here at Texas EMS Magazine and Texas EMS Conference, we hope you have a bright and prosperous new year.

Kelly

FROM THIS SIDE



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