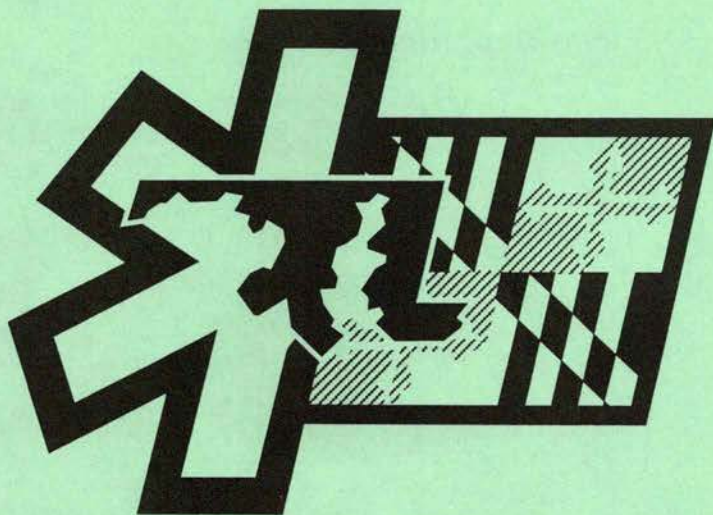


*Maryland Institute for
Emergency Medical Services Systems*



Press Report

February, 2005

Fire Department

To the Editor:

For the past 25 years, it has been my privilege to serve as medical director to the county Fire Department. I have been a strong proponent of having two paramedics for each of the county's 15 advanced life support ambulances, as we do currently.

I initially opposed changing our method of providing advanced life support, or ALS. However, data collected for two years conclusively show that a large proportion of the "emergency calls" to which paramedics respond can be mitigated by a single paramedic and a basic- or intermediate-level emergency medical technician.

Medical quality assurance in the department is constantly reviewed, and indicates that a change in method of delivery is warranted. Other factors — including delays at hospitals due to shortages of beds or nursing staff, as well as emergency department delays — have contributed to the challenge of providing emergency care.

Issues related to this vital service are complex. However, there is no doubt that our present method of service must change.

The planned pilot program should provide effective and efficient service. It will increase the number of units with ALS capability from 15 to 20, improve service and make the best use of our existing resources. In the future, as the number of ALS providers in the department increases, my goal is to once again staff our paramedic units with two ALS providers each.

I and others applaud the Fire Department's plan for delivery of service. In addition, I commend you for enlightening the public about the difficulties faced by the Fire Department in providing quality emergency medical service.

Dr. ROY MYERS
Crofton

Feb 2 2005

Whiteford volunteers honor top members Russell Glenn, Ryan Martin best of best

Russell Glenn and Ryan Martin earned top honors in 2004 from the Whiteford Volunteer Fire Company.

Glenn was named Firefighter of the Year and Martin was named EMS Person of the Year at the company's annual banquet Saturday at Pine Woods.

Newcomer Christine Guerin was named Bookie EMS Person of the Year and Matt Barben was named Fire Officer of the Year and Alex Christ was EMS officer of the Year.

On the fire side, Whiteford responded to 317 calls for service in 2004, 67 of them motor vehicle accidents and 22 of them dwelling or building fires.

Volunteers responded to 627 EMS calls in 2004. Their average response time was

four minutes, 10 seconds.

The Top 12 fire responders for 2004 were: Larry Holbrook, 277 calls; Janet Holbrook, 269; Matt Barben, 266; Chad Holbrook, 260; Ted Wooden, 200; Russell Glenn, 199; Matt Mumpower, 198; Frank Kirk Jr., 196; Ryan Martin, 192; Charlie Martin, 181; John Monath, 172; and Alex Christ, 169.

The Top 12 EMS responders for 2004 were: Alex Christ, 321 calls; Ryan Martin, 152; Matt Mumpower, 93; Matt Barben, 89; Rich Dunham, 87; Derek Hopkins, 81; Janet Holbrook, 78; Charlie Martin, 60; Ted Wooden, 60; Mike Humeke, 54; Todd Bousa, 48; Chad Barker, 45; Diane Post, 15; and Kim Dunham, 41.

Administrative officers for 2005 are

Derek Holbrook, president; Larry C. Holbrook, vice president; Carol Mumpower, secretary; Russell Glenn, treasurer; Janet Williamson, ambulance secretary; and Larry C. Holbrook, Derek Hopkins, Tom Barben, Patricia F. Kirk, Carol Mumpower, Frank Kirk, Heather S. Williamson, Todd Bousa and Russell Glenn, board members.

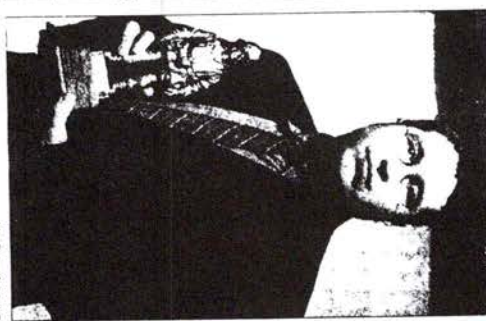
Operative officers for 2005 are: Frank Kirk, chief; Matthew Barben, first assistant; Rich Dunham, second assistant; chief; Chad Barker, captain; 6-1; Dan Barben, chief 6-2; John Monath, lieutenant 6-1; Charlie Martin, lieutenant 6-2; Todd Bousa, EMS chief; Diane Post, EMS captain; Alex Christ, EMS lieutenant 6-1; Matt Mumpower, EMS lieutenant 6-2.



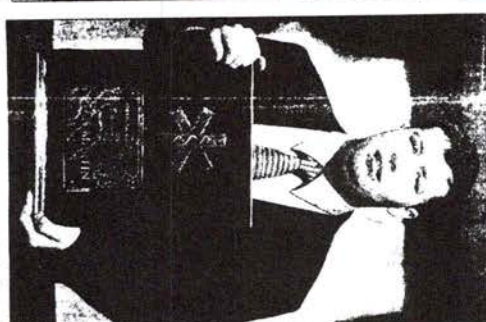
Larry Holbrook was named top fire responder for 2004 for the Whiteford Volunteer Fire Company. (Photo by Alex Christ)



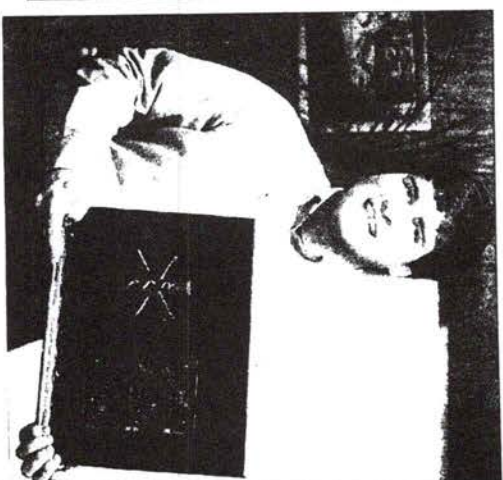
Christine Guerin was honored as both the Whiteford Volunteer Fire Company's rookie firefighter and rookie EMS person of the year for 2004. (Photo by Alex Christ)



Russell Glenn was honored with the 2004 Firefighter of the Year award for the Whiteford Volunteer Fire Company during Saturday evening's banquet at Pine Woods.



Ryan Martin was named the 2004 EMS Person of the Year for the Whiteford Volunteer Fire Company. (Photo by Alex Christ)



Alex Christ was named top EMS responder and EMS officer for 2004 for the Whiteford Volunteer Fire Company. (Photo by Alex Christ)



Capital Clipping Service

58 11 11 11

Miller names group to check electricity deregulation impact

ANNAPOLIS — Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. appointed an 11-member commission last week to examine the impact of electricity deregulation, a landmark law passed by the General Assembly in 1999.

The commission will assess the progress and impact of the deregulation law because Miller (D-Calvert, Prince George's) believes its intended goals are not being met.

"The motivation for enacting the legislation — lower utility prices and a competitive marketplace for Maryland's residential and commercial customers — has not yet been realized to its fullest potential," Miller said in a statement.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Thomas McLain Middleton (D-Charles) along with 10 other senators will consider the role of the Public Service Commission and the Maryland Office of the People's Counsel in implementing the law.

The commission will also consider the ways investor-owned electric utilities and electric cooperatives have been authorized by the Public Service Commission to procure power. Electricity for residents of Charles, St. Mary's and parts of Calvert County is provided by the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, a member-owned utility based in Hughesville.

Miller was critical last fall when SMECO announced a 23 percent rate hike for residential customers.

The commission will also debate the issue of utility grants that are provided by the state to the counties that house power plants. The utility grants for the counties were part of the deregulation law that was passed in 1999. The fiscal 2006 budget proposed by Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. eliminated the deregulation grants, meaning Calvert County lost \$6.1 million and Charles County lost more than \$2 million.

Miller and other local lawmakers are working to restore the cuts.

"I recall the clear intent of the General Assembly, that upon full implementation, a competitive market would lead to lower electric utility rates and costs to Maryland customers," Miller said. "We're not there yet, and I want to know why."

Gov.'s hospital cuts called 'payback' by Busch

House Speaker Michael J. Busch blasted Ehrlich on Monday night for his \$5 million capital budget cut to community hospitals — a move that will hurt Calvert Memorial Hospital and Civista Medical Center in La

Capital watch



Plata — accusing the governor of "petty political retribution."

Busch's aides passed out a two-page analysis of the cut on Monday night showing that Calvert Memorial was counting on \$1.1 million for expansion and renovation of its existing emergency room, an addition of a rapid admit unit and a project that includes a new sexual assault consult room and bereavement room.

Civista was expecting \$1.2 million for its expansion project that includes a larger emergency room to accommodate the patient increase the hospital has received over the past few years. According to Busch's office, the hospital last year experienced 35,000 emergency room visits in a space designed to treat 18,000.

Busch (D-Anne Arundel) said Ehrlich's \$5 million cut was the first time in 20 years that the hospital funding has been eliminated by the state. He said Ehrlich cut the money because the Maryland Hospital Association sided with the legislature in last month's override of the medical malpractice reform legislation that Ehrlich vetoed.

House Minority Whip Anthony I. O'Donnell (R-Calvert, St. Mary's) said the cut was due to the governor's commitment to provide more school construction money.

The hospital association has refused to comment on the cut.

"These types of cuts continue to blunt communities and interest groups their freedom of speech in a Democratic process," Busch said in an interview. "It's petty political retribution at its worst and goes way beyond the pale of normal political discourse."

O'Donnell blasted the speaker for calling the cut "retribution."

"I, of all people, find it particularly interesting to hear the speaker's comments about political retribution," O'Donnell said in a not-so-subtle jab at Busch, who moved O'Donnell's seat to the House floor at the beginning of session because of a long-standing feud.

Busch said he and other Democrats will work to restore the money.

—THOMAS DENNIS

11-21
2/2/05

Fire, ambulance appreciation Snow no problem for Darlington

By Matt Ward

Darlington Volunteer Fire Company celebrated a successful year Saturday night, holding its annual fire banquet as snow fell outside.

"I want to make sure you know that you're affecting the lives of the people out there every time you go out that door in a positive way," Fire Chief James Terrell told company members.

The company honored Terrell with the Jim Warner Award, given yearly and named for the company's long-time treasurer.

"I cannot tell you how much I appreciate it," Terrell said.

The company honored stationmaster and second vice president Ralph Borden as Fire Operator Person of the Year.

"We were looking for someone who does a lot of hard work and doesn't get recognized," Terrell said.

County Councilwoman Roni Chenoweth, a Republican representing Fallowfield and Abingdon, said the numbers and figures play into decisions at the county level.

"Those specs and stats are important to those of us in Bel Air who sit and look at what you all are doing," Chenoweth said.

Darlington responded to 410 fire calls in 2004, with an average of 18 people responding to each.

Fire personnel registered 3,680 man-hours on calls and 5,842 hours in training. The company's EMS side answered 680 calls, spending 4,080 man-hours out of the station.

The company named J. Alan Thompson as Emergency Medical Services Person of the Year.

"Volunteers, we don't know how to thank you. I'll be very honest," State Sen. J. Robert Hooper, a Republican representing northern Harford

District 35, said.

Unlike some other fire companies, Darlington doesn't contract out for banquet services and volunteers work on weddings and other firehouse events. The company named Edna Reeves Administrative Person of the Year.

John O'Neill, Harford County director of administration, spoke on behalf of the county executive.

"We really couldn't run this county without folks like Edna and everybody here tonight," O'Neill said.

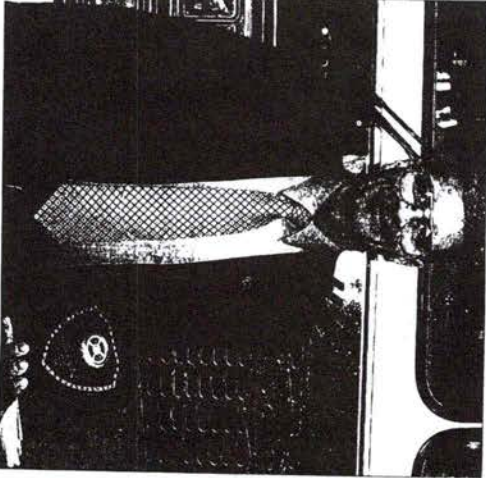
The Top 10 fire responders in 2004 were John Terrell, 293 calls; J. Alan Thompson, 290; Arnold Hitchcock, 269; Alan Rudi, 250; Donald Thomas, 241; George Roakey, 225; James Terrell, 218; Raymond Evans, 215; John Singleton, 199; and Travis Amberman.

181.

The Top 10 EMS responders in 2004 were Shirley Thompson, 263 calls; J. Alan Thompson, 251; Edna Reeves, 182; Linda Thomas, 169; Donald Thomas, 164; Jason Gullion, 109; Robert Parsons, 97; Angela Gullion, 91; John Terrell, 89; and Raymond Evans, 61.

The Top 10 Volunteers in the company's administrative section were Edna Reeves, 868 hours; Larry Lee, 850; Mary Hickman, 556; Shirley Roe, 484; Shirley Thompson, 433; Barbara Evans, 264; Carl Horrey, 226; Odell Crouse, 202; Ruth Cox, 178; and Willard Evans, 164.

Fire and EMS personnel from Fort Deposit, Rising Sun and Havre de Grace covered calls for Darlington during the banquet.



Ralph Borden is recognized during Saturday evening's banquet as of Darlington Fire Company's firefighter of the year for 2004.



Darlington Volunteer Fire Company's top 10 fire responders for 2004 are back row from left: James Gullion, Edna Reeves, Alan Thompson, Shirley Thompson, Linda Thomas, and Raymond Evans. Front row from left: John Terrell, John Rudi, Jason Gullion, and Donald Thomas.



Darlington Volunteer Fire Company's top 10 EMS responders for 2004 are back row from left: John Terrell, Alan Thompson, Arnold Hitchcock, Alan Rudi, and George Roakey. Front row from left: Raymond Evans, John Singleton, and James Terrell. They were honored at Saturday's banquet. Donald Thomas and Travis Amberman are not pictured.



Capital Clipping Service

91
X.3..

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Department of Emergency Services to get two new SUVs

By KONRAD SUROWIEC
Staff Writer

517FB

CENTREVILLE — By a 3-2 vote, the Queen Anne's County Commissioners approved the purchase of two new sport utility vehicles for \$53,486 for the Department of Emergency Services and the reallocation of about \$16,750 in capital funds.

Two 2005 Ford Expeditions will be purchased off a state contract for \$26,743 each from Hertrich Fleet Service. One will be used by the communications division and one will be used by the emergency medical services division. The total cost for one vehicle will be \$47,300, including the purchase price of the Expedition and the cost to reconfigure its interior for use by EMS paramedics.

John Chew, director of the department of emergency services, said one new Expedition will replace an EMS response vehicle that was totaled in an accident on April 13. The EMS vehicle was parked on the shoulder of U.S. Route 50 near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge when a vehicle traveling on Route 50 crashed into it. Scott Haas, chief of the EMS division, asked the commissioners to allow the department of emergency services to use the money from the insurance claim (\$30,544.88) and reallocate \$16,751.12 from its capital budget to pay for the new EMS vehicle and the interior refurbishing.

The capital funds had been designated to buy a cardiac monitor, which was a priority during the budget process, but "the opening of the Queenstown site and the shortage of paramedic units is now a higher priority," Chew wrote in a Dec. 1 memo to County Administrator Paul Comfort.

R.O. "Nemo" Niedomanski and Ben Cassell voted Dec. 7 to approve both vehicle purchases and the budget reallocation. Commissioners Mike Koval and Gene Ransom voted no. Koval questioned the need for the new EMS vehicle.

Haas said the new Expedition will bring the total back to six EMS response vehicles. There are four EMS stations, but two "high use" stations have two vehicles each, said Haas. He said two vehicles are needed at shift changes because a paramedic completing a call often returns a couple hours after his shift ends, while the paramedic coming on duty often has to respond to a call soon after his shift begins. County EMS stations are at Kent Narrows, the department of emergency services building near Centreville, the Queenstown Firehouse and the Sudlersville Firehouse. In November, county EMS staff also began providing ambulance service from the Queenstown Firehouse, but the ambulance is provided by the Queenstown Volunteer Fire Company.

The other new Ford Expedition will be used by the communications division as a "communications response vehicle," Chew wrote in the memo to Comfort. It will respond to emergency events; carry spare radios, batteries and charging support; and provide radio communications with users not on the 800 megahertz system. Funds for the new vehicle are in the department's capital budget. The Expedition will replace a 1996 Ford Crown Victoria with 180,000 miles.

Chew said the department of emergency services has 11 vehicles: six for the EMS division, two each for the communications and emergency management divisions, and

TheWBALChannel.com

Cardiologist Explains Importance Of Home Defibrillators

BALTIMORE -- A Maryland doctor thinks about heart health every day -- not only as a cardiologist, but also as a heart patient. He recently explained the importance of home defibrillators in WBAL-TV 11's Cardio Check.



HEART DISEASE

- ☐ Virtual Heart
- ☐ Heart Risk Test
- ☐ Menu Maker
- ☐ Risk Factors
- ☐ Warning Signs
- ☐ Treatments
- ☐ Heart-Healthy Diet
- ☐ ? Know Your Heart
- ☐ ? Women and Heart
- Health
- ☐ Family History Of Disease?

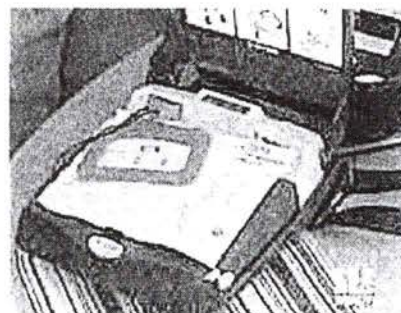
- ☒ American Heart Association
- ☒ CDC Cardiovascular Heart Program
- ☒ National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Dr. Stephen Pollock, a cardiologist at Baltimore's St. Joseph Medical Center, knows all too well the dangers of sudden cardiac arrest, from patients and personal experience. Pollock's father died due to sudden cardiac arrest at the age of 54. Pollock was only 18.

"Some people would say it has made me a little neurotic, or made me a cardiologist, but I have always been concerned about sudden cardiac death and its effect on the family," Pollock said.

"When you lose a family member to SCD, it is a devastating experience. There's no warning. One minute they're there, and next minute they're gone," Pollock added.

