

REGION 2 – NORTHERN NY

CHAMPLAIN EMS, Clinton County, broke ground in September on a new EMS station at 1150 Route 11. The 4,200 square foot facility is expected to be completed in March 2015 at a cost of \$480,000 and will house ambulances, office space, supplies and also offer space for meetings and training. Since formation over a decade ago the agency has operated out of rented space in the Champlain VFD on Elm Street. Currently, the squad has 3 ambulances operating at the EMT-CC level, 42 volunteers, 6 full time staff plus per diem staff who respond to more than 800 calls annually.

CROWN POINT RESCUE SQUAD, Essex County, may close operations because it can't find a medical director. A 6 month search for a physician to serve in that role has proved fruitless. Ideally, the medical director would be an emergency room physician at a hospital where the squad transports patients, but according to news reports the problem is, Ticonderoga and Elizabethtown Hospitals only have physician assistants in the emergency room. The squad tried contacting doctors at other hospitals in the region, including Plattsburgh, Middlebury, Vt., and Burlington, but had no luck finding anyone willing to take the position. There were two interested parties and financial compensation was offered but both backed out. Crown Point Rescue Squad is part of the A.E. Phelps Volunteer Fire Department of Crown Point and has enough members — 3 EMTs now and 4 more in training — and the Fire Department provided drivers for the ambulance. The Crown Point Fire District has contracted with Lamoille Ambulance Service, a Vermont-based business with an office in Ticonderoga, to provide transports. Should the Rescue Squad have to be disbanded and no longer may transport patients, its members become first responders.

FORT DRUM US ARMY BASE, Jefferson County, discontinued use of commercial provider Guilfoyle Ambulance Services, Inc. as of 8/1/14. News media reports the post will rely on Army medics from Fort Drum EMS to provide immediate care for injured soldiers in non-life-threatening situations and aid their movement from the range to transfer points accessible by ambulances for local ambulance companies including Carthage Area Rescue Squad, Evans Mills Volunteer Ambulance Service, Gouverneur Rescue Squad, Indian River Ambulance Service and Natural Bridge Volunteer Ambulance. Those area ambulances will drive soldiers the rest of the way to area hospitals. There are no changes for care during life-threatening situations, in which soldiers are taken by medical helicopter to the hospital. The Army expects to save \$1.5 million to \$2 million annually while Guilfoyle, which has had the contract for about 10 years, let go 7 employees. The 107,265 acre base is home to the 10th Mountain Division, Light Infantry, its supporting elements and several tenant units including the 174th Fighter Wing Air-Ground Gunnery Range, 20th Air Support Operations Squadron, 18th Weather Squadron Detachment 1 at the Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield. The base population was 12,955 at the 2010 census and it trains 80,000 troops Annually.

GUILFOYLE AMBULANCE SERVICE, Jefferson County, moved back into its old smaller quarters at 438 Newell Street in Watertown, a number of buildings with 8 bays which was constructed specifically for a fleet of ambulances and is centrally located in the city. The company's owners are attempting to lease out the building at 1291 Faichney Drive on the west side of Watertown that was bought in 2011. Guilfoyle lost the contract for Fort Drum as well as 2 nursing homes. A number of employees were laid off and the annual revenue loss is estimated at \$1.5 to \$2 million. Guilfoyle employs 96 people and has a fleet of about 25 ambulances, wheelchair vans and other vehicles.

LYON MOUNTAIN FIRE DISTRICT, Clinton County, will increase EMS service from 8 hours a day to 24/7 starting in early 2015. NYS DOH lists Lyon Mountain Volunteer Fire Company with 1 ambulance as the ALS level transporting agency for the area but a news article indicates the District contracts with Lyon Mountain EMS Corporation for rescue service. The District's expenses would increase substantially in order to provide the additional coverage hours as the present \$82,000 EMS annual cost would increase by \$178,145 with the total annual district budget going from \$257,891 to \$436,036. After debate at a budget meeting the District voted to raise the tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed value from \$2.03 to \$2.98 and a property valued at \$100,000 would pay \$298 vs the current \$203 annually. Under the approved plan, an AEMT would be in station 24 hours a day with a paid ambulance driver on duty from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and volunteers taking over the remaining 16 hours. The District covers parts of the Towns of Dannemora, Ellenburg and Saranac and the hamlet of Lyon Mountain. Annual EMS call volume is about 150.

