



THE BURN SHEET

EMS in the North Fork Valley

Call Review with Dr. Pruett

On October 23rd a number of NFAA staff met with Dr. Pruett to discuss recent runs, challenges and EMS events. One of the many points made:

ETOH + Significant Mechanism of Injury + any Abnormal Vitals Signs= Transport to ER.

Sometimes we show up on scene to discover the seemingly miraculous escape of injury by our customers with ETOH on board... "Yep, only had a couple of beers." EMT: "Yes, but sir your pulse is 180, which happens to match the number of feet your vehicle plunged down the cliff." This person should be seen at the ER.

See you at the next Call Review in Dec... there's always something interesting !

The Board has been taking a look at the future of EMS in the valley. Recruitment of new EMTs and Drivers is the key to continuing the level of service the NFAA provides today. We have new, or nearly new rigs, we have up-to-date equipment, CE program provided, funding for people to go to EMS conferences, hourly pay now in place for those on-call and the Association remains financially sound. Our weak point is volunteers. Without people to take the EMS calls in the North Fork, we have no service.

What are the options? We've been looking into becoming a service with PAID employees instead of volunteers. To cover all three communities 24/7 with the service we provide today, estimated wages would be around \$900,000. This would be unattainable with membership-based income. With a tax district mill levy equal to the average Fire Dept in the North Fork Valley (3.84), we fall short by \$500,000 per year. To fund the total amount needed, our mill levy

would have to be more than double, around 8.35. An unrealistic prospect with voters. Other answers to the \$500,000 deficit would be to cut service by two communities, creating one central base with two 24 hr crews. We can all picture how that would work, as calls never come in evenly spaced. This would result in poor patient care and response times that are unacceptable.

A bit of comparison with the Delta County Ambulance District, serving Delta and Cedaredge, helps bring things into perspective also. DCAD staffs and runs only one more ambulance than the NFAA, making costs comparable. Their mill levy in 2007 was 2.5, on almost double the Assessed Valuation of properties as in the North Fork Valley, provides part of their income, while the remainder is generated from their 2,900 EMS calls per year. With only 750 North Fork runs per year and close to the same costs as DCAD, forming a North Fork Ambulance tax district
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NFAA

PROVIDING
EXCELLENCE IN
EMERGENCY CARE
IN THE NORTH
FORK VALLEY,
SINCE 1969

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**Letters to Business
Owners**

The NFAA will be sending a letter to all North Fork Valley businesses, large and small to let them know we need more EMTs and Drivers. They can help us by being members, becoming EMTs and Drivers, and if their business structure would allow it, we ask they consider letting their employees sign up for two shifts each month while at work and allow them to leave for a couple of hours to take an EMS call. If this would work in your business or for your employer, please talk to them!

EVENTS

Board Meeting

Thursday, 7 pm, Nov 6th, Crawford Fire Station

Continuing Education

Monday, Nov 10th 7 pm, Crawford Fire Station
Topic: Highlights from the NFAA folks attending the EMS Conference.

EMT Class to start

Now is the time to apply for funding for the EMT class. Call the business office at 872-4303 to get an application, fill it out and return it to the office. If this is done before the 20th of the month, you and the review committee will have a chance to meet for an interview for a recommendation to be made at the next Board meeting. We have the Dec. 4th Board meeting and the January 8th meeting before the start of the EMT class.

EMS con't from front page...

makes no sense. Based on costs and possible income from EMS calls, a private ambulance service would not be attracted to pick up the North Fork either.

There are some EMS agencies with both paid and volunteer crews. This arrangement is not without it's own set of complex problems. We are not the only EMS agency in rural Colorado facing these challenges. Because our service stems from humble beginnings, funded by membership rather than taxes and has been "community built" over the last 39 years we are in much better shape than most rural agencies.

Any way you look at it, if we do not get more local folks to step up to become EMTs and Drivers, the North Fork Valley will soon be in an EMS crisis with some very unattractive options. The cost for ambulance service will go up, taxes will go up and patient care will go down the drain with a service far below what the NFAA is providing today.

Please talk to your friends, family and neighbors about volunteering and encourage those who could, to step up to the plate. The NFAA is providing a quality EMS service to our communities. All we need are people who are willing to help other people.