Sudden cardiac arrest concerned Pollock so much that he purchased an automatic external defibrillator (AED). As a man who has had several angioplasties, he calls it insurance.



"There's not always someone at home, bad luck is bad luck. But if something happens to me, my family would be capable of resuscitating me instantly and giving me an opportunity to live out my life with them," Pollock said.

Pollock said the AEDs are user-friendly.

"Basically, [the AED] walks you through [the procedure]. All you do is open it and call for help. It will actually walk you through what you have to do and it even has pictures of where to put the pads," he said.

The doctor said the AED gives him a sense of comfort.

"I don't want my children to go through that, I don't want my wife to go through that. This is just part of that, along with seeing the doctor and taking care of myself," Pollock said.

While Pollock doesn't recommend home defibrillator to his patients, he is a public advocate for making AEDs available in all public places.

The cost on the machines continues to decrease, and they currently range in price around \$1,200.

Stay with TheWBALChannel.com and WBAL-TV 11 News for the latest Cardio Check and health updates.

ENTERPRISE

LEXINGTON PARK, MD
10,000
WEDNESDAY
FEB 2 2005

Capital Clipping Service

68
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Tightening the reins on teen drivers

State Sen. Roy Dyson might just have some help this year in his long-running efforts to cut down on the number of car crashes involving teen drivers.

Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. is sponsoring bills intended to make teen drivers safer. He wants to lengthen the time that a young driver has a learner's permit and tighten penalties on young drivers who drive irresponsibly.

Teens can now get a learner's permit when they are 15 years and 9 months old, and drive with the permit for four months. Under the proposed legislation, teens would have to be 16 years and 3 months old before obtaining a license. And the governor proposes that young drivers have a learner's permit for six months,

instead of four.

Ehrlich also plans to seek tougher provisional driver's licenses for teens who have been driving for less than 18 months. Young drivers will have a mandatory 90-day license suspension if they violate seat belt and curfew restrictions. Another initiative would increase penalties for driving under the influence. Drivers younger than 21 who are convicted of alcohol- or drug-related driving offenses would have their licenses revoked for three years or until they turn 21.

Our Opinion

For about a decade, Dyson has proposed that drivers younger than 18 be restricted from carrying other teenage passengers younger than 18 for the first six months after they get their driver's licenses. There is an exception in Dyson's

bill for the young driver's brothers and sisters.

The idea is to lessen the distractions for the young drivers.

Dyson said he will again submit his legislation. The bill for the past two sessions of the legislature has made it through the Senate only to die in the House of Delegates.

It is unclear yet if any of the teen driving initiatives will make their way into law this year, but any effort to cut down on the accident rate for young drivers is welcome. In Maryland, 106 teens were killed on the roads in 2003. And one in five teenagers is involved in a crash in their first year of driving, according to the AAA. Nationally, automobile accidents are the No. 1 killer of teens.

Every adult remembers what it was like to be a teen driver, and the responsibility of a driver's

license for the first time, but in St. Mary's and elsewhere, young drivers face more dangers than drivers of years ago. For starters, our highways are more crowded with traffic, and that traffic moves at a faster pace. Also, some of the county's back roads are traveled at speeds on reserved for the big dual-lane highways. Many drivers out there on the roads today are in a hurry and have little patience for those who don't drive at their speed or may not be quite sure where the turn ahead may be. Plain and simple, young drivers need more experience.

These initiatives are a good idea, and it's not because teens are more reckless these days. Driving an automobile is a big responsibility, and it takes a little longer to get a license to make sure young drivers have the experience they need, then so be it.

CALVERT RECORDER

PRINCE FREDERICK, MD
WEDNESDAY 10,000
FEB 2 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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Calvert County commissioners agenda for Feb. 2

547
FB

at the Calvert County
Courthouse, Main Street, Prince
Frederick, 10 a.m.

- Appointed Brent Hutchinson and Ellen Zanhiser to the Solomons Architectural Review Committee;
- Approved a historic district application for Jessica and David Mc-

Clain;

- Held a work session on the five year construction budget, moving plans for a new indoor swimming pool in Prince Frederick up to fiscal year 2006 and 2007;
- Received a \$28,167 grant from the Southern Maryland Development Commission for the Calvert Country Market;
- Amended the rules for the county employee Bright Idea Award;

- Used critical area funding to increase one zoning inspector from part time to full time;

- Certified 15 development rights for Deckman LLC;

- Awarded Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad a \$107,000 grant to replace an ambulance;

- Signed a small watershed grant application.

KENT COUNTY NEWS

CHESTERTOWN, MD
WEEKLY 8,500
FEB 3 2005



Capital Clipping Service

29
1.3... 23 XX... V3

Galena Fire Company receives Homeland Security grant

GALENA - The Galena Fire Company Inc. has received a grant of \$113,125 from the 2004 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Galena Volunteer Fire Company will use the funds to purchase equipment for firefighter and EMS personnel safety. These items will include EMS protective gear, self-con-

tained breathing apparatus upgrades, rapid intervention team equipment, an air cascade unit and fit testing equipment.

The funding, part of \$745 million nationwide, will be awarded to several thousand fire departments in the current fiscal year.

"We recognize the importance of the Fire Act Grants to our nation's fire departments and we will continue to work

closely with the fire service community to meet their needs," said C. Suzanne Mencer, director of Department of Homeland Security Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP).

The Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program benefits rural, urban and suburban fire departments throughout the United States. These funds increase the

effectiveness of fire fighting operations, firefighter health and safety programs, new fire apparatus, emergency medical service programs and fire prevention and safety programs in local departments.

"In this nation, far too many individuals lose their lives or are injured by fire. Among these victims are firefighters who provide emergency

response service to their fellow residents," said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulson. "The nation's firefighters and American homes are safer today through this important grant program."

For more information on the grant program or the USFA, contact the Grants Program Office at 1-866-274-0942 or e-mail FIRE@GRANTS.gov.

PUBLIC SAFETY AWARDS



547F13

The Knights of Columbus held its Public Safety Awards program Saturday to recognize those in the community who ensure the public safety of its citizens. Prince George's County Volunteer Firefighter LaVon McMullen and EMT Phillip Bird received the Prince George's County Firefighter of the Year award. Jonathon Bigony was selected as the Bowie Volunteer Firefighter of the Year. Cpl. Melvin Proctor of Police District II in Bowie was recognized as the Police Officer of the Year.

TOP: Mayor G. Fred Robinson stands with Bird, Proctor and Bigony.

ABOVE: Robinson stands with Bigony, Grand Knight Rich Boehm, and BVFD Chief Pete Mellitts.

RIGHT: District II commander Maj. Michael Blow, Robinson and Proctor.



Courtesy photos

GREENBELT NEWS REVIEW

GREENBELT, MD
WEEKLY 11,000
FEB 3 2005



Capital Clipping Service

56 .X.4.. 8 XX... W2

Principals Receive Emergency Training

Aided by federal grant funding, the Prince George's County Public School system has rolled out a new systemic emergency response and crisis intervention training program for all principals and their staffs. The first of five training sessions was held at county police headquarters to ensure schools and emergency responders have the same expectations during a crisis. 547F-B

Funded by a \$529,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, a staff development program has been created by the schools' Department of Security Services. This training is designed to address a "Code Red, Lock-Down" situation such as where there is an active shooter in a school.

Using a train-the-trainer strategy, principals and their emergency response coordinators will attend training sessions and return to their schools. Each emergency response coordinator will implement staff training sessions at their school. Schools will also receive radios, bull horns and training materials to improve communication during a lock-down situation. The training covers police response, fire/EMS response and recovery/mental health resources.



Capital Clipping Service

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X.3c
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13

Over-burdened Allegany EMS service ripe for consolidation

Most of us involved in Emergency Ambulance Service have been aware of a pending volunteer crisis in Allegany County EMS companies. Meetings at various levels have brought no viable solutions. Suggestions from EMS companies

READER COMMENTARY

have centered around increasing appropriate levels or simply paying members on a full-time basis. However, in a county so reduced in population by loss of industry and property taxes at near limits, officials find these objectionable. However, more and more stress has been placed on fewer and fewer volunteers so that we must look hard now before it is too late.

We have shied away from the only viable solution, that is, to consolidate companies. Most do not want to hear this word, for territory is uppermost in all our minds.

However, the needs of the citizens should always be first, and therefore this avenue

must be considered.

First, let's look at numbers. Garrett county serves about 30,000 people with two companies or about 15,000 each. Washington County serves about 150,000 people with eight companies, or nearly 19,000 each. We in Allegany county serve about 70,000 people with 14 or 15 companies, less than 5,000 each on the average. We can do better.

Of course, there may be disadvantages to consolidating. It will be said that an ambulance would be a greater distance from some people. The fact is that if that now-closer ambulance does not respond, another from farther away is summoned to do so and that, in some cases, can be many miles.

It may be said that consolidation would threaten and take away territory, but if we look at it another way, each company together with another would actually gain new territory and new responsibility.

Many, but not all companies, use third-party billing as a means of support along with subscription programs. Each company receives a

share of county appropriation funding which, in this county, is now divided 14 or 15 ways. There is also a small amount of state funding each year. However, by reducing the number of companies, we would certainly raise the portion of county funding to each, and state monies as well. Income from third-party billing would increase as consolidated companies responded to larger territory and hence more calls.

“...more and more stress has been placed on fewer and fewer volunteers, so that we must look hard now before it is too late..”

Another advantage might be fewer ambulance vehicles required to serve the county. These have become vastly more expensive, and reducing the number would lessen the strain on squads which are hard pushed to

purchase and maintain them. The question that may come to the fore in all this is, if we can answer the calls now, how could we answer them in consolidation? Will we need more volunteers?

Volunteers are our most valuable resource. They are more valuable than all the equipment in all the companies. Without them, nothing moves, no one is served. Consolidating provides more opportunity to use skills, to meet and serve more people, perhaps at some point, to actually benefit financially which, of course, goes back to one of the requests of some members.

This would not be easy to bring into being. The county would need to be studied for maximum effect and location of companies. However, it is almost certain that no citizen would be neglected by being too far away from emergency ambulance service. It is not only worth considering but worth an intensive study.

Sam Metz
Barton



<http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/health/wire/sns-ap-reporting-infections,1,163829.story>

Group Wants Hospitals to Report Infections

By DANIEL YEE
Associated Press Writer

February 7, 2005, 5:47 PM EST

ATLANTA -- A consumer group has been pushing for hospitals to report rates of patients infected during their hospital stays, although medical officials have been reluctant to do so out of concerns over cost and whether publicly releasing the data will fix the problem.

The Consumers Union, which publishes the popular magazine Consumer Reports, wants states to require hospitals to make public data on patients infected at hospitals. That's because each year there are 2 million healthcare-related infections -- including 90,000 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It is a problem," said Lisa McGiffert, senior policy analyst for the group. "It affects the lives of 5 percent to 10 percent of hospital patients, who sometimes suffer debilitating long-term health consequences. We do want to give the system a little bit of a shove to take action."

The consumer push for better health information has already prompted four states -- Florida, Illinois, Missouri and Pennsylvania -- to require hospitals to make public such data.

Yet each of the states have fledgling reporting systems, as there is no industry standard. And existing Web sites that offer hospital information to consumers often have limited data, are difficult for consumers to use, or do not provide data on specific hospitals, McGiffert said.

Later this month, the federal health agency is expected to release recommendations on the best ways states can work with hospitals to make infection data public. A draft of the agency's plan was expected to be released Tuesday at the meeting of The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology in Atlanta.

The CDC became involved after many state officials sought the Atlanta-based agency's guidance on how best to report hospital infection rates.

"You want to have data ... so consumers can make decisions but also health care providers can use for improvement," said Dr. Denise Cardo, director of the CDC's division of healthcare quality promotion.

The CDC recommends that states make the most of local infection control experts and the vast array of knowledge the federal agency has built against infections in the last 30 years. In addition, states are urged to use existing public health data collection methods and to make sure any data collected is useful to the public and to health officials.

But hospitals and the CDC say there's not enough evidence that releasing infection rates to the public actually helps hospitals reduce the problem. Hospital officials say that collecting and analyzing the data

would be another huge task on top of other responsibilities -- including saving people's lives -- amid budget limitations.

"We are very interested in sharing our data with the public to make them safe and to provide a higher quality of care," said Nancy Foster of the American Hospital Association. "But how do you do that credibly? We don't need another set of data graveyards."

The hospital infection rates would have to be validated, which is neither easy to do nor cheap, Foster said. In addition, focus groups have had trouble understanding the information, she said.

But McGiffert says the infections cost hospitals about \$5 billion dollars a year, so it makes sense for hospitals to do everything possible to reduce the rates -- including making the problem known to the public.

"If they can reduce infections by half, they can save hospitals a lot of money," she said.

* _____

On the Net:

CDC info: <http://www.cdc.gov>

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology: <http://www.apic.org>

American Hospital Association: <http://www.aha.org>

Consumers Union: <http://www.consumersunion.org>

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TheWBALChannel.com

Emergency Rooms Busy As Flu Season Kicks In

Officials: Only Use ERs For True Emergencies

BALTIMORE -- Widespread influenza cases are crowding emergency rooms statewide, prompting health officials to ask residents to use them only for true emergencies.



INFLUENZA

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- ☐ This Year's Recommendations
- ☐ Prevention
- ☐ Treating Flu
- ☐ Protect Kids
- ☐ Pregnancy Risks
- ☐ Cold Or Flu?
- ☒ Worried About Getting Flu?
- ☒ Fight Flu At Work
- ☒ CDC Flu Site
- ☒ Map: Flu Trends
- ☒ How Viruses Work
- ☒ Find A Flu Shot Clinic

"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may have to be diverted away from the closest hospital," state health secretary S. Anthony McCann said Tuesday. "Please use emergency rooms only for true medical emergencies."

Gov. Robert Ehrlich said no one should hesitate to seek emergency services, "but when calling 911, be sure there is a true emergency situation."

Emergency departments throughout Maryland are experiencing a significant increase in patient visits, the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems said.

Dr. Robert R. Bass, MIEMMS Executive Director, said emergency activity normally peaks in the winter when flu and other respiratory illnesses peak.

Stay with TheWBALChannel.com and WBAL-TV 11 News for the latest health updates.

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Wed., Feb. 9
All Times ET/PT
8:00 60 Minutes
9:00 The King of
Queens
9:30 The King of
Queens
10:00 CSI: NY
10:30 60 Minutes

Many Maryland E.R.s Are Reaching Capacity ✓ NEW 9:40 AM

Feb 9, 2005 9:40 am US/Eastern

Baltimore, MD (WJZ) A critical situation is facing some Maryland hospitals.

Many injured or sick patients are struggling to find available emergency rooms.

E.R.'s statewide are nearing capacity levels and doctors say the flu is to blame.

The state's Emergency Medical Management Services Agency is directing ambulances to emergency rooms which have vacant examination rooms to have alleviate the problem.

Patients without life threatening injuries and illnesses are urged to stay away from emergency rooms and to make a doctor's appointment instead.

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AP

Video



 **Local Emergency Rooms are Crowded, Kai Jackson Reports**

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14 named to council on EMS

H 547FB

CENTREVILLE — The Queen Anne's County Commissioners appointed 14 members to the county's Department of Emergency Services Advisory Council.

The commissioners voted 5-0 on Feb 1 to appoint 10 voting members and four non-voting to the advisory council. Voting members include Queen Anne's County Sheriff Charles Crossley, Capt. Martin Knight of the Maryland State Police; Centreville Police Chief Ben Cohey; Dr. Chinnadurai Devadason, Queen Anne's County health officer; Dr. Deborah Davis, jurisdictional medical director; Ted Jackson, chairman of the Queen Anne's County Fire Chiefs Association; Lonnie Anthony, vice chairman of the Queen Anne's County Fire Chiefs Association; Guy Schelhouse, chairman of the ambulance committee; Francis C. Coursey III, volunteer firefighter with the Church Hill Volunteer Fire Company; and Robert Finck, a volunteer emergency medical services provider with the Kent Island Volunteer Fire Department. The non-voting members are county staff with the Department of Emergency Services: John Chew, director; Robbie Blackiston, communications chief; Gail Oldershaw, emergency management chief; and Scott Haas, EMS chief.

The 1st voting member, Kent Island resident Mike Hoffman, was appointed by the county commissioners in September 2004 to fill the "consumer" position on the advisory council.

The fifth non-voting member is the fire coordinator, a Department of Emergency Services staff position that is not yet filled.

CUMBERLAND TIMES-NEWS

CUMBERLAND, MD
WEDNESDAY 30,396
FEB 9 2005



Capital Clipping Service

36
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8 XX.... W3

ERs busy as flu season kicks in

BALTIMORE (AP) — Widespread influenza cases are crowding emergency rooms statewide, prompting health officials to ask residents to use them only for true emergencies.

"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may have to be diverted away from the closest hospital," state health secretary S. Anthony McCann said Tuesday. "Please use emergency rooms only for true medical emergencies."

Gov. Robert Ehrlich said no one should hesitate to seek emergency services, "but when calling 911, be sure there is a true emergency situation."

Emergency departments throughout Maryland are experiencing a significant increase in patient visits, the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems said.



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In case of emergency

Keeping track of chemicals in Harford

By Jessica Aldon

A key Harford public safety leadership position changed hands in January amid little fanfare when Richard Brooks of Norrisville took over as chairman of the committee responsible for keeping track of the myriad chemical threats to public health.

Brooks, 47, is a familiar face to those who work in the public safety field and to the committee he took over effective Jan. 19. But the average citizen of Harford County generally is better off at times when the organization is dealing with relatively low profile matters. The committee, known by the bureaucratically ambiguous moniker Local Emergency Planning Committee, was formed in the mid-1980s in the aftermath of an accidental release of chemicals at a plant in Bhopal, India. Thousands of people were killed and thousands more injured.

It came to light that many of the same safety issues that had made possible the Bhopal tragedy were also issues when it came to the storage, manufacture and transport of potentially dangerous chemicals in the U.S.

The result of concern about the potential problems in the U.S. was the federal Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act — often referred to by its initials, SARA — which was signed into law on Oct. 16, 1986, according to Harford County officials. Title III of the Act is known as the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Law or simply SARA Title III for short.