MIDSTATE REGIONAL EMS COUNCIL, Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties, has moved to 14 Foery Drive, Utica, NY 13501. Also moving to the location is the Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare EMS Program Agency. The new quarters has 2 large classrooms, a conference room and lab space. Parking is available for 60 vehicles. Phone, FAX and e-mail addresses remain the same.

PLATTSBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT, Clinton County, received a \$43,982 US DHS Assistance to Firefighters Grant to purchase PPE including lightweight pants, boots and gloves to protect ambulance crews from blood borne pathogens such as hepatitis B, HIV and meningitis.

STARK, Herkimer County, will be the site of a new 260 foot high communications tower that will extend contact ability to other counties in the 11 county Adirondack Regional Interoperable Communications Consortium. A Round 3 Statewide Interoperable Communications Grant will provide most of the \$900,000 funding for the tower on a leased site which will have at least three new antenna systems and three microwave dishes.

TURIN VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, Lewis County, is seeking more funds from the Town of Turin to operate the ambulance service. A member cited a declining number of volunteers and attributed it in part to changes at Lewis County General Hospital in Lowville saying many runs are going to Utica, which is a 3 hour round trip and it is deterring a lot of volunteers. When the ambulance was going to Lowville more frequently, the crews could be back in an hour. The department has to been employing Lewis County Search and Rescue paramedics five days a week, for 12 hours a day. Search and Rescue is charging about \$30 an hour to have the paramedic at the station during the day. It is going to cost the Turin FD more than \$80,000 a year to keep the paramedic at the department during the day. The department also has \$18,000 in insurance for the ambulance and a truck payment of \$15,000 plus the cost of supplies. The town is being asked to double its \$30,000 to \$34,000 annual contribution but the Town Supervisor wants to limit the increase to \$3,000 to \$3,500. Turin FD operates 2 ambulances and 1 fly car at the EMTCC level.

WARREN COUNTY has been presented with a consultant's report projecting it would cost nearly \$6.1 million to upgrade the EMS-fire-police emergency services radio system to patch transmission and reception holes and with an upgrade to a cutting-edge digital system, the price would increase to \$7.8 million. Transmissions in one area are so problematic that for a number of years at least 1 Warren County agency is dispatched by Saratoga County. The consultant's personnel spent several months in the county this year, analyzing the current system, performing tests and logging 325 miles during mobile tests. Factors such as transmitter and antenna placement and direction as well as mountainous terrain contribute to communications problems and the federally required "narrowbanding" of signals also plays a part. Coverage issues in the Stony Creek area were too complex to solve with the current analysis. Recommendations call for initially expending \$300,000 for signal repeaters to strengthen the network and to change the direction of some antennae. \$2.4 million would be needed for 4 new transmitters on existing towers in Chester, Lake Luzerne, Warrensburg and on Black Mountain in Dresden. Grant money may be available to assist with some of the work and the county can also use its personnel to defray costs but Warren County will have to budget funds to pay for equipment.

WELLESLEY ISLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT, Jefferson County, lost its BLS ambulance and a brush truck, fireboat, pumper and tanker plus emergency equipment due to a major fire on 8/13/14 that destroyed one of its stations in a 1912 building leased from the Thousand Island Park Corp. The value of the VFD loss was put at \$800,000. Members responded within minutes but were unable to open the bay doors due to loss of power to the building. Crews from Alexandria Bay, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Depauville, Fishers Landing and LaFargeville aided the island's department in battling the fire, including running about 1,000 feet of hose lines to draw water from the St. Lawrence River. Two firefighters received medical treatment for smoke inhalation, but soon were released. The department continues to operate from its Densmore station with that station's vehicles and equipment plus a loaned ambulance from Thousand Islands Emergency Rescue Service and an engine loaned Clayton VFD. Thousand Island Park Corp. indicated the structure would be rebuilt.