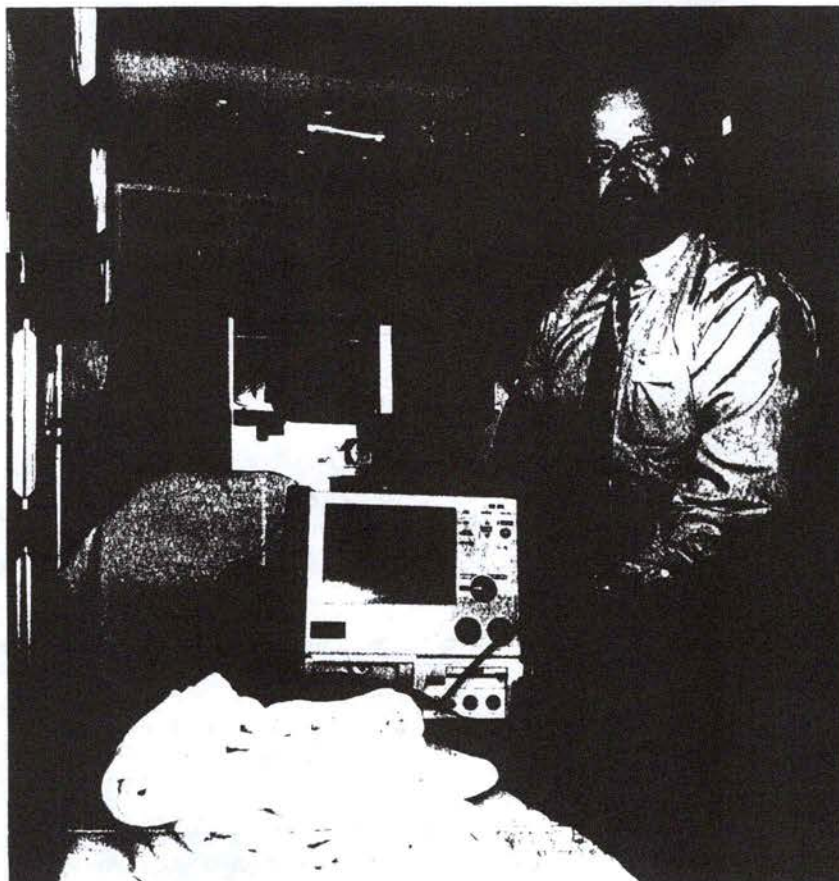
The states and counties were required, as a result of SARA, to do a number of things, and one of the responses in Maryland was the requirement that counties establish local emergency planning committees. In Harford County, the committee consists of representatives of elected officials, police agencies, fire and ambulance companies, hospitals, transportation operations, emergency planning officials, federal officials associated with local installations and people from key industrial facilities.

While it is theoretically possible the Local Emergency Planning Committee of Harford County would be the lead agency responsible for finding out what went wrong in the event of a Bhopal-type disaster, it is more common for the committee to end up dealing with more mundane matters, such as accidental fuel spills or intentional small-scale chemical dumping. The idea behind the committee is that it will prevent, rather than deal with, major chemical-spill problems.

It is also designed to allow citizens to know what kind of potentially hazardous or toxic chemicals different businesses have on hand in the area, where those chemicals are and what is being done with them.

Brooks, the committee's new chairman, is chief operating officer for Hart to Heart Ambulance in Churchville, a private ambulance company. He is also president of Norrisville Volunteer Fire Company.

Brooks' term as LEPC chairman can be indefinite, said Ernie Crist, emergency manager at Harford County's Emergency Operations Center and 911 dispatch center in Hickory. While Crist is a paid employee of the county in his capacity as 911 and emergency operations director, Brooks is



Richard Brooks is chairman of the Harford County Local Emergency Planning Committee, chief operating officer for Hart to Heart Ambulance in Churchville and president of Norrisville Volunteer Fire Company.

a volunteer member of the committee he now leads.

"From time to time we will have to submit his name to the state's emergency response committee for renewal or rectification," Crist said. "But otherwise he can stay on as long as he would like."

Former committee chairman Charles Jones resigned the post during commitments to his paid job with the Army. A farewell ceremony for Jones and welcome-as-chairman ceremony for Brooks was held at the Jan. 19 LEPC meeting.

Once Jones resigned, Harford County Executive Jim Harkins sought someone for the position who had both an interest and the background to take over as chairman of the committee.

Once Harkins had made his selection, he had to submit the name to a mirror committee at the state level for approval, Crist said.

"I think Richard will be a big help to Harford County," Crist said. "He was the chair of the Baltimore County LEPC, so he understands the role and will bring fresh ideas to the table."

Brooks said he is looking forward to Brooks' tenure and the ideas he will bring on how to better the emergency planning function in Harford County.

Brooks said he hopes to hold up his end of the bargain and make sure Harford County citizens know what is going on

with the committee.

"I hope we can live up to the community's right to know," Brooks said. "I think we've been doing a good job with the regulations of the LEPC and making sure the community is aware of any hazardous chemicals in the area."

In addition to being familiar with how Harford County emergency planning committee works, Brooks brings a wealth of knowledge from other jurisdictions and experience in the local volunteer fire and ambulance service.

Brooks was chairman of the Baltimore County Emergency Planning Committee for 14 years and has volunteered with Norrisville Volunteer Fire Company for 14 years, serving most recently as the fire company's president.

He said he thinks Harford County is in a unique situation with regard to chemical products. Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Clorox plant in Perryman, an ammonia shipping company, the Havre de Grace and other operations that deal in potentially hazardous chemicals are well established, as are major port routes for such products along the various rail and trucking routes that pass through the county.

Brooks said the community deserves to know what chemicals are, how they are transported, how they are stored and how they are disposed of. For example, at every meeting an update is given on the progress of dis-

Norrisville man in charge of plan

In case of emergency

LEPC, from A-1

mustard agent, an obsolete chemical weapon, that had been stockpiled at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Part of the purpose of committee is to inform the community about what is going on with emergency plans, including what is going on with chemicals in the county. The LEPC also enforces county codes on chemical and fuel spills and has the authority to levy fines against companies and individuals if it finds proper procedures weren't followed or were willfully violated.

The emergency planning committee generally meets at 3 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at the Harford County 911 Center in Hickory.

Brooks said he will work hard to make sure the communication lines between the community and the LEPC stay open.

Brooks has an extensive background in emergency services. In addition to serving as a volunteer fireman and paramedic, he was previously a paid fireman in Baltimore County. He said he has been working for Jason Skidmore, owner of Hart to Heart Ambulance, since 1994. He started as a consultant before becoming chief operating officer. Hart to Heart transports heart patients from hospital to hospital, generally in non-emergency situations.

Brooks said Hart to Heart transports anywhere between four to 10 people a day between hospitals in Harford County and Baltimore. In 2004, the bus was handled 1,600 transports.

Brooks is also a certified paramedic and on occasion goes on emergency calls on those relatively rare occasions when Hart to Heart is dispatched to handle such calls.

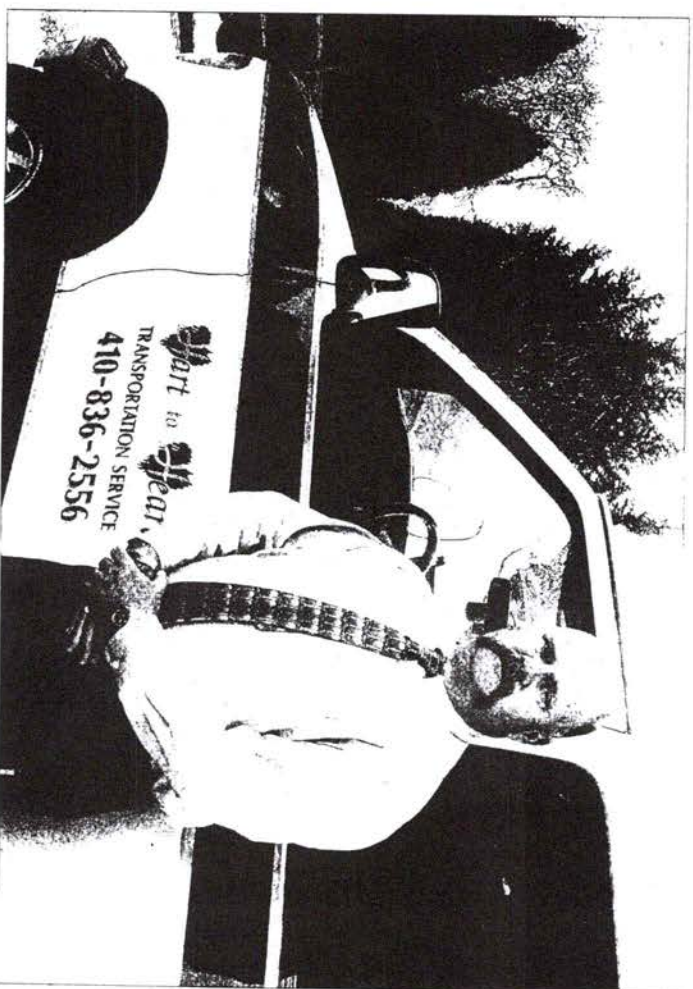
He said his most interesting call came in 1986 when he was on his first day on the job as a lieutenant with Baltimore County Fire Department. That was the day of the 1987 Amtrak train disaster in Chase. "I was on the first truck that made it to the scene," Brooks said. "I was right in the middle of all the action."

Brooks said it was comforting to see how the entire system worked: on that day, when a passenger train collided with a freight train, firefighters and emergency medical technicians were sent from all over the state to deal with the many people who had been injured.

Brooks has lived in Norrisville for 15 years. He is married and his wife teaches at John Archer School in Bel Air. His 21-year-old son works in the Anne Arundel County fire and EMS service and has been a volunteer at both Norrisville and Joppa-Magnolia volunteer fire companies.

Brooks went to Calvert Hall College for his high school education and to Community College of Baltimore and University of Maryland.

As for his goal as head of the emergency planning committee, Brooks said: "I hope we can continue to inform the county on what chemicals are here and what is going on with those chemicals."



Richard Brooks, chief operating officer for Hart to Heart Ambulance Corps in Chaseville, is the new chairman of the Harford County Local Emergency Planning Committee.

CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

WESTMINSTER, MD
WEDNESDAY 24,572
FEB 9 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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W3

ERs busier as flu season kicks in

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE — Widespread influenza cases are crowding emergency rooms wide, prompting health officials to residents to use them only for true emergencies.

"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may have to be diverted away from the closest hospital," state health secretary S. Anthony McCann said Tuesday. "Please use emergency rooms only for true medical emergencies."

Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. said no one should hesitate to seek emergency services, "but when calling 911, be sure there is a true emergency situation."

Emergency departments throughout Maryland are experiencing a significant increase in patient visits, the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems said.

Dr. Robert R. Bass, MIEMMS Executive Director, said emer-

547FB
"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may have to be diverted away ..."

S. Anthony McCann
State health secretary

gency activity normally peaks in the winter when flu and other respiratory illnesses peak.

KENT ISLAND BAY TIMES

STEVENSVILLE, MD
WEEKLY 5,000
FEB 9 2005



Capital Clipping Service

91 .X.3.. 23 XX... W3



Photo by ANGELA PRICE

547FB

Fire Dept. elects EMS officers for 2005

Queenstown Volunteer Fire Department Emergency Medical Services Officers for 2005 include, from the left, Lt. Jim Lewis, Administrator Terry Pilkerton, Capt. Ronnie Harrison, and Asst. Administrator Winfield Miller. Not pictured: Lt. Gerald Kellam and Hose Twister Larry Searce.



Capital Clipping Service

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W3
XX....

GVAD celebrates growth in 2004

547FB

By KONRAD SUROWIEC
Staff Writer

QUEENSTOWN — Members of Grasonville Volunteer Ambulance Department heard an upbeat message at their annual dinner Saturday night, Feb. 5, at the Queenstown Moose Lodge. The new ambulance station — once a distant dream — is under construction with completion expected in the spring.

Coming into the fall (of



Photo by KONRAD SUROWIEC

Jonathan McKenney, an EMT with Grasonville Volunteer Ambulance Department, holds the Captain's award he received at the department's annual dinner.

2004), the new membership has been surging. ... As we enter into 2005, the energy and excitement of the new year is intoxicating," said GVAD 2nd Lt. Andrew Blackwood.

He said GVAD's drivers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics responded to nearly 600 calls in four counties and transported patients to seven hospitals in 2004. Department vehicles logged over 35,000 miles. Blackwood recalled a year ago, in early 2004, the new building was "still a distant dream." Planning for the building began several years ago.

GVAD President Jimmy O'Donnell said construction on the ambulance building, located on Main Street next to the Grasonville Firehouse, began in early November 2004 and the department is shooting for completion in May. GVAD Vice President Bill Russell said the two-story structure will hold four ambulances and have a meeting room, kitchen, showers, and bunk room.

"It's been a long while coming," said O'Donnell.

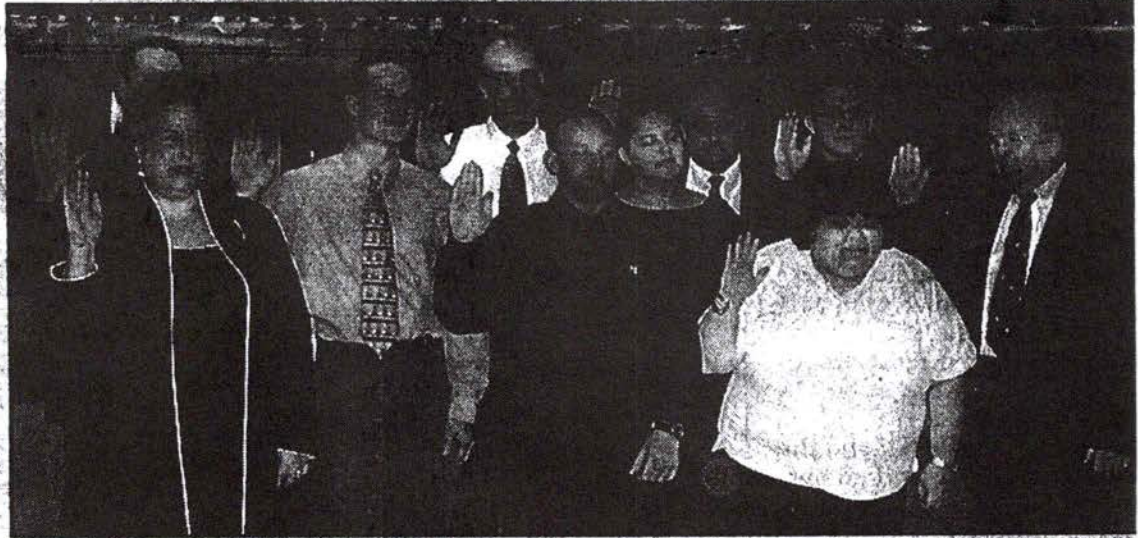
"Kicking and screaming all the way," said Russell.

The chicken and roast beef dinner was followed by words of thanks from GVAD officers to service clubs, community residents, and neighboring

See GVAD, p.5

volunteer fire departments and emergency medical services units in Queen Anne's County. GVAD Capt. Guy Schelhouse thanked Steve McCombs, chief of Grasonville Volunteer Fire Department, "for working with us and helping us become a better department."

Queen Anne's County Commissioner Ben Cassell gave the oath of office to the GVAD officers for 2005. Administrative officers include: O'Donnell, president; Russell, vice president; Sandy West, recording secretary; Kit Buckingham, corresponding secretary; Larissa George and Billy Seymour, members of the board of directors. Line officer include: Schelhouse, captain; Greg Harrison, first lieutenant; Blackwood, second lieutenant; and Frank Bell, sergeant. Two administrative officers not at the installation ceremony were Robin O'Donnell, treasurer, and



Administrative officers and line officers for Grasonville Volunteer Ambulance Department take the oath of office at the department's annual dinner Feb. 5. In front, from left, are Kit Buckingham, corresponding secretary; Andrew Blackwood, second lieutenant; Sandy West, recording secretary; and Bill Russell, vice president. In back, from left, are Jimmy O'Donnell (hidden from view), president; Greg Harrison, first lieutenant; Billy Seymour, member of the board of directors; Larissa George, member of the board of directors; Guy Schelhouse, captain; and Frank Bell, sergeant. Not shown are Robin O'Donnell, treasurer; and Jeff Risley, board of directors member.

Jeff Risley, a member of the board of directors.



Jimmy O'Donnell (right), president of Grasonville Volunteer Ambulance Department, presented the Director's Award to Guy Schelhouse, GVAD captain.

EMT Jon McKenney received the Captain's Award and the award for GVAD's top responder in 2004 with 232 calls. McKenney, Harrison and Russell received five-year service awards. The Attendant of the Year Award, voted on by members of the department, was presented to Schelhouse. He also received the Director's Award.

Awards were presented to volunteers who responded to 25 or more calls in 2004. The group included: Matt Coursey, 25; Erica Halsey, 35; Jim O'Donnell, 36; Rob Stroterhoff, 44; Blackwood, 55; Harrison, 59; Kenny Cross, 66; Seymour, 74; Charlie McLaughlin, 86; Bell, 91;

and Schelhouse, 189.

GVAD presented certificates of appreciation to Te Jackson, a Church Hill volunteer firefighter and chairman of the Queen Anne County Fire and EMS Commission; and Grasonville resident Barbara Wilkerson, longtime supporter of Grasonville's volunteer fire and ambulance departments.

GVAD is celebrating 30 years of service. The ambulance squad was organized in 1974 as part of GVFD. The ambulance department became a separate incorporated organization in 1991. Russell said GVAD has 37 members, including seven paramedics and about 20 EMTs and 10 drivers.

DAILY BANNER

CAMBRIDGE, MD
WEDNESDAY 6,750
FEB 9 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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Flu keeps ERs busy

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Widespread influenza cases are crowding emergency rooms statewide, prompting health officials to ask residents to use them only for true emergencies.

Representatives from fire department Emergency Medical Services programs, hospital emergency departments and local health departments have been monitoring Yellow Alert activity at the area hospitals. A Yellow Alert indicates that a hospital emergency department is experiencing a temporary overload and requests ambulances to transport patients to another hospital if possible. Even when on Yellow Alert, area hospitals remain open to treat seriously ill or injured patients.

"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may

have to be diverted away from the closest hospital," state health secretary S. Anthony McCann said Tuesday. "Please use emergency rooms only for true medical emergencies."

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) reported the first confirmed flu case in Maryland on Oct. 28, 2004 and currently is reporting the flu activity level as "widespread" in Maryland.

Gov. Robert Ehrlich said no one should hesitate to seek emergency services, "but when calling 911, be sure there is a true emergency situation."

Emergency departments throughout Maryland are experiencing a significant increase in patient visits, the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems said.

Dr. Robert R. Bass, MIEMSS executive director, said emer-

See Flu — Page 2

CALVERT RECORDER

PRINCE FREDERICK, MD
WEDNESDAY 10,000
FEB 9 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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Huntingtown firefighters feted

BY ROB PERRY
STAFF WRITER

The unsung heroes of the Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad were given their due Saturday night at the department's 32nd Annual Awards Banquet.

The awards banquet recognizes the department's top performers in the arena of saving lives and dousing fires in Calvert County. Local meteorologist Doug Hill began the evening by complimenting the

See Banquet, Page A-11



STAFF PHOTO BY ROB PERRY

From left, Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad Chief Ozzle Osborne, Deputy Chief Ricky Hayes, Assistant Chief Jonathan Riffe, top EMS and fire runner of 2004 Michael Nasti and Deputy EMS Chief Carroll Spriggs pose for a photo at the HVFDRS banquet Saturday night at the North Beach Fire Hall. Nasti answered 709 EMS calls and 544 fire calls.

Banquet

Continued from Page A-1

members and guests, who included Calvert County Commissioners Jerry Clark (R), Linda Kelley (R) and Wilson Parran (D).

"I want to thank you for all of the hard work you do for this county," Clark said to the crowd. "When the bell goes off when its cold and raining, you are the ones who go out there while the rest of us are in bed sleeping."

"We come here every year to say thank you and we mean thank you," Kelley said.

The department's President William Shrom presented a few awards to people who assist the department in various capacities. Chief Ozzie Osbourn presented awards to the department's leading call runners, the members who responded to the most emergency calls for help. Members who made more than 200 EMS calls were: John Dorsey, 229; Gene Farrell, 233; T. Nicholson, 244; Carroll Spriggs, 261; Stacy Clay, 297; Danny Cox, 301; Jon Riffe, 316; Eddie Bivens, 340; Ricky Hayes, 347; and Ozzie Osbourn, 457. The members who made more than 200 fire calls were: Robert Roundtree Jr., 204; Clinton Cox Jr., 206; Dave Willis, 211; Drew Amick, 215; Edward Bivens, 216; Mike Montgomery, 238; Kevin Farrell, 257; Paul Robison, 260; Timothy Nicholson, 262; David Cooper, 278; Carroll Spriggs, 286; John Dorsey, 324; Jon Riffe, 343; Ricky Hayes, 396; Gene Farrell, 388; Ozzie Osbourn, 447; Danny Cox, 470; and Chris Hengstenberg, 472.

The top runner for both fire and EMS calls was Michael Nasti. Nasti responded to 709 EMS calls and 544 fire calls.

The department presented the honorable Life Saving Award to members who responded to three separate incidents where their actions contributed to saving the life of a citizen.

Deputy Chief Ricky Hayes, Lt. Stacy Clay, EMT Jessi Nutwell, paramedics Stanis Inscöe, Herbert Hamilton, Capt. Russell Wells and firefighters

George Malone and Thomas Silvers received the Life Saving Award for an incident that occurred on Jan. 25, 2004. The members had received a call to help an asthma attack victim on Plum Point Road. When the crew arrived, they found the patient in cardiac arrest. The ambulance crew gave the patient CPR, and transported them to Calvert Memorial Hospital. By the time the ambulance arrived at the hospital, the patient had a pulse, blood pressure and an open airway. Osbourn said "because of the quick and skillful actions taken by (the members), the patient was given an extra opportunity at life."

Sgt. Eddie Bivens, EMT Kylie Price, Lt. Mike Montgomery, Assistant Chief Jon Riffe, Hayes, firefighters John Dorsey, Mark Morrison, Chris Hengstenberg, paramedic Eileen Jenkins and Capt. Larry Patin received the Life Saver Award for a call they responded to on March 22, 2004. At about 2:44 p.m., the crew responded to Patuxent United Methodist Church where they found an 86-year-old woman lying on the floor of a bus. The woman was not breathing and had an extremely low pulse rate. The crew initiated rescue breathing and loaded the patient onto the ambulance and took her to Calvert Memorial Hospital. By the time the ambulance arrived at Calvert Memorial, the patient's heart rate had been raised to near normal.

Bivens, EMT Brittany McLelland, Nutwell, EMT Kevin Farrell, Brian Thrasher, Officer John Borden, firefighters Robert Roundtree Sr. and Mike Nasti, Osbourn, EMT Bo McKenney and paramedic John Hassler received the Life Saver Award for a call they responded to on May 15, 2004.

At around 12:54 p.m., the department received a call for an unconscious child in the 4300 block of South Creek Court. When the crew arrived, they found a 5-year-old girl unconscious in a pool.

The crew was told by people on the scene that the child was in the pool at the bottom for a long period of time.

The child was pulled out of the pool and the crew gave her CPR. The crew was able to get the child to breathe. On the way to the hospital, the child regained full consciousness and was held at Calvert Memorial Hospital for observation. Osbourn said because of the crew's quick actions, "a child's life was saved."

In addition to presenting the outstanding members of the department with awards, the company's past presidents and chiefs were honored with a badge and a salute from the deputy and assistant chiefs, Hayes, Riffe and Spriggs.

Towards the end of the evening, members of the company who had died were honored with a moment of silence as Osbourn rang a bell six times, once for each member who had passed on.

The department also swore in their new officers for 2004. They are: President, William Shrom III; Vice President, Mike Bowen; Secretary, Gene Farrell; Treasurer, Paul Robinson; Board of directors—Scott Bowen, Ron Nahas, Larry Patin, Ricky Ward and Mike Wells; Chief, Ozzie Osbourn; Assistant Chief, Jon Riffe; Deputy Chief-Fire, Ricky Hayes; Deputy Chief-EMS, Carroll Spriggs; Capt.-Fire, Larry Patin; Capt.-EMS, Bo McKinney; Lt.-Fire, Danny Cox; Lt. EMS, Kylie Price; Lt.-Rescue, Mike Montgomery; Sgt.-Fire, Eddie Bivens; Chief Engineer, Chris Ward; engineers, Norman Hawkins and John Dorsey; Safety Officer, Clinton Cox Jr.; Auxiliary Officers—President, Erika Schroeder; Vice President Betty Johnson; Secretary Michelle Armstrong; and Treasurer, Mandy Bowen.

Other outstanding members who were honored at the banquet were:

EMS rookie of the year: Jessi Nutwell;

Firefighter rookie of the year: Chris Hengstenberg;

Firefighter of the year: Gene Farrell;

EMS of the year: Brittany McLelland;

Rescue person of the year: Mike Montgomery;

Chief's Award: Stacy Clay; Officer of the Year: Jon Riffe.

THE STAR



DEMOCRAT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2005

SERVING THE MID-SHORE FOR 205 YEARS

Crowded ERs mark influenza season Spokesman says Dorchester General and Memorial Hospital at Easton are full

By SARAH ENSOR
Staff Writer

EASTON — The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems Tuesday announced patient visits to emergency rooms in the state have increased significantly, making some emergency departments go on yellow alert.

Dorchester General Hospital and the Memorial Hospital at Easton are full, not unusual for influenza season, said Patti Willis, spokesman for Shore Health

System.

The State of Maryland reports the flu is widespread in the state, but exact numbers are not available. The Web site for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene states reporting laboratory confirmed influenza cases is voluntary.

Willis said many people go to the emergency room when they do not have primary care physicians.

In emergencies, people should go to the emergency room, Willis said, but for non-emergencies, they should call their regu-

lar doctor.

Many people visit the emergency room with flu-like symptoms, and some have flu-related complications, like dehydration, respiratory problems or pneumonia.

With both hospitals full, emergency room patients who need to stay in the hospital must wait for a bed, Willis said. Those people have to stay in the emergency room, she said, limiting space for other emergency room patients.

Willis said the message is not to avoid the emergency room if emergency care is

needed, but to call primary care physicians for non-emergencies to ensure the proper level of care is given.

People with flu-like symptoms will be required to wear a mask in the waiting room at the two hospitals, Willis said. That measure is designed to prevent the spread of flu and to protect flu patients from secondary illnesses. The hospitals have enacted the policy for the last several years, she said.

Willis said the emergency room staff will see patients as quickly as possible.

DAILY TIMES

SALISBURY, MD
THURSDAY 27, 964
FEB 10 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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Maryland
547FB
STATE INSTITUTE SAYS HOSPITALS
NEARING CAPACITY. Emergency
departments statewide are
experiencing a significant
increase in the number of
patient visits, according to
the Maryland Institute for
Emergency Medical
Services. The institute's
executive director said
emergency department
activity typically peaks this
time of year, when flu and
respiratory illnesses are
common.

REPUBLICAN

OAKLAND, MD
WEEKLY 11,072
FEB 10 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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TACO BELL DONATES TO RESCUE SQUAD - The Oakland Taco Bell recently donated \$3,132 to the Southern Garrett County Rescue Squad to support the squad's new building campaign. Taco Bell pledged 20 percent of all sales made at its Garrett Highway restaurant between the hours of 5 and 8 p.m. from July through December 2004. The restaurant paid an additional \$50 bonus when the 20 percent figure exceeded \$60. Supporters boosted sales above the 20 percent level 22 times during the campaign's 26 Tuesdays, earning bonuses totaling \$1,100, noted a Taco Bell spokesperson. Pictured, left to right, at the check presentation are Oakland Taco Bell manager Olive DeWitt, Barbara Tichnell, SGCRS financial secretary, and David Moon, SGCRS president. Taco Bell plans to kick off a series of "Dog Day Mondays" beginning Feb. 21 to raise funds for the Oakland City Police Department's purchase of a new K-9 dog. The new dog is necessary to replace the department's current K-9, Uro, who is 7 years old and suffering some health problems. The cost of certifying a new K-9 and its handler is estimated at \$10,000, noted the spokesperson. In the past, the K-9 has been instrumental in investigating narcotics violations, building searches, and tracking burglary suspects. 247FB

REPUBLICAN

OAKLAND, MD
WEEKLY 11,072
FEB 10 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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LIONS MAKE DONATION - The Oakland/Mtn. Lake Park Lions Club recently donated \$1,000 to the Southern Garrett County Rescue Squad to support the squad's new building campaign. Eric Sanders, the club's first vice president, is pictured at left presenting the check to David C. Moon, SGCRS president.

washingtonpost.com

Flu Season Arrives, Late but Potent

Sufferers Overflow Emergency Rooms, and 24 Maryland Hospitals Set Restrictions

By Fredrick Kunkle and D'Vera Cohn

Washington Post Staff Writers

Friday, February 11, 2005; Page B01

At a hospital in Annapolis, some emergency room patients waited three to five hours to see a doctor yesterday. At the University of Virginia, twice as many students as usual have reported flulike illnesses. And in the District, Elizabeth Latwin couldn't seem to find anyone who wasn't feeling lousy.

"Everyone in the office was sick. Everyone I go to school with is getting sick," said Latwin, a Catholic University law student. "We're passing it around to each other."

The winter season for flu and other illnesses has hit the Washington region later than usual this year, emptying offices and schools and sending overflow crowds to emergency rooms with gastrointestinal problems and upper respiratory infections.

By 2:30 p.m. yesterday, the Maryland agency responsible for coordinating emergency medical treatment reported that 24 hospitals, most in the Baltimore area, were filling with so many sick people that their staffs could no longer accept ambulance runs in cases that were not life-threatening.

Twelve hospitals in the state were operating under a "red alert," which meant that their emergency rooms were so crowded that they had to turn some patients away, according to the Web site operated by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems. Among the hardest-hit areas are Anne Arundel and Howard counties.

"I've been working in D.C. for more than nine years, and this is the worst I've seen," said Jack Dubin, medical director of the emergency room at Washington Hospital Center. "Every hospital is busy. There are very long waits."

Other sufferers, among the walking wounded, soldiered on with their trusty Z-PAKs, green cardboard packets of the antibiotic Zithromax, which is commonly prescribed for bronchial infections.

Latwin, an Arlington County resident who juggles her law studies with an internship in the Montgomery County state's attorney's office, said she came down with what she thinks was just a nasty cold, not the flu. But it sent her temperature soaring and robbed her of her voice for six days.

A spokeswoman at Anne Arundel Medical Center said yesterday that about 40 people had been admitted to the Annapolis hospital in the previous 24 hours. That's up from an average of about 25, said the spokeswoman, Martha Harlan.

"It's not just one bug that's causing all this," said Richard L. Alcorta, who heads the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems. At one emergency room, he said, doctors found that about 20 percent of the patients had the influenza A strain. The rest were suffering from viral infections that caused upper respiratory and gastrointestinal distress.

Some doctors also reported a seasonal jump in the number of cases of strep throat.

But gauging the severity of the flu outbreak was difficult because in many jurisdictions it is an illness that is reported on a voluntary basis to health officials.

"Especially with the weather going hot and cold, hot and cold, we usually see it," said Stephen M. Bane, an ear, nose and throat specialist in private practice near Potomac Hospital in Woodbridge. He said the number of flu cases seems to be lower than typical for this time of year.

"There have been some isolated flu outbreaks in the D.C. area, but nothing like we usually get. We may get away without a major flu outbreak this year," he said.

Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reported a total of about 1,030 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza as of yesterday, spokesman John Hammond said. He cautioned that because influenza is not a medical condition that health care providers must report to state officials, the numbers give only a rough approximation of the illness's spread.

A chart on the agency's Web site shows that confirmed cases are coming in at a rate of about 250 a week, still well below the peak of about 350 a week reported in the 2003-04 season. That spike in flu cases also occurred in the last three weeks of 2003.

Public officials across the region have been urging people to use common sense before heading to the hospital. If a person is breathing well, running a fever that can be managed with over-the-counter medications and keeping down fluids, the person probably can ride it out, the officials said.

But a sick person who runs a higher temperature, feels short of breath, has trouble keeping fluids down and becomes lightheaded when going from sitting to standing should seek medical attention -- preferably from a primary-care physician first, Alcorta said. People with serious underlying health conditions, such as asthma or HIV infections, should not hesitate to seek medical care, he said.

Staff writers Michele Clock, David A. Fahrenthold and Susan Kinzie contributed to this report.

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CAPITAL

ANNAPOLIS, MD
FRIDAY 45,303
FEB 11 2005



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Emergency rooms see rise in flu cases

547FB
By PAMELA WOOD
Staff Writer

While Anne Arundel County's hospitals and emergency medical services have not been overwhelmed by a rising number of flu cases, state health officials are warning patients not to go to the emergency room unless it's absolutely necessary.

Emergency in some parts of the state have been overrun with sniffling, aching patients as the flu takes hold in Maryland, according to state health officials. That doesn't leave enough room for the more critical patients with broken bones or serious illnesses.

State health and emergency management officials issued a joint statement this week asking flu sufferers to stay home from the hospital if they can.

Anne Arundel Medical Center and North Arundel Hospital haven't been overcrowded with flu patients, though hospital officials say that could change.

"That was definitely a problem last year and it could be a problem this year if the number of flu cases continues to increase," said Margot Mohsberg, a spokesman for Anne Arundel Medical

WARNING SIGNS

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that patients seek medical help right away if they are experiencing the following flu "emergency warning signs."

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing.
- Bluish skin color.
- Not drinking enough fluids.
- Not waking up or not interacting.
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held.
- Flu-like symptoms that improve, but then return with a fever and worse cough.

• Fever with a rash.

In adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen.
- Sudden dizziness.
- Confusion.
- Severe or persistent vomiting.

(See FLU, Page A12) A

FLU

(Continued from Page A1)

Center.

Maryland is among 16 states reporting "widespread" flu activity, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That means flu or flu-like illnesses are showing up in all parts of the state.

This flu season started later and has been milder — so far — than last year.

Anne Arundel County has had 105 confirmed cases of the flu this season, compared to 344 cases this time last year, said Ellen Jones, a county health spokesman. Doctors aren't required to report flu to authorities, however, and many people recover from the flu without ever seeking medical attention.

When hospitals are overloaded, they go on "yellow alert" status and some incoming patients are sent elsewhere if possible. Hospitals on yellow alert still treat seriously ill or injured patients.

AAMC has gone to yellow alert several times in recent weeks, Ms. Mohsberg said. Last weekend, 239 people came to the hospital for help, up from the normal average of 200. Twenty-five to 40 people a day are being admitted to the hospital for overnight stays, a higher than average number.

Ms. Mohsberg said that while

the number of flu cases is rising slightly, it is not the major reason for the increase. The exact number of flu cases was not available this morning.

"Our numbers are up in the emergency department, though we have not seen a huge increase," Ms. Mohsberg said.

Despite having its busiest month ever last month, North Arundel Hospital avoided problems by bringing in extra staff and opening new beds, said hospital spokesman Allison Eatough.

"They're going to try to keep that up as the numbers increase," she said.

The Glen Burnie hospital did not have to go to yellow alert at all last month. Right now, the hospital is treating between 10 and 20 cases of the flu each week.

Mrs. Eatough said patients still should go to the emergency room if they feel they are having serious problems with the flu or can't see their regular doctor.

"We want to make sure if people feel they are really sick to still come in," she said.

Ambulances crews haven't had much of a problem either, said Capt. Michael Cox, a county Fire Department spokesman.

"We've experienced a few slight delays the past few weeks. It's nothing jeopardizing service or delaying care," he said.

To keep the flu from overwhelming hospitals and emer-

gency crews, health officials are asking people to consider how severe their symptoms are before heading to the emergency room.

"This time of year that the emergency departments see an increase in patients appearing with winter illnesses. This takes up valuable space for the more critical patients," said Dr. Robert R. Bass, director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems.

County Health Officer Frances B. Phillips and Fire Chief Ronald D. Blackwell yesterday urged flu patients to go to their regular doctor first before going to the hospital.

The county Health Department still has some flu shots available. A clinic by appointment only will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday at the Health Services Building at 8 Harry S Truman Parkway outside Annapolis. Call 410-222-4896 to make an appointment.

Flu shots also are available by appointment at the Glen Burnie Health Center, 416 A Street, SW, by calling 410-222-6633.

The county requests donations of \$10 per shot. The donations is covered by Medicare Part B, and patients should bring their Medicare card with them.

pwood@capitalgazette.com

ENTERPRISE

LEXINGTON PARK, MD
FRIDAY 16,000
FEB 11 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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ERs jammed as winter illnesses hit

BY KEVIN CONRON

STAFF WRITER

5HFB

The flu season has arrived, swamping emergency rooms in Southern Maryland with patients seeking treatment.

On Tuesday the emergency rooms at Calvert Memorial Hospital in Prince Frederick, Civista Medical Center in La Plata and St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown were unavailable for 60 percent of the time, except for most urgent patients, said Lisa Myers, with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services.

"This is our peak for the 2004-2005 [flu] season," Myers said.

Hospitals around the state, including Civista, were issuing yellow alerts to emergency medical services departments,

meaning they were at capacity except for seriously ill or injured patients.

Calvert and St. Mary's issued red alerts, meaning at one time on Wednesday they didn't have beds with monitoring equipment available.

Debbie Shuck-Reynolds, clinical coordinator of the emergency department at Civista, said it has been busy. "The hospital has been full consistently," she said.

Hospital staffs are seeing it all when it comes to winter ailments.

"We are getting hit really hard with flu right now," Shuck-Reynolds said, as well as gastrointestinal virus.

People may not understand the alerts, she said. They don't

A See Illness, Page A-4

Illness

Continued from Page A-1

mean people won't be treated, but those with minor problems will have lower priority than those more seriously ill.

"We don't like to see our patients waiting, but that swollen ankle is going to have to wait," she said.

Shuck-Reynolds suggests people seek treatment first with a family doctor.

And if a winter illness strikes, stay at home. Don't let children who are ill go to school, where they can spread the virus.

"Yes, you're feeling miserable," Shuck-Reynolds said of those suffering from the flu, "but you should be able to get to the family doctor."

Dr. Robert R. Bass, MIEMSS executive director, said, "This is the time of the year that the emergency departments see an increase in patients appearing with winter illnesses. This takes up valuable space for the more critical patients."

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reported the first confirmed flu case in Maryland on Oct. 28, 2004, and currently is reporting the flu activity level as "widespread" in Maryland.

"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may have to be diverted away from the closest hospital," said DHMH Secretary S. Anthony McCann. "Please use emergency rooms only for true medical emergencies."

MARYLAND INDEPENDENT

WALDORF, MD
FRIDAY 25,000
FEB 11 2005



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Emergency rooms fill with winter ills

BY KEVIN CONRON
STAFF WRITER

The flu season has arrived, swamping emergency rooms in Southern Maryland with patients seeking treatment.

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Frederick, Civista Medical Center in La Plata and St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown were unavailable for 60 percent of the time, except for the most urgent patients, said Lisa Myers of the Maryland Institute For Emergency Med.

See Hospitals, Page A-11

Hospitals

Continued from Page A-1

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Calvert Memorial and St. Mary's issued red alerts, meaning at one time on Wednesday they didn't have beds with monitoring equipment available.

Debbie Shuck-Reynolds, clinical coordinator of the emergency department at Civista, said it has been busy.

"The hospital has been full consistently," she said. You name it, hospital staff is seeing when it comes to winter ailments. "We are getting hit really hard with flu right now," Shuck-Reynolds said, as well as gastrointestinal virus and winter vomiting.

People may not understand the alerts, she said. They don't mean people won't be treated, but those with minor problems will have lower priority than the seriously ill.

"We don't like to see our patients waiting, but that swollen ankle is going to have to wait," she said.



Shuck-Reynolds

Shuck-Reynolds suggests people seek treatment first with the family doctor. And if a winter illness strikes, stay at home.

Don't let children who are ill go to school where they can spread the virus.

"Yes, you're feeling miserable," Shuck-Reynolds said if the flu strikes, "but you should be able to get to the family doctor."

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The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reported the first confirmed flu case in Maryland on Oct. 28 and currently is reporting the flu activity level as "widespread" in Maryland.

"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may have to be diverted away from the closest hospital," said DHMH Secretary S. Anthony McCann. "Please use emergency rooms only for true medical emergencies."

Local paramedics honored during annual dinner

By Jennifer Lehman 54 JFB
Staff Writer

(Feb. 11, 2005) Local emergency service workers were recognized and applauded for their service during an annual dinner held by the Ocean City Paramedic Foundation last Thursday evening at the Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel.

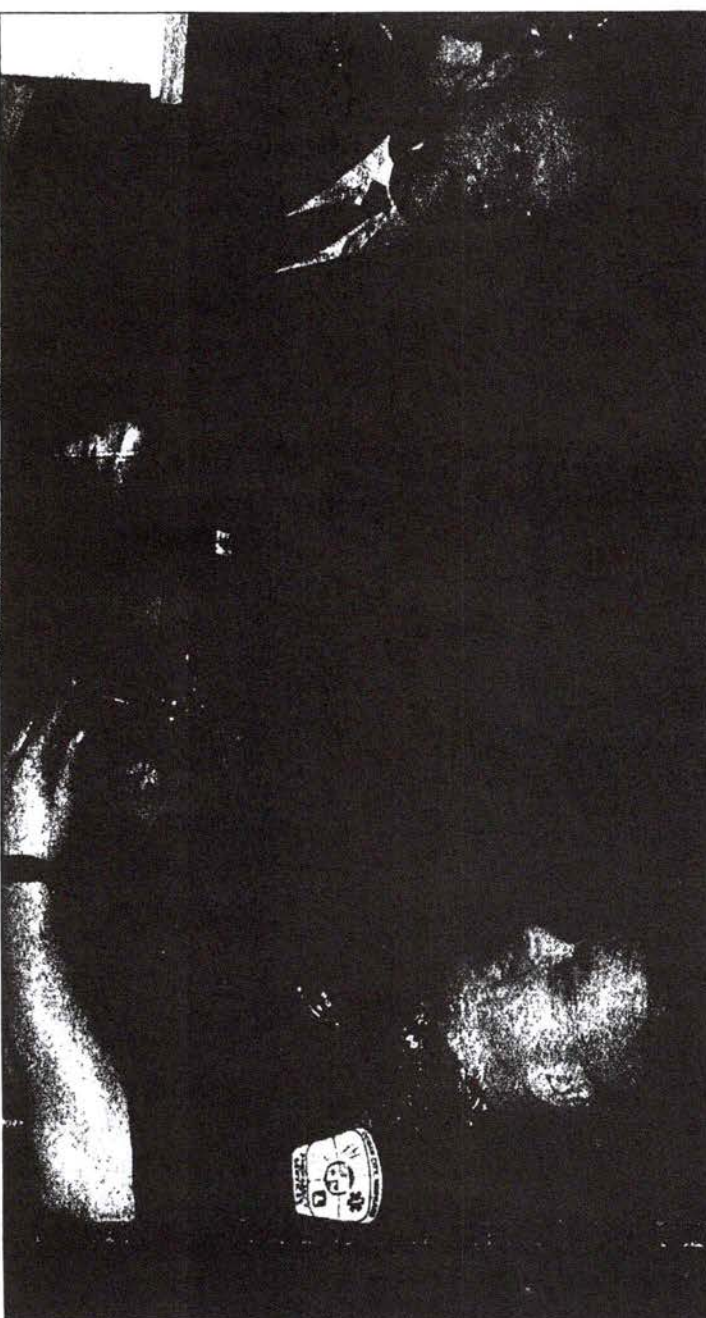
Firefighter and paramedic Craig Temple was named the 2004 Paramedic of the Year, a prestigious award that is voted on by fellow emergency personnel. Temple, who received a plaque and key to the city, was given this award for his work ethic and dedication to the department.

"We really are a family," he said. "We stick together."

Mayor Jim Mathias also received recognition and was named the "Most Ingenious Person of the Year" - an award given to a clever and resourceful person.

"Well, I've won six awards ... five elections and this," Mathias said as he held up his plaque.

Other paramedics were also recognized and received an Outstanding Service Award for their achievements. They include Lt. Chuck Barton for the development and maintenance of the Automated External Defibrillator program in city buildings; David Cropper for the development and maintenance of the AED program for all fire departments; Larry Sackdorf for his continued involvement in the community with the SAM (Save A Minute) boxes and general water safety education; and Darrick Elliott and Alan Schweizer for surf



Ocean City Mayor Jim Mathias presents paramedic Craig Temple with a key to the city. Temple was named Paramedic of the Year by the Ocean City Paramedic Foundation last Thursday evening.

rescue.

Firefighter and paramedic J.H. Williams also won a special award for organizing his shift to assist the fire department with duty crews and organization of Adopt a Family for Christmas.

"It's nice to recognize people who've worked so hard," said Dick Pairo, founder of the Ocean City Paramedic Foundation. The organization, which was created in 1988, donates money and equipment to paramedics.

The Paramedic Foundation has provided

an awful lot of money to the paramedics for a number of years," City Council President Rick Meethan said. "Money that sometimes Ocean City doesn't have for them in the budget."

Ocean City paramedics responded to more than 5,000 calls in 2004. Of those calls, paramedics aided nearly 3,600 patients and transported 2,240 of them to area healthcare facilities.

"Paramedics are our connection to the hospital," Pairo said, explaining hospitals should be less significant if there weren't

knowledgeable paramedics aiding patients as they are being transported.

Capt. David Collins, who received recognition by Fire and EMS officials near the end of the dinner, said paramedics respond to a multitude of injuries - anywhere from a stubbed toe on the Boardwalk to a horrific car wreck on Coastal Highway.

The dinner was "to recognize what we do for Ocean City. It's nice there's a group of concerned citizens," Collins said. "They don't have to do it, but they do, do it to make life better."



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Monday, Feb. 14
All Times ET/PT
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9:00 Everybody
Loves Raymond
9:30 Two and a
Half Men

10:00 48 Hours
10:30 48 Hours

Seasonal Illnesses Cause Hospital Numbers to Rise

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Feb 12, 2005 6:04 pm US/Eastern

(AP) Although a feared flu epidemic hasn't materialized, Maryland hospitals are seeing more patients suffering from seasonal illnesses.

Dr. Richard L. Alcorta, medical director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, said hospitals across the state have called in extra staff. Hospitals also have put up temporary beds in some areas and postponed elective surgeries to deal with the increase in patients with winter ailments.

He attributed the normal heavy patient load for this time of year to seasonal occurrences of influenza, as well as a gastrointestinal virus generically referred to as "stomach flu."

Pneumonia and bronchitis have also been common.

"Essentially all of our hospital beds, in a lot of our hospitals, are full," Alcorta said. But, he added, "Each year we see some of this."

As of 5 p.m. Friday, 18 Maryland hospitals were operating under "red" or "yellow" alerts.

A yellow alert means the hospital is asking that noncritical patients be sent to the next-nearest facility.

A red alert means the hospital's critical-care beds are full, so people requiring inpatient critical-care treatment should be sent elsewhere, if possible.

Hospitals are not turning away patients with life-threatening injuries or illnesses.

Even hospitals that have experienced a large increase in admissions said they have been able to handle the load.

"Winter is busier," said Dr. Dick Kuo, medical director of the adult emergency room at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

"We've been very crowded but not overwhelmed."

During his Thursday night shift at Northwest Hospital Center in Randallstown, emergency room physician Dr. Frederick Burke said some patients were being placed on extra beds in the hallways.



Although this winter seems busier than the last, he said, it's not uncommon for hospitals to experience yellow and red alerts this time of year.

"It happens all the time," he said. "Patient care is not compromised as a result of it."

Alcorta said that 18 of 22 hospitals in Central Maryland had posted a yellow alert Tuesday.

Although requests to divert patients are common, that number was "actually pretty high," Alcorta said.





One problem, he said, is that economic pressures have forced hospitals to reduce the size of their staffs, giving them less flexibility to handle patient loads during heavy periods.

"They've been decreasing their surge capability," Alcorta said.

He said people who are sick should seek medical care, but he encouraged those with mild symptoms to either monitor their health for a few days or see their primary-care doctor.

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Hospitals throughout Md. see outbreak of flu cases

Extra staff called to work, temporary beds put up

By ERIKA NIEDOWSKI
SUN STAFF

Though fears of a flu epidemic have so far gone unrealized, emergency rooms throughout Maryland have been taxed to capacity — and in some cases beyond — by an influx of patients complaining of seasonal illnesses.

Dr. Richard L. Alcorta, medical director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, said hospitals across the state called in extra staff, put up temporary beds in some areas and postponed elective surgeries to deal with the

increase in patients with winter ailments.

He attributed the heavy patient load — which happens almost every winter — to seasonal occurrences of influenza, as well as a gastrointestinal virus generically referred to as “stomach flu.” Pneumonia and bronchitis have also been common.

“Essentially all of our hospital beds, in a lot of our hospitals, are full,” Alcorta said. But, he added, “Each year we see some of this.”

As of 5 p.m. yesterday, 18 Maryland hospitals were operating under “red” or “yellow” alerts. A yellow alert means the hospital is asking that noncritical patients be sent to the next-nearest facility.

A red alert

[See Flu, 3B]

Flu patients taxing state's hospitals to capacity

[Flu, from Page 1B]

means the hospital's critical-care beds are full, so people requiring inpatient critical-care treatment should be sent elsewhere, if possible.

Hospitals are not turning away patients with life-threatening injuries or illnesses. Even hospitals that have experienced a large increase in admissions said they have been able to handle the load.

“Winter is busier,” said Dr. Dick Kuo, medical director of the adult emergency room at the University of Maryland Medical Center. “We’ve been very crowded but not overwhelmed.”

During his Thursday night shift at Northwest Hospital Center in Randallstown, emergency room physician Dr. Frederick Burke said some patients were being placed on extra beds in the hallways. Although this winter seems busier than the last, he said, it's not uncommon for hospitals to experience yellow and red alerts this time of year.

“It happens all the time,” he said. “Patient care is not compromised as a result of it.”

Alcorta said that 18 of 22 hos-

pitals in Central Maryland had posted a yellow alert Tuesday. Although requests to divert patients are common, that number was “actually pretty high,” Alcorta said.

One problem, he said, is that economic pressures have forced hospitals to reduce the size of their staffs, giving them less flexibility to handle patient loads during heavy periods.

“They’ve been decreasing their surge capability,” Alcorta said. He said people who are sick should seek medical care, but he encouraged those with mild symptoms to either monitor their health for a few days or see their primary-care doctor.

Dr. Michael Pipkin, emergency room director at Franklin Square Hospital Center, said patient volume there has been predictably very high. But many people showing up in the ER didn't need emergency treatment and wound up clogging the system.

“Patients with flu occasionally need to come to the ER, but that's rare,” he said. “Those who can't manage at home are typically the very young and the very old.”

Dr. Lisa Maragakis, associate epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins Hospital, said flu arrived later this winter than last, when it peaked in mid-December. Hopkins' ER staff has been busy treating flu patients, she said, as well as those with other viral symptoms.

“They're typical wintertime pathogens,” she said. “It's not unexpected.”

At Anne Arundel Medical Center, the number of emergency patients jumped from an average of 200 to 240 on Sunday, said Margot Mohsberg, a hospital spokeswoman. The number of patients admitted increased from about 25 to 40. She attributed the jump to influenza, stomach flu and a variety of other ailments.

“We are definitely seeing more patients, but we are definitely not overwhelmed,” she said.

St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson treated a record number of emergency patients, 183, on Monday. Many were elderly men and women with pneumonia, said hospital spokeswoman Vivienne Stearns-Elliott. Flu did not account for the majority of cases.

As of Thursday, more than halfway through the flu season, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene had reported 1,030 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza. The state recorded nearly 2,200 during all of last flu season.

Federal health officials called for a rationing of vaccine in the fall after factory contamination kept half the nation's supply from reaching the market. But a few million doses are still available, and officials said it's not too late to be immunized.

Meanwhile, area hospital officials said they have tried to cope with longer-than-usual waiting times in emergency rooms by bringing in additional staff.

“You bring in nurses, you bring in techs to help the emergency room,” said Michael Schwartzberg, a spokesman for Greater Baltimore Medical Center, which had posted both yellow and red alerts yesterday afternoon. “We’ve done what we can do to get patients moving through the system.”

Sun staff writers David Kohn, Dennis O'Brien and Michael Stroh contributed to this article.

FREDERICK NEWS-POST

FREDERICK, MD
SUNDAY 41,707
FEB 13 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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W4

Winter ailments taking their toll

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BALTIMORE (AP) — Although a feared flu epidemic hasn't materialized, Maryland hospitals are seeing more patients suffering from seasonal illnesses.

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A red alert means the hospital's critical-care beds are full, so people requiring inpatient critical-care treatment should be sent elsewhere, if possible.

CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

WESTMINSTER, MD
SUNDAY 24,572
FEB 13 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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Md. hospitals see more patients as winter takes its toll

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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BALTIMORE — Although a feared flu epidemic hasn't materialized, Maryland hospitals are seeing more patients suffering from seasonal illnesses.

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CUMBERLAND TIMES-NEWS

CUMBERLAND, MD
SUNDAY 32,583
FEB 13 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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State hospitals seeing more patients

^{5 FEB}
BALTIMORE (AP) — Although a feared flu epidemic hasn't materialized, Maryland hospitals are seeing more patients suffering from seasonal illnesses.

Dr. Richard L. Alcorta, medical director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, said hospitals across the state have called in extra staff. Hospitals also have put up temporary beds in some areas and postponed elective surgeries to deal with the increase in patients with winter ailments.

He attributed the normal heavy

patient load for this time of year to seasonal occurrences of influenza, as well as a gastrointestinal virus generically referred to as "stomach flu." Pneumonia and bronchitis have also been common.

"Essentially all of our hospital beds, in a lot of our hospitals, are full," Alcorta said. But, he added, "Each year we see some of this."

As of 5 p.m. Friday, 18 Maryland hospitals were operating under "red" or "yellow" alerts. A yellow alert means the hospital is asking that noncritical patients be sent to the next-nearest facility.

A red alert means the hospital's critical-care beds are full, so people requiring inpatient critical-care treatment should be sent elsewhere, if possible.

Hospitals are not turning away patients with life-threatening injuries or illnesses. Even hospitals that have experienced a large increase in admissions said they have been able to handle the load.

"Winter is busier," said Dr. Dick Kuo, medical director of the adult emergency room at the University of Maryland Medical Center. "We've been very crowded, but not overwhelmed."

Hospitals seeing more patients as ailments take toll

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Medical Center.

"We've been very crowded but not overwhelmed."

During his Thursday night shift at Northwest Hospital Center in Randallstown, emergency room physician Dr. Frederick Burke said some patients were being placed on extra beds in the hallways.

Although this winter seems busier than the last, he said, it's not uncommon for hospitals to experience yellow and red alerts this time of year.

"It happens all the time," he said. "Patient care is not compromised as a result of it."

Alcorta said that 18 of 22 hospitals in Central Maryland had posted a yellow alert Tuesday.

Although requests to divert patients are common, that number was "actually pretty high," Alcorta said.


One problem, he said, is that economic pressures have forced hospitals to reduce the size of their staffs, giving them less flexibility to handle patient loads during heavy periods.

"They've been decreasing their surge capability," Alcorta said.

He said people who are sick should seek medical care, but he encouraged those with mild symptoms to either monitor their health for a few days or see their primary-care doctor.

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The Washington Times

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Flu patients flood emergency rooms

By Melissa Brosk

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Published February 13, 2005

Flu sufferers have been filling area emergency rooms, prompting some to close their doors to ambulances, medical services officials say.

Friday was among the busiest days. Six hospitals in the District were on "yellow alert," meaning they had asked to receive only patients needing urgent medical care. In Maryland, 12 hospitals were on "red alert," which meant they are receiving no new patients.

"There is a huge delay because the staff is overwhelmed," Dr. Richard L. Alcorta, medical director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, said Friday.

He also said some hospitals have called in extra staff, put up temporary beds and postponed elective surgeries to deal with the increase in patients with winter ailments.

The situation had improved yesterday. As of late afternoon, one District hospital had posted a red alert and one had posted a yellow. In Maryland, two were on red alert and two had been on yellow. One hospital in Virginia had been on red alert.

Still, the situation has doctors and health officials asking people to stay away from emergency rooms unless they are severely ill or in high-risk groups such as the elderly, young children, asthmatics or the immune deficient.

"People need to be sensible," said Dr. Chris Wuerker, an emergency room doctor at Washington Hospital Center, among those on alert. "If it is symptoms [patients] know and can recognize and are otherwise doing OK, they just need to take it easy and rest."

He acknowledged that emergency rooms are busier during the winter and that this season has been worse than average, but said the situation is "not horrible."

Dr. Alcorta said people who are sick can normally be divided into three categories: those who are feeling sick and can stay home, those who are feeling sick and want to see someone and those who are feeling sick and don't recognize the symptoms.

"People feeling dizzy, short of breath and [unable] to keep down fluids should go to the ER," he said. "If you're at high risk, you should go to the ER. If it's not an emergency, you should just stay home or call your primary care physician."

The flu is not the only illness that has filled emergency rooms.

Dr. Alcorta said patients are also going to them for strep throat and a number of other viruses including a "nasty" gastrointestinal one.

February is the most severe month of the flu season, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 36,000 people in the United States die each year from the flu, the agency reports.

This year's flu season began with health officials declaring a shortage of the vaccine, then limiting distribution to the high-risk population.

However, they announced at the end of January that 3.5 million doses were available and now say people should still receive the shot because the influenza virus can circulate for several more weeks.

"We've seen a slight increase in flu-like illnesses this month, but that is normal this time of year," said Briant Coleman, spokesman for the D.C. Department of Health.

He also encouraged high-risk people to receive a shot and said the department yesterday had 14,190 doses available to all District residents.

"They can call the Department of Health to set up an appointment or go to one of our express clinics," he said

- *This article is based in part on wire service reports.*

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<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/obituaries/bal-md.ob.mcmahon13feb13,1,4506169.story>

Chief Martin McMahon, 94, first-aid pioneer

By Frederick N. Rasmussen
Sun Staff

February 13, 2005

Battalion Chief Martin C. McMahon, who transformed the Baltimore City Fire Department's Ambulance Service and played an important role in the development of mouth-to-mouth artificial respiration and closed-chest massage, died of a heart attack Feb. 5 at a Lewes, Del., nursing home. He was 94.

"He was a pioneer and known nationwide for improving pre-hospital care, bringing first-aid courses to firehouses and was at the very beginning of the Maryland Emergency Medical System," said Division Chief Donald W. Heinbuch.

Chief McMahon was born in Baltimore and raised in Canton. His interest in medicine began in his youth. "My mother was a nurse. After she was married, she used to minister to neighbors, and I used to help her," Chief McMahon told The Sun in a 1957 interview.

After graduation from City College, Chief McMahon served in the merchant marine until joining the Fire Department in 1940.

"Due to his prior merchant marine experience, he was assigned to the fireboat Torrent," said his son and only survivor, Denis G. McMahon, a retired captain in the city Fire Department's communications division who lives in Clarksville, Del.

In 1941, Chief McMahon began serving part time on the ambulances of the old Municipal Ambulance Service that had been established by Mayor Howard W. Jackson in 1927.

He took a first-aid course on his own time and qualified as an instructor. He was able to convince his superiors of the importance of first aid training, which has been compulsory for all firefighters since 1946.

He was presented the Red Cross' Longfellow Award for stanching the flow from an artery of a man felled by a collapsed wall at a fire. In 1955, during the fire at the Tru-Fit Clothing Co. on East Baltimore Street that claimed the lives of six firefighters, he crawled through rubble after the building collapsed to deliver morphine to trapped firefighters.

After he was made captain in 1951, Chief McMahon was able to have the ambulance service placed under jurisdiction of the Fire Department.

"When I took over, we had 10 ambulances. ... The Bureau of Social Services, which was much smaller then, even had control over one ambulance, although the Fire Department paid the salary of the two drivers," Chief McMahon said in an interview with The Sun at the time of his 1975 retirement. "It wasn't an easy thing, but I broke that damn thing up with those old biddies."

It wasn't long before Chief McMahon made sweeping changes in the ambulance service. His mobile hospitals

installed in specially equipped trucks with the latest in lifesaving equipment replaced former hearse-like Cadillac ambulances. Medical care was delivered by trained paramedics.

"You can't handle injured people like they're sacks of meal. You've got to know what you're doing," he said in the 1957 interview in *The Sun*.

His friendship in the 1950s with Dr. Peter Safar, who was chief of the department of anesthesiology at what was then Baltimore City Hospitals, resulted in the development of the mouth-to-mouth resuscitation technique. They also developed a pocket-size S-shaped breathing tube or airway, which was a more effective way of performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

In 1959, he learned about closed-chest massage techniques, now known as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and insisted his crews learn both techniques.

As a result of his work, he became an internationally known expert and was much in demand as a speaker.

The short, husky firefighter was never known for his tact. "He either agreed with you, or if he didn't, he let you know why -- in certain, not infrequently profane terms," said a *Sun* profile.

"Marty McMahon was in love with medicine and his department. It was a love that was 24 hours a day. We are all indebted for what he accomplished during his lifetime," said James Crockett, president of the city's Board of Fire Commissioners.

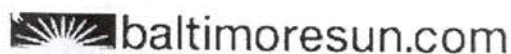
At his retirement and in recognition of his achievements, Chief McMahon's badge, No. 37, was retired.

He had been a communicant of Sacred Heart of Jesus Roman Catholic Church in Highlandtown. He moved to Clarksville from East Baltimore in 2003.

Services are private.

He was predeceased by two wives, Eleanor Devlin McMahon and Elizabeth McMahon.

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<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/carroll/bal-ca.flu13feb13.1.2512384.story>

Carroll hospitals, like others in state, seeing flu increase

Rise in cases noted within past few weeks

By Sheridan Lyons
Sun Staff

February 13, 2005

This winter's influenza has officially hit Carroll County, as in the rest of Maryland, officials said.

The county has seen an increase in flu-like symptoms in the past two to three weeks, said Debbie Middleton, the county Health Department's program director for communicable diseases.

"It's everywhere," she said. "We've noted an increase - probably in the last two to three weeks - like the rest of the state."

Although influenza is not a reportable disease for which figures must be kept, Middleton said, "We know we have had an increase in flu or flu-like symptoms in the county."

The department held its last flu-vaccine clinic Jan. 31, she said.

Mary Spiro, a public relations specialist at Carroll Hospital Center, said the emergency department's clinical director reported being "overwhelmed" in the past week with patients coming in with gastrointestinal and upper-respiratory problems.

"Most of the EDs in the region are on yellow alert because of the flu," Spiro said, adding that Carroll's emergency department medical director, Dr. David Crane, called this the peak of the flu season.

The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems announced Tuesday that emergency rooms throughout the state were nearing capacity, with a significant increase in the number of patient visits.

This placed many on "yellow alert" status, according to the announcement, which means a hospital is experiencing a temporary overload and asks that ambulances go to another hospital, if possible. This does not apply to seriously ill or injured patients.

Influenza activity is reported every Friday on the state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Web site. The outbreak was characterized as regional as of Dec. 25 and became widespread since the week ending Jan. 8.

"We're currently 'widespread,' since about a month ago," said Greg Reed, program manager for the Maryland Center for Immunization at the state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Some flu vaccine still is available, he said.

While the flu is not an illness that must be reported, Reed said, many facilities must report outbreaks of three or more cases - including day care centers, prisons, hospitals, schools and nursing homes.

In Carroll, Middleton said, "We've had several long-term care facilities that have had respiratory outbreaks."

This includes several nursing homes in the county, she said. They have taken measures to curb the spread of the disease, such as limiting activities, restricting admissions and visitors, coordinating staff to limit contact and serving meals in the rooms, she said.

A few Health Department employees also have come down with the signature symptoms: body aches, dry cough or upper-respiratory problems, fatigue and fever.

To avoid spreading the flu, people should stay out of crowds, wash hands thoroughly, cover mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing and stay at home if they become ill, Middleton said.

"The flu is really bad," she said.

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1 he Sun
Feb 15, 2005

Officials unveil communications system for first responders



BARBARA HADDOCK TAYLOR: SUN STAFF
Ernie Crist, manager of Emergency Services for Harford County, uses a radio to demonstrate the Central Maryland Area Radio Communications system.

Emergency network to cover central Md.

By LAURA BARNHARDT
SUN STAFF

During the Howard Street Tunnel fire, firefighters from the city and Baltimore County had to exchange radios to talk to one another as they battled the underground inferno.

After a tanker truck flipped off an Interstate 95 overpass last year and exploded, some emergency officials used cell phones to get instructions. And during the 92-vehicle pileup in October on Interstate 95, some emergency workers relied on 911 dispatchers to communicate with others on the scene because there was no regional emergency communications network, authorities said.

Yesterday, officials from the city and Baltimore, Howard, Harford, Carroll and Anne Arundel counties unveiled what they hope will be a solution to the problem: the Central Maryland Area Radio Communications system.

Known as CMARC, the network includes five channels that are accessible to any emergency worker using an 800-megahertz radio, officials said.

"It doesn't matter what uniform you're wearing," said Baltimore County Executive James T. Smith Jr., who is newly elected chairman of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, which oversaw the project. "It's going to make a huge difference. ... The people who need help will get it faster."

The system will initially cover the city [See *Emergency*, 2B]

Officials unveil emergency communication system

Emergency, from Page 1B

and areas within the Baltimore Beltway, around Baltimore-Washington International Airport and along Interstate 95, said Ernie Crist, manager of Emergency Services for Harford County, who led the team of officials working on the CMARC project.

Crist tested the system at an afternoon news conference at M&T Bank Stadium, showing that antennas in the city and Baltimore and Howard counties were working.

While most of the officials talked about recent disasters requiring regional emergency responses, including Tropical Storm Isabel, Howard County Executive James N. Robey, a former police chief, told the crowd of reporters and local officials about his experience as a rookie officer chasing jewelry store robbers who had taken hostages.

As he followed the suspects' car into Baltimore County, he said, he wasn't able to radio to the other county officers that hostages were in the vehicle. In the end, a hostage was fatally



BARBARA HADDOCK TAYLOR: SUN STAFF
Anne Arundel Quick Response Team member Mark Fraser listens to his radio during a demonstration of CMARC.

shot by police.

"It doesn't have to be a tunnel fire or an Isabel," he said. "It can be a simple pursuit. ... This is a win-win for all of us."

The \$700,000 cost of installing eight antennas and buying 284 radios for distribution in Annapolis, Baltimore City and Baltimore, Carroll and Harford counties was covered by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security

grant, officials said.

All of the county and city agencies have some 800-megahertz radios already, Crist said.

State agencies, including the Maryland State Police and Maryland Transportation Authority Police, are buying 800-megahertz radios, he said.

Some departments, including Baltimore County's police and

fire departments, will have to re-program their radios to use the new network, but incident commanders and emergency responders close to the county's borders have CMARC-compatible radios, said Richard Muth, director of Baltimore County Emergency Management.

Programming should be complete within six months, and will allow other agencies such as the county's health and public works departments to use the system too, Muth said.

As part of the project, Baltimore City sold Anne Arundel County — for \$1 — a 200-foot steel radio tower to be erected in the Brooklyn Park area as part of the network. The city no longer needed it, officials said.

An additional 20 to 30 antennas and towers will begin to be installed this summer to expand the coverage area of the radio system to include the metropolitan area, Crist said. The \$5 million cost will be funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, he said.

FLU SEASON NEARING ITS MARYLAND PEAK

Sick patients packing city emergency centers

300 beds at Memorial, Sacred Heart full Tuesday

“Many people didn’t get a shot who ordinarily would.”

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MICHAEL A. SAWYERS

LEAD NEWS STAFF WRITER

CUMBERLAND — Emergency rooms and beds at Memorial and Sacred Heart hospitals are crowded

these days with individuals experiencing either flu or flu-like symptoms, according to Kathy Rogers, spokeswoman for the Western Maryland Health System.

“We have had an extraordinarily

high number of people coming to the emergency rooms at both hospitals,” Rogers said Tuesday. Many of those being admitted are elderly.

■ SEE SICK — 13A

Center for Immunization at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Gregory Reed,

Sick: City emergency rooms filled

CONTINUED FROM 1A

“The most common reason for admission is severe respiratory stress,” Rogers said.

As of Tuesday morning, about 300 beds were occupied at the hospitals. “We’re nearing capacity,” Rogers said.

Rogers said individuals with flu-like symptoms should first seek help from their primary care doctor or at a clinic instead of at an emergency room.

“Waits can be very lengthy in the emergency rooms,” Rogers said, explaining that the severity of a person’s injury or condition will put him at the front of the line.

Besides difficulty breathing, a common flu symptom is gastrointestinal distress.

Kim Beckman, a media specialist at Parkside Elementary School, said more students than usual have been absent in recent days.

Brandon Irwin, a fifth-grader, knows the feeling well.

“I was off for three days two weeks ago. Mostly I was doing a lot of coughing and I had a real sore throat,” he said Tuesday.

Flu shots continue to be available on a walk-in basis at the Allegany County Health Department on Willowbrook Road for all people on Wednesday from 1 to 4 p.m. The cost is \$7.50.

The flu snapshot has a similar image throughout Maryland, according to state health officials.

Maryland is reaching the peak of its flu season, though months remain. Lab-confirmed cases grew to 850 this week.

“Do we want more people to be vaccinated? Yes,” said Gregory Reed of the Center for Immunization at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

After an early season shortage scared away people who should have been vaccinated, the state finds itself with a sur-

plus of vaccine doses. All state restrictions on eligibility for a flu vaccine were lifted Jan. 25.

“Many people didn’t get a shot who ordinarily would” due to the initial supply scare and strict eligibility guidelines, Reed said.

Nationally, there are more than 3 million doses left, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which said only 93 percent of the national supply has been used.

Dr. Richard Alcorta of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems said that this time of year it is common for there to be a surge of patients presenting flu-like symptoms.

“Ambulances (in some locations) are waiting lined up at the door and can’t get patients unloaded,” he said. “We’re seeing a nature’s bioterrorist attack.”

Michael Sawyers can be contacted at msawyers@times-neu.com. The Capital News Service contributed to this story.

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Flu season comes late but hits hard

BY KEVIN CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

SHFB

The flu season has arrived, swamping emergency rooms in Southern Maryland with patients seeking treatment.

On Feb. 8, the emergency rooms at Calvert Memorial Hospital in Prince Frederick, Civista Medical Center in La Plata and St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown were unavailable for 60 percent of the time, except for the most urgent patients, said Lisa Myers of the Maryland Institute For Emergency Medical Services.

"This is our peak for the

2004-05 [flu] season," Myers said.

Hospitals around the state, including Civista, were issuing yellow alerts to emergency medical services departments, meaning they were at capacity except for seriously ill or injured patients.

Calvert Memorial and St. Mary's issued red alerts, meaning at one time on Feb. 9 they didn't have beds with monitoring equipment available.

Debbie Shuck-Reynolds, clinical coordinator of the emergency department at

See Flu, Page A-9 A

Flu

Continued from Page A-1 A

Civista, said it has been busy.

"The hospital has been full consistently," she said. You name it, hospital staff is seeing when it comes to winter ailments.

"We are getting hit really hard with flu right now," Shuck-Reynolds said, as well as gastrointestinal virus and winter vomiting.

People may not understand the alerts, she said. They don't mean people won't be treated, but those with minor problems will have lower priority than the seriously ill.

"We don't like to see our patients waiting, but that swollen ankle is going to have to wait," she said.

Shuck-Reynolds suggests people seek treatment first with their family doctor. And if a winter illness strikes, stay at home.

Don't let children who are ill go to school where they can spread the virus.

"Yes, you're feeling miserable," Shuck-Reynolds said if the flu strikes, "but you should be able to get to the family doctor."

Dr. Robert R. Bass, MIEMSS executive director, said, "This is the time of the year that the emergency departments see an increase in patients appearing with winter illnesses. This takes up valuable space for the more critical patients."

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reported the first confirmed flu case in Maryland on Oct. 28 and currently is reporting the flu activity level as "widespread" in Maryland.

"When hospital emergency departments are nearing capacity, ambulances may have to be diverted away from the closest hospital," said DHMH Secretary S. Anthony McCann. "Please use emergency rooms only for true medical emergencies."



Capital Clipping Service

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8 XX... W3

Veterans home's 911 calls questioned

Medics say misuse
is stretching them thin

BY THOMAS DENNISON
STAFF WRITER

ANNAPOLIS — The Charlotte Hall Veterans Home is misusing the 911 emergency call system and stretching volunteer medical services to dangerous levels, officials from the Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad said Friday.

The concerns — ranging from improper 911 use to the increasing volume of calls at the home — were laid out in a lengthy presentation to the Southern Maryland delegation on Friday morning.

Mechanicsville medics explained that the number of nonemergency calls to the veterans home is on the



Wood

Missy Raley, chief of the Mechanicsville rescue squad, said, "For the last two years, calls have been going up and up," leading her and some of her fellow medics who attended Friday's meeting to call for the veterans home to provide its own service. Raley and other medics from Mechanicsville said they have no problem running emergency calls, but Del. John F. Wood Jr. (D-St. Mary's, Charles) and some emergency serv-

ice providers are worried that ambulances are being used as taxicabs. "If it's an emergency and someone is really sick or injured, no one is complaining about those calls," Wood said. "It's getting the calls for transporting veterans to the hospitals for doctor's appointments that we see [as] a problem."

Jim Pixton, operations manager for the American Ambulance Association in Southern Maryland, lashed out at Wood during one part of the meeting Friday. Pixton, a volunteer in St. Leonard, said he took exception to one comment from Wood that AAA — a contract ambulance service — was not responding promptly to calls from the veterans home.

Pixton said afterward that he lost his cool, but was trying to clarify Wood's remarks.

According to statistics given to the

See Calls, Page A-10

Calls

Continued from Page A-1

delegation, 911 dispatches to the veterans home have spiked roughly 100 calls between 2002 and last year. In January of this year, 911 was used 33 times — setting a pace for nearly 400 calls in 2005, which would be another increase from the nearly 350 calls in 2004.

The increase in call volume is stretching

the services from the Mechanicsville, Hughesville and Benedict squads, lawmakers said. St. Mary's County, for instance, has one advanced life support unit for the entire county.

Steve Wynn, administrator at the veterans home, and the facility's medical director told the delegation that they are meeting with the emergency service providers to help remedy the situation. Wynn also explained that family concerns and medical liability risks are major factors in the decision to call for an ambulance.

Wynn vowed ongoing tracking of the 911 usage by the veterans home, educating the facility's medical staff and to continue meeting with the rescue units on a monthly basis. He also said that they would try to use a paid ambulance service more often.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs George W. Owings III, a former Calvert County delegate, met with veterans home and EMS officials several weeks ago to discuss the situation.

As for the veterans home getting its own ambulance service, Wynn said, "That's not my call."



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The 2005 officers of the Queen Anne-Hillsboro Fire Department were sworn in Saturday night.

Queen Anne-Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Company holds annual awards banquet

Clay Owens

547f8 Times-Record

QUEEN ANNE — Serving Caroline, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties since 1945, the Queen Anne-Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Company honored its members during its annual awards banquet Feb. 12.

Good cheer and camaraderie filled the air as President Danny McNeal celebrated the installation of two new lifetime members, John Chalupa and Phil Starkey, who have each served 20 years. He also paid tribute to T.L. Reynolds, a lifetime member with 69 years experience who was unable to attend due to illness.

"The joke's on you guys," McNeal told Chalupa and Starkey. "Now that you're lifetime members, you have to do more work around here."

Phyllis Skinner was named as a new Honorary Lifetime Member for her many years of service to the company.

Vernon Coultas was honored by the company's Junior Cadets for his six years of leading them. They presented him with a new camping



Gretchen Eiseman was named Little Miss Fire Queen at Saturday's banquet.

kitchen, for which he was pleased and grateful.

The gathering watched a slide show which featured highlights of the company in action from the previous year. Though there were serious pictures, such as fires and accidents along Route 404 the company responded to, there were also plenty of personal



Chief Craig McNeal stands with Queen Anne-Hillsboro's Miss Fire Queen Rachel Showacre.

photos which left those in attendance in good spirits.

The award winners for 2004 were:

Administrative, Stephanie McNeal; Medical Person, Greg Whitby; Most Medical and Rescue Calls, John Chalupa; Most Fire and Rescue Calls, Brandon Hopkins; Line Officers of the Year, Craig McNeal and Vernon Coultas; Fireman of the Year (Runner Up), Danny Lister; Fireman of the Year, Danny McNeal; Ambulance Captain's Award, Steve

Palmatary; and President's Award, Tom Difatta.

Rachel Showacre was named Miss Fire Queen, and Gretchen Eiseman was named Little Miss Fire Queen.

The evening was culminated by the swearing in of the officers for 2005. The administrative officers are: President, Danny McNeal; Vice, President Darla Coultas; Secretary Lindsay Ewing; and Treasurer Beverly McNeal.

The Board of Directors are Stephanie McNeal, David Chaires, Linda Chalupa, Dennis Starkey and Tommy Unruh.

The line officers are: Chief, Craig McNeal; Deputy Chief, Tommy Unruh; Assistant Chief, Brandon Hopkins; Captain, Steve Palmatary; Lieutenants, Bruce Carroll and Eric Voorhees; Chief Engineer, Scott Roe; and Assistant Engineers, Joe Mimms and Jason Bloom.

The EMS officers are Captain Vernon Coultas and Lieutenant John Chalupa.

The Junior Cadet officers are: President Jodi Blades; Vice President Katie Horney; Secretary Lauren Whitby; and Treasurer Katherine Hall.

WORCESTER COUNTY TIMES

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Snow Hill firemen inducted into Shore Hall of Fame

Chief Larson honored for 51 years of service to volunteer fire company

By Bill Kerbin
Staff Writer

SMFB

SNOW HILL — Two Snow Hill firefighters, Chief Alfred L. (Sonny) Larson and Richard A. Mills Jr., were recently inducted into the Eastern Shore Volunteer Firemen's Association's Hall of Fame at a ceremony.

Larson, chief of the Snow Hill Volunteer Fire Company, was recognized for his 51 years of service. He became a member in November 1953. After completing his basic training he eventually moved up to EMT status where he was active on the ambulance squad for 10 years before being injured.

In 1962, he was elected assistant chief for a five-year term after which he was elected chief. He served three terms as chief, 1967-1977, 1979-1991 and from 1997 until the present time. He is the longest serving chief in the company's 108-year history.

In the mid 1960s after the county fire departments saw a need for better training and communications, Larson helped organize and lay the groundwork of the Worcester County Fire Chiefs Association. A charter member of the organization, he has served four terms as chairman. He has served on a number of committees which have greatly improved the fire service in Worcester County. He lists as a favorite the fire prevention programs conducted



Sonny Larson

at county schools.

Among his honors, he was recognized at the Maryland State Firemen's Association Convention and Conference,

and by the Worcester County Fire Chief's Committee and the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association for his 51 years of service. He has also received the Medal of Valor, the highest honor a person can receive from the State of Maryland.

Richard A. Mills Jr., a member of the fire company for 24 years, became a member in April 1981. He completed basic training and became an EMT in 1982. In the Snow Hill department, he has held the positions of rescue squad secretary, treasurer and first lieutenant. He is the current president of the company. He has also served as vice-president.

He is a past president of the Worcester County association and the immediate past president of the Eastern Shore Volunteer Firemen's Association. He has also served on many committees both locally and regionally. Working with fire prevention and safety, he has been appointed as a county representative for the State Smoke Detector Program for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired.

Among his awards are Top EMS Responder, award for a CPR save and the Medal of

Valor from the state of Maryland.

His induction into the Hall of Fame was the third in his family. His father, Richard Sr. and

grandfather, Thornton Mills, have also been elected. Gilbert Perdue, a past chief of the Snow Hill Fire Co., is also in the Delmarva and the Maryland

State Halls of Fame.

Reach Bill Kerbin at
410-957-1700 or e-mail at
bkerbin@smgpo.gannett.com

CAPITAL

ANNAPOLIS, MD
THURSDAY 45,303
FEB 17 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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Rescue JHFB

The Capital (Feb. 2) was kind to highlight my involvement in the Jan. 31 rescue of a woman from Weems Creek, but in reality all I did was dial the phone. The real credit for the successful rescue goes to the emergency services personnel who responded to my call.

The rescue involved county police, fire and emergency medical services personnel, members of the Woodland Beach Volunteer Fire Company and state police pilots.

The three county police officers who were first on the scene found the victim and pulled her from the water.

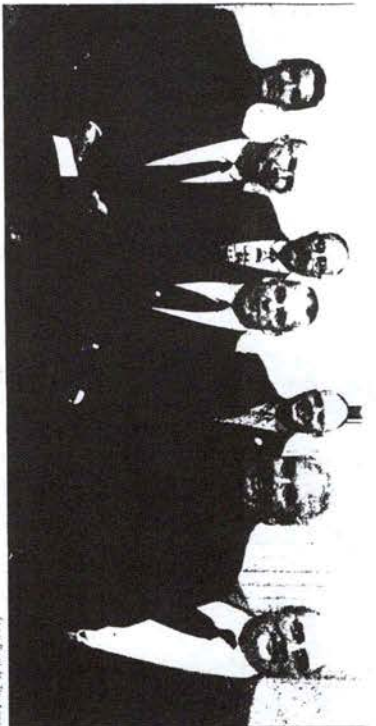
The firefighters and EMS personnel hand-carried all of their equipment to the scene, since the access road was not safe for their trucks. They tended to the victim's medical needs and carried her up a long flight of icy concrete stairs and across a slick lawn to the waiting ambulance.

The state police pilots performed a brief aerial search when there was a question as to whether another victim was still in the water.

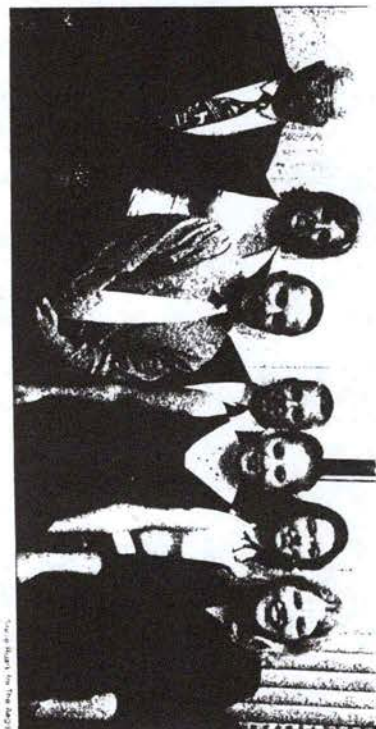
At one point a police officer was doing his best to warm the victim's frozen hands. At another point, a firefighter wrapped his coat around the victim to insulate her from the cold night air.

We moved to Annapolis from Washington, D.C., in 1999 and count ourselves lucky to live here. The quick response and the professionalism shown by the emergency services personnel gave us one more reason to feel that way.

CHRIS GROOBEY
Annapolis



Kingsville Volunteer Fire Company's top 10 firefighters for 2004 are, left to right, Stephen Miller, Douglas Maynard, Gary Weer, Timothy Berckridge, Ronald Hale, Edward Griffiths and Charles Taylor Jr. Donald Cassel III, Alexander Scott and Jeffrey Weer are not pictured.



Kingsville Volunteer Fire Company's top 10 ambulance members are, left to right, (r) Robert O'Hara, Lindsay Ann Ortiz, Brian Bower, Timothy Berckridge, Jamie Huggins, Ashley Adams and Carlos Velez. Alexander Scott, Jeffrey Weer and Carlos Velez are not pictured.

Kingsville honors outstanding service

Members of Kingsville Volunteer Fire Company celebrated their 2004 performance Saturday night, honoring service from the volunteers.

In 2004, Kingsville's volunteer firefighters responded to 912 fire calls and emergency medical personnel answered 793 ambulance calls.

Timothy Berckridge was named the company's EMS Person of the Year. He was also presented the Raymond Layfield President's Award.

Shawn Little was presented the Vernon A. Brown Sr.

Freightliner of the Year Award. The top 10 firefighters for 2004 were: Douglas Maynard, 408 calls; Donald Cassel III, 341; Gary Weer, 317; Ronald Hale, 311; Alexander Scott, 303; Jeffrey Weer, 281; Edward Griffiths, 272; Stephen Miller, 271; Timothy Berckridge, 257; and Charles Taylor Jr., 232 calls.

The top 10 emergency responders for 2004 were: G. Robert O'Hara, 158 calls; Alexander Scott, 139; Timothy Berckridge, 129; Brian Bower, 110; Jeffrey Weer, 94; Teresa

Mosley, 87; Jamie Huggins, 85; Lindsay Ann Ortiz, 73; Ashley Adams and Carlos Velez, 66.

The top 10 fund-raisers for 2004 were: Rita Saylor, 664 hours; Karen Saylor, 187; F. Thomas Dzechowicz, 184; Brian Bower, 180; Jennifer Wirtz, 170; Elizabeth Linde, 167; Ronald Cassel Jr., 165; Shawn Little, 157; Ronald Cassel Sr., 136; and Alexander Scott, 121.

Administrative officers for 2005 are: Dennis Eyre, president; Stephen Belkoff, vice president; Kimberly Myers, corresponding secretary; Scott Taylor, recording secretary; Gary Weer, treasurer; Raymond Corbin, sergeant-at-arms; Rita Saylor, Kelly Berckridge, Frank Deems III and Stephen Miller, board of directors; and Ronald Cassel St. chaplain.

Fire and rescue officers for 2005 are: Grayson Corbin Jr., captain; Michael Berna, senior lieutenant; Timothy Berckridge, Edward Griffiths and Charles Taylor Jr., first lieutenants; Ronald Hale, Alexander Scott, Donald Cassel III and Shawn Little, second lieutenants; and Joseph Kudrna and Bruce List, one-neers.

EMS officers for 2005 are: John Henderson, first lieutenant; and Michael Lynn, Jamie Huggins and John Cromwell, second lieutenants. Service awards were presented to Ronald Cassel Sr., 40 years; F. Thomas Dzechowicz, Robert Chaney and Thomas Frye, 30 years; Timothy Berckridge, Rita Saylor and Dennis Eyre, 25 years; Joseph Kudrna, 20 years; G. Robert O'Hara, Joanne Frye and Kyrle Preiss, 15 years; David Ninos, Matthew O'Laughlin and Thomas Stevenson Jr., 10 years; and Michael Marino and John Henderson, five years.



Kingsville Volunteer Fire Company's Raymond Layfield President's Award was presented to Timothy Berckridge, standing with presenters Edna's spinal center, and G. Robert O'Hara, Saturday during the company's installation of officers dinner in Kingsville.



Kingsville Volunteer Fire Company's Vernon A. Brown Sr. Firefighter of the Year Award is presented to Shawn Little, left, standing with Capt. Grayson Corbin, Saturday during the company's installation of officers dinner in Kingsville.



Kingsville Volunteer Fire Company's EMS Person of the Year is Timothy Berckridge, right, standing with Brian Bower, Saturday during the company's installation of officers dinner in Kingsville.

MARYLAND REGISTER

ANNAPOLIS, MD
BI-WEEKLY 3,600
FEB 18 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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HB 0239 HGO: Dept of St Polc - Transf of the SWHAF. RAF to the Md Emer Mgt Agnc. Transferring the administration of the Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund from the Department of State Police to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA); authorizing the Director of MEMA to administer a specified fund and develop specified procedures; requiring the Director to provide specified authorization to the Treasurer for disbursing specified funds; and defining specified terms. EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2005. **The Speaker (Admin)** PS, §§8-101 through 8-106-amended.

MARYLAND REGISTER

ANNAPOLIS, MD
BI-WEEKLY 3,600
FEB 18 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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W3

SB 0510 B&T: Law Enforc Officers' Pension System -
Mbrshp - Aviators with the Department of State Po-
lice. Providing aviators who operate an aircraft for the
State Emergency Medical System and who are employed by
the Department of State Police with membership in the Law
Enforcement Officers' Pension System; making membership
optional for specified aviators; etc. EFFECTIVE JULY 1,
2005. Sen DeGrange, et al SP, §§26-201 and 26-202-
amended.

WESTERN MONTGOMERY BULLETIN

POOLESVILLE, MD
WEEKLY 10,000
FEB 19 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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GOVERNOR EHRLICH HOLDS 13 EVENTS IN COUNTY

Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., and his executive cabinet held thirteen events in Montgomery County on Monday, highlighting several of Governor Ehrlich's successful initiatives. Governor Ehrlich, Lt. Governor Michael S. Steele, and their executive cabinet also gathered at Rockville City Hall to hold a Cabinet Meeting hosted by Rockville Mayor Giammo in the City Council Chambers. The meeting was broadcast on the local cable access channel.

"Today's events demonstrate my deep commitment to the concerns of the citizens of Montgomery County," said Governor Ehrlich. "The initiatives we highlight today are making Montgomery County and all of Maryland a cleaner, safer and more prosperous place to live."

Some of the highlights of the events were:

Inter-County Connector (ICC) Tour: The Governor and state agencies provided an overview of environmental projects related to ICC construction followed by a tour of the ICC route. The ICC is Governor Ehrlich's top transportation priority. Agencies: Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Planning, and the Department of the Environment

Project Lead the Way: Lt. Governor together with seven state agencies highlighted the interagency collaboration between education (K-16) and workforce and economic development.

They visited Magruder High School to interact with students and staff involved in the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) pre-engineering Program.

This is a national program administered through the State Department of Education with guidance from other agencies, as well as the Maryland business community.

PLTW is designed to help schools give students the knowl-

edge and skills they need to excel in high-tech fields, such as engineering. Agencies: Department of Education, Department of Business and Economic Development, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Department of General Services, Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism, Maryland Higher Education Commission

Collaborative Supervision and Focused Enforcement Initiative (C-SAFE): The Lt. Governor joined the state agencies and community groups in highlighting the International C-SAFE initiative.

This public safety program combines state and local planning, policing, adult and juvenile probation offices, support of addiction recovery, community mobilization, community prosecution and nuisance abatement to fight crime in the local area. Agencies: Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Juvenile Services, State Police

Health and Medical Homeland Security Event: Governor Ehrlich's homeland security team demonstrated results of Homeland Security grant funding and toured state-of-the-art displays at the Emergency Operations Center.

From there, the event moved to the Shady Grove Hospital where the Secretaries toured hospital decontamination tents and viewed systems static display (coordinated system with all hospitals); NCR UASI purchase of inter-hospital communication (Radio Demo). Agencies: Office of Homeland Security, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nationworld/nation/wire/sns-ap-train-crash,1,1452639.story>

Ambulance Hit by Train in Ark., Killing 3

By Associated Press

February 20, 2005, 9:34 AM EST

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. -- A train slammed into an ambulance that apparently tried to get out of its path, but stopped at a rail crossing, killing all three paramedics on board. The patient in the vehicle survived, officials said.

Paramedics Jeff Ferrand, 37, and John Rook, 23, died at the scene Saturday after the Union Pacific train hit the front end of the ambulance, spinning it around and ejecting the emergency workers.

A third paramedic, Christopher Klingan, also 23, was taken to a hospital but later died, officials said.

"Perhaps the driver saw the train coming and tried to get back, because a matter of two or three feet and there would not be an accident," Arkansas State Police Cpl. Darren Neal said.

Neal said the driver apparently decided he couldn't make it across the county road crossing in rural Fulton, backed up and came only a few feet from getting out of the train's path.

The ambulance was carrying a woman, Charlene Gayton, who had suffered a heart attack or a stroke. She was not hurt in the wreck, and remained in stable condition late Saturday.

Gayton, 66, was taken to a hospital by her family, who came in another vehicle and pulled her out of the ambulance. The accident happened about 50 yards from her mobile home.

Witness Beauford Wyatt Sr. said he rushed to help the paramedics, but one of them was already dead and he couldn't save the other.

"I tried to help," said Wyatt, 25. "He said two words and died in my hands."

Officials said there was a sign at the crossing, but no gates or lights. Train engineer John Harris told police he saw the ambulance start to cross the tracks Saturday afternoon. He blew the horn, rang the bell and applied the emergency brake to no avail.

Authorities were investigating.

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<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/bal-ed.notary20feb20,1,2635388.story?coll=bal-opinion-headlines>

Notes and nonsense

February 20, 2005

FROM THE FOLKS who brought us extra-secure driver's licenses with embedded text and multicolored holograms comes this surprising approach to teen safety: the notarized permission slip from Mom or Dad.

Don't laugh.

Apparently, top officials at the Motor Vehicle Administration have a lot of confidence in public notaries. Or perhaps, despite all these years of crusading against forged documents, they believe teens would never think to fake a note from home.

Here's the background: The General Assembly is considering legislation to restrict passengers under age 18 in cars driven by teens. It's a sensible measure that addresses a significant problem - distracted young drivers. The most common cause is having fellow teens in the car with them. It's a big reason why youngsters are disproportionately involved in accidents. The results can be fatal whether the teens are in the driver's seat or riding along.

But fear not, parents - the bill is a modest proposal. It applies only to the first 180 days of a teen's provisional license and exempts relatives living in the same house. And it's a secondary offense. That means a police officer can't pull a teen over for suspicion of driving with underage passengers. The driver can only get in trouble if pulled over for a different infraction, such as speeding or running a stop sign. Currently, 21 states have a similar restriction, including nearby Virginia.

But somehow that's not modest enough for the MVA. During a hearing last week, the agency's administrator endorsed the bill - but only if it allows for a notarized waiver. No other state has such a system, and the bill's supporters suspect the MVA may be trying to kill the legislation with a ridiculous loophole.

That doesn't make much sense, because the Ehrlich administration has its own bills aimed at the teen driver problem. The administration wants to, among other things, extend the learner's permit period from four months to six months and mandate that any driver under the age of 21 convicted of a drunken or drugged driving offense have his or her license suspended for at least three years or until age 21, whichever is longer.

Those measures are helpful, too, but safety advocates believe Maryland's lack of a restriction on minor passengers in teen-driven cars is the more pressing need. A House environmental matters subcommittee is expected to vote on the proposal this week. They have our permission to pass the bill without any silly amendments.

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<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nationworld/nation/wire/sns-ap-brf-helicopter-crash,1,6366596.story>

Patient Dies in Ark. Medical Copter Crash

By Associated Press

February 21, 2005, 11:08 PM EST

SILOAM SPRINGS, Ark. -- A medical helicopter crashed on takeoff Monday, killing a man who was being airlifted from a highway accident. The helicopter pilot, a nurse and a paramedic were injured.

Federal Aviation Administration spokesman John Clabes said the medical crew was responding to a traffic accident about 3 miles north of Cherokee City, near the Arkansas-Oklahoma line.

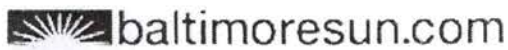
The helicopter, operated by Air Evac Lifeteam of Claremore, Okla., had just lifted off with the 71-year-old patient aboard, and reached an altitude of about 400 feet, when the chopper began to spin and fell back to the ground, crashing into a pasture, according to witnesses. The patient, who was from Texas, was pronounced dead at the scene.

The pilot and a paramedic were in serious condition. The condition of a flight nurse was not immediately available.

Air Evac is a private air ambulance company serving rural areas in parts of nine states, according to the company's Web site.

The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board will investigate.

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<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/sfl-caeds17feb21.1,3411093.story>

From the South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Heart defibrillators are appearing in condos, clubs around S. Florida

By Jeremy Milarsky
Staff Writer

February 21, 2005

The paddles paramedics use to shock people back to life may someday become as common as a glass-encased fire extinguisher on the wall.

In condominiums and clubhouses around South Florida, automatic external defibrillators are popping up on walls, under security guards' desks and in fitness rooms. The devices, which can save someone suffering a heart attack, have become cheaper and easier to use, particularly in the past decade.

The technological and economic developments have not gone unnoticed by some of Broward County's politicians. Already, three Broward cities have passed laws compelling some business owners to keep a defibrillator on site.

"We're definitely in a transition period," said Brian Webster, a vice president at Medtronic Emergency Response Systems, a Washington-based company that builds and sells the defibrillators. "I think what's going to happen is ... you'll begin to see action against facilities that don't carry these, where there's a lot of traffic."

South Florida has begun to see such cases. In December, the family of Alessio Tringali, 49, of Fort Lauderdale, who suffered a fatal heart attack at an Oakland Park fitness club, sued the club owners, arguing the man's life could have been saved had there been a defibrillator in the building.

While Florida law does not compel anyone to have the devices, some of Broward's cities do. Last year, commissioners in Weston and Coral Springs passed a law requiring defibrillators in some government buildings and businesses.

Sunrise legislators on Jan. 25 passed a law similar to the one in Coral Springs, requiring the devices in restaurants with more than 100 seats, large fitness clubs and hotels. There's been a push for such laws in other communities, such as Plantation, where condominium leaders in the community of Lauderdale West recently acquired a device for their clubhouse.

Although laws have not been as common in Palm Beach County, the county's school board recently agreed to spend \$250,000 to make sure each campus had a defibrillator, and the city of Boynton Beach was honored by the American Heart Association last year for its efforts to distribute the devices.

There has not, however, been a push for the devices from the insurance industry. Fitness clubs with defibrillators are unlikely to get a better deal from their insurance companies, said Anita Byer, who owns Setnor Byer Insurance and Risk in Plantation.

"They would not benefit from an insurance standpoint," Byer said. "Insurance carriers are usually concerned about the misuse of such a device."

Sunrise commissioner Don Rosen, who got the idea after hearing about the law in Coral Springs during a meeting of the Northwest Council of Mayors, said he was not fazed by the cost of the devices. The defibrillators can cost between \$1,500 and \$3,000.

"The benefit far outweighs the cost of the unit," he said.

Training someone to use the devices has also become easier. For example, on their company Web site, device manufacturer Royal Philips Electronics shows a 5-minute video showing how to revive a victim with one of their defibrillators.

They used to cost much more. In 1997, a defibrillator cost the Broward County government about \$3,500. Now the county gets them for about \$1,500, said Todd Leduc, assistant fire chief for the county.

As the devices have become more affordable, they have also become easier to use, the Heartstart FR2-Plus sold by Royal Philips Electronics uses electronic text and sensors to tell an amateur rescuer exactly when to shock a heart-attack victim.

Firefighters in Coral Springs and Weston say they have not seen a documented case of a private person using a defibrillator on a heart-attack victim before paramedics arrive.

One of the few such cases happened in Hallandale Beach, where government employees have given out the devices, but haven't started compelling business owners to keep them.

It happened a year ago at a fitness club in Hallandale Beach. Mark Pomerantz, a dentist who works in the city, was jogging on the treadmill when he "heard a thud," he said. The man next to him had fallen, suffering from a heart attack.

Pomerantz grabbed the defibrillator, kept in a box under the front counter, and used it on the man, who happened to be a patient of his. The man survived.

Pomerantz, who had taken a refresher course in CPR the day before the rescue, doesn't think people should use the devices without getting some training. But he does think they should be all over the place, encased in glass and mounted on walls like fire extinguishers.

"I'm in 100 percent agreement of that," Pomerantz said.

Jeremy Milarsky can be reached at jmilarsky@sun-sentinel.com or call 954-572-2020.

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Capital Clipping Service

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Man not too busy to volunteer

547FB

By ERIN CUNNINGHAM

News-Post Staff
ecunningham@fredericknewspost.com

NEW MARKET — When Lacoe Alltop retired from the telecommunications business seven years ago, he decided to go into business for himself.

He formed LMJ Investments — his own company. Then, he purchased three flower shops. He operates Frederick Florist on Rosemont Avenue and two locations of Forget-Me-Not Florist. He runs the business end of the shops, and stays away from flower design.

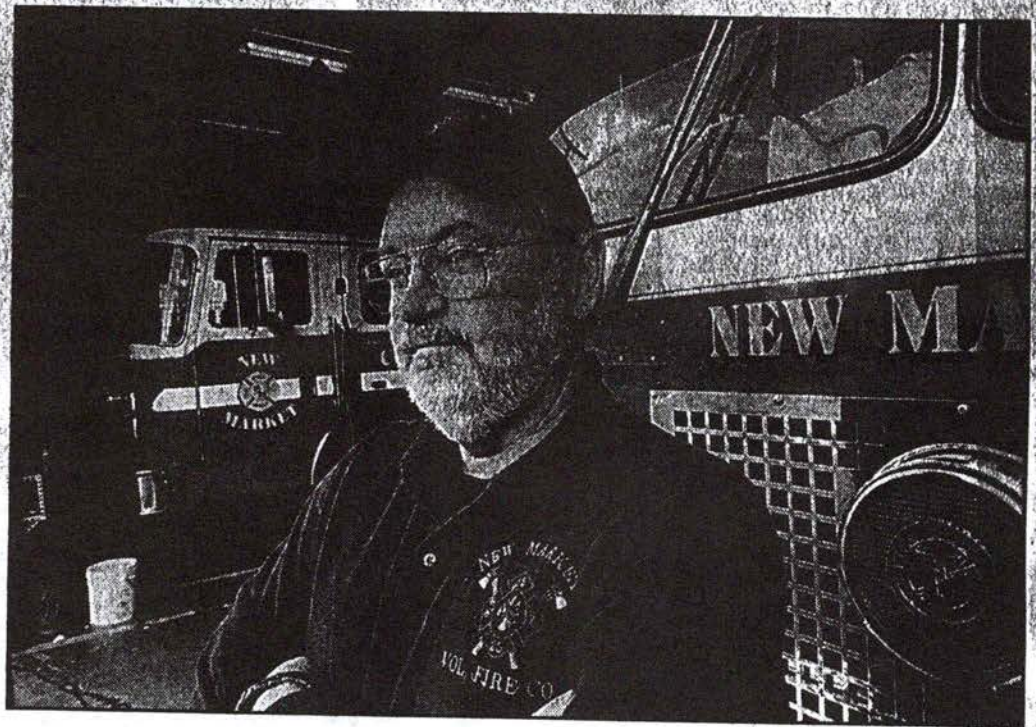
"I'm a business man," he said. "You don't want me designing your flowers."

After he retired, he took another risk. He became a volunteer firefighter with New Market District Volunteer Fire Co. Mr. Alltop said he'd been teaching scuba diving for about 20 years when he noticed older people were starting take up the sport.

He decided to become a certified emergency medical technician.

"The best way to do that," he said, "was to become a member of a fire station."

Slice of Life



Staff photo by Doug Koontz

Lacoe Alltop is a business owner and firefighter at New Market District Volunteer Fire Co.

After signing up with the New Market station and receiving his EMT certification, he took courses in hazardous materials. Soon, he was enrolled in firefighter courses. Now, he said, he responds to more fire calls than medical calls.

"I just wanted a way to give back," he said of volunteering.

He gives back to fire, rescue and law enforcement personnel, as well, by offering them discounts at his flower shops.

He spends nearly 20 hours a week at the fire station, and said sometimes he spends the

night to respond to early morning emergencies. Because he lives in Mount Airy, he said, it would be difficult for him to respond unless he was already in the station.

He said the satisfaction he gets from saving a life is invaluable.

DAILY BANNER

CAMBRIDGE, MD
TUESDAY
FEB 22 2005



Capital Chipping Service

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CPD gets four new AEDs

By Pete Macintia
Daily Banner

CAMBRIDGE — Four additional automatic electronic defibrillators (AEDs) were acquired by Friday Cambridge City Police Friday through the help of Cambridge Emergency Medical Services (CEMS).

"Basically, we got AEDs for the police department starting back in 2002, and currently they have six AEDs," said Public Relations and Education Coordinator for the City of CEMS Ryan Killough. "This will bring them up to 10, with our goal being to outfit each vehicle they have plus the building. So our goal is to get 23 AEDs ultimately."

The availability of the AEDs in police units will facilitate the immediate emergency care of Cambridge residents when certain cardiac problems arise.

"When they get automatically dispatched on a cardiac arrest by the 911 center, and if they arrive there before EMS does for car-

diac arrest, they're trained to go ahead and use the AED and perform CPR to hopefully to save a life either with us or before we can get there," Paramedic Killough said.

He said, "Our goal throughout the city and the county is to put them anywhere there is potential for large numbers of people. That will include any building or churches where there is a large gathering of people — our goal is to have an AED in there."

He continued, "The reason we need AEDs out in the community is because for every minute that passes when somebody is in sudden cardiac arrest, their chances of surviving decrease by 10 percent. It takes EMS around 10 minutes to respond to calls even within the city by the time we can get there and get them defibrillated."

"That gives them a very small chance of survival. With AEDs, our goal is to get them defibrillated within the first three to five minutes," he said.

Paramedic Killough said the AEDs "came from a Federal Rural Access grant that allow rural counties to obtain AEDs."

"The class to use these is a four-hour class that has to be repeated every other year. The City Police Department has it in their policy to receive CPR, First Aid, and AED training on an annual basis," he said.

Concerning AED placement in non-police settings, he said, "Before I put an AED in any building in the county, I make sure they have the proper training and the number of properly trained personnel to use it. The AED has to be used in conjunction with CPR, so you need to have a CPR and AED class."

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) said through AEDs are designed to be used by people without a medical background, those using the equipment must

See AED's — Page 2

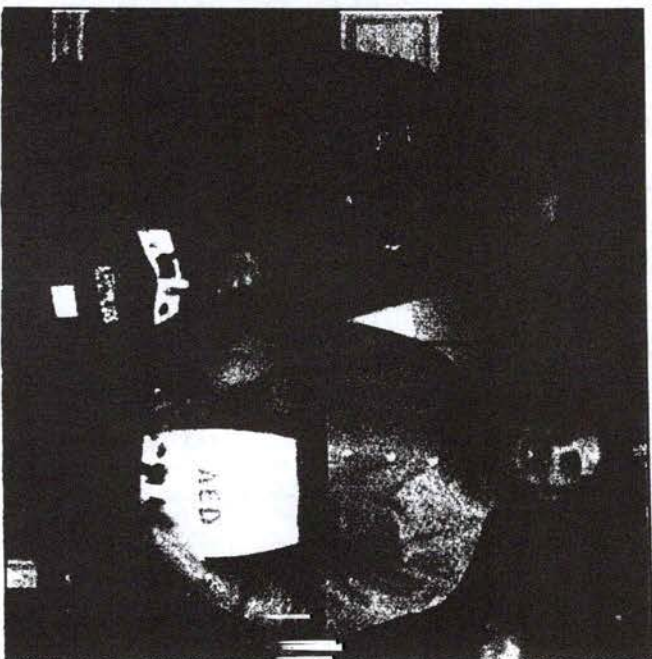
demics of the 20th century, a federal health official said Monday.

Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said scientists expect that a flu virus that has swept through chickens and other poultry in Asia will genetically change into a flu that can be transmitted from person to

Science.

In Asia, there have already been a number of deaths among people who caught the flu from chickens or ducks. The mortality rate is very high — about 72 percent of identified patients, said Gerberding. There also have been documented cases of this

See Flu — Page 2



Daily Banner/Pete Macintia
Cambridge City Police Chief Kenneth Malik (left) and Paramedic Ryan Killough displayed Friday new automatic electronic defibrillators Cambridge Emergency Medical Services was able to provided for the police through a federal grant.

AEDS

Continued From Page 1

be trained in the use of the device. "Once the AED is hooked up to a patient, it has the ability to determine if defibrillation is necessary or if CPR is appropriate," the DHMH said.

In 2003, Maryland's layperson AED program, operated by Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services System (MIESSS), had approved 295 facilities across the State to use this life-saving equipment. Since use of the equipment began in 2000, eight lives have been saved out of 34 attempts by the end of 2003.

Defibrillation is useful when patients present with certain cardiac dysrhythmias, such as ventricular fibrillation (v-fib).

In this malfunction, the ventricles no longer beat with a steady, full, symmetrical pattern. Instead of a forceful contraction, there is a "quivering" of the heart muscle and the heart is incapable of pumping oxygenated blood to vital organs.

Those trained place the paddles of the defibrillator in the proper positions on the chest. On an

Advance Life Support (ALS) ambulance in Maryland, those trained can monitor the electronic rhythm of the heart before and after administering a jolt of energy.

The amount of power from the defibrillators is determined by the body mass of the patient.

Given the fact that a dysrhythmia like v-fib means sure death for the patient, an objective of sending an electrical shock to the heart is to silence the chaotic firing of cardiac cells in the hopes a portion of the heart will respond with a life-sustaining pattern.

CPR is required in such situations.

When proper medically trained personnel are present, medications are administered to the patient per established Maryland protocol. ALS units have the capability to transmit the patient's electrocardiogram to a medical facility.

Regarding training, each year MIESSS sponsors an EMS Care seminar. EMS Care 2005 is slated for April 29 to May 1, at the Marriott Bethesda Hotel in Bethesda. The meeting is also sponsored by the Emergency Education Council of Region V Inc., and hosted by the Montgomery County Department of Fire and Rescue Services.

One breakout workshop of the seminar will be "Cardiac Arrest: Maryland's

Experience with AEDs."

In a prepared statement, MIESSS said, "Cardiac arrest forms have been part of the Maryland EMS System for over four years. This presentation will share

state and regional trends seen in cardiac arrests, AED usage, and manual defibrillation in Maryland."

The National Center for Early Defibrillation (NCED) said in a prepared statement said, "Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death in North America.

In fact, sudden cardiac arrest is truly a public health crisis. Unlike nitrate, however, sudden cardiac arrest is treatable.

"The cure for most cases of sudden cardiac arrest is immediate treatment with a defibrillator, a device that shocks the heart out of a fatal rhythm, allowing a normal, healthy rhythm to resume," the NCED said.

It said though, science and industry have developed a safe and effective cure that works, few victims of sudden cardiac arrest have quick access to this treatment because many communities have

not yet developed strategies to ensure that a defibrillator reaches every victim of sudden cardiac arrest within five minutes of collapse.

"As a result, in most communities, fewer than five percent of victims survive. In contrast, some communities with strong response systems have achieved survival rates of 30 to 50 percent and more," the NCED said.

In regard to training, it said, "Learning to use an AED is highly intuitive and surprisingly simple. Many people report that it is far easier than learning CPR."

The NCED said, "Current AED courses usually last about three to four hours to allow ample time for hands-on practice and to help increase user confidence and confidence."

It continued, "AED training and related resources are offered through the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, EMP America, the American Health and Safety Institute, the National Safety Council and others. AED manufacturers also offer training resources."

Staff writer Pete Macintia can be reached at 228-3728 or petemacintia@yaho.com

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Capital Clipping Service

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Upcounty ER addresses critical need

The heart surgeon R. Adams Cowley, a pioneering trauma specialist at the University of Maryland, decades ago recognized that rapid treatment for severely injured patients could exponentially improve their chances for survival.

He is credited with coining the phrase the "golden hour" in trauma care of receiving critical care within 60 minutes after a major injury can make the difference between life and death.

Legislation that would allow Shady Grove Adventist Hospital to open a satellite emergency room in Germantown is entering its own golden hour in Annapolis this month.

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The association representing hospitals and the state health department also have varying degrees of heartburn with the proposed legislation, which creates a loophole for Adventist's Germantown center.

Shady Grove's statistics clearly demonstrate the need for a northern satellite. The hospital estimates that about 40 percent of the people treated in the ER at its Rockville hospital were from upper Montgomery County.

Community groups have rallied in support of the Shady Grove plan, pointing to congestion on the roads between Germantown and Rockville, which can delay a trip to the hospital, as a real concern.

Even by the most conservative estimates, population growth for northern Montgomery and southern Frederick counties will provide a sufficient patient base in the years ahead. The Germantown center also could fill a void when other emergency rooms are too busy or closed.

In an era of rapid change in the health-care industry nationwide, hospitals aren't known for rushing in to money-losing ventures.

From the vantage point of health regulators, there

most certainly are broader policy issues to be aired, including whether Maryland's health rules are in step with the way care is being brokered these days.

Like it or not, emergency rooms have become the doctor's office for those lacking insurance, or regular access to a doctor or clinic.

Maryland's rules that require in-patient beds at acute-care centers, like emergency rooms, might need to be refreshed. Those rules were a stumbling block in Adventist's request for a certificate, first made two years ago.

Absent immediate changes in state regulations, Shady Grove needs the support of the legislature for a special exception. The clock is ticking.

Capital Clipping Service

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Preston VFC cites members, top firefighters

Clay Owens
Times Record

PRESTON - The Preston Volunteer Fire Company honored its members at its annual awards banquet Feb. 19.

Special guests from local, county and state government, as well as local rescue agencies, were on hand to help commend Preston's emergency responders. Sen. Richard C. Colburn, R-37-Mid-Shore, and Del. Adde E. Eckardt, R-37B-Dorchester, presented certificates of appreciation from Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. and the Maryland General Assembly to the 13 members who had reached various milestones of service with the company.

Among those recognized were Fred Start for 40 years of service, and Dale Kenton and Bob Wahl, with 30 years each.

"Everything you do is appreciated by the community," Colburn said. "If the town of Preston had to pay for all you do, the taxes would be astronomical."

President Andy Garey served as master of ceremonies during the evening and proved to be a good-natured host who kept the presentations flowing and the gathering laughing.

Outgoing Chief Greg Bennett reported his company responded to 162 calls in 2004, accumulating 5,850 miles on their vehicles and 1,754 man hours of service.

"If they say you look good doing your job, there are people who make that possible. These are the guys (line officers) who made me look good. Thank you," Bennett told the gathering, who gave him a warm round of applause.

Outgoing EMS Captain Janice Stanley, who is turning over the reins to her husband Dave, reported her squad had gone on 529 runs the

five dive calls, one of which was a water rescue. He thanked those who supported the dive team's work and also took time to thank Chris Ruark of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for donating four exposure suits to the team.

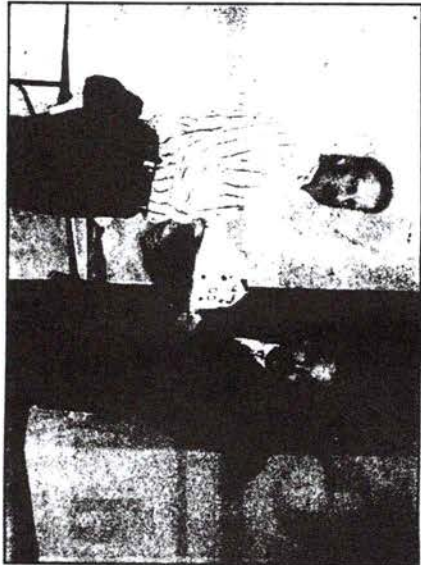
The suits will be used by those who help the dive team in cold and inclement weather. Ruark will also assist the dive team this year when possible.

After the reports were given, Bennett and Garey recognized the fire company's award winners. Wahl received the President's Award.

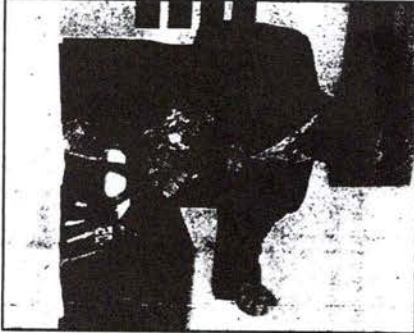
Donald Willoughby was named Fireman of the Year and Brent Marine won the Chief's Award. Chris Hall, who was unable to attend because he is serving with the Navy, was named Rookie of the Year. His parents accepted the award for him.

Butch Frase was honored as the top responder for fire calls with 101. He was followed by Alan Kenton, Brent Marine, Chris Hall, Troy Plutschak, Harold Brice, A.J. Plutschak, Jeff "King Corn" Covey, Craig Meekins, Russell Dukes, W. Keith Bennett and Jimmy Cheezum.

Stanley named W. Keith Bennett as the Ambulance Company's Driver of the Year and Dave Stanley as the EMS Provider of the Year. Dave Stanley also won the award for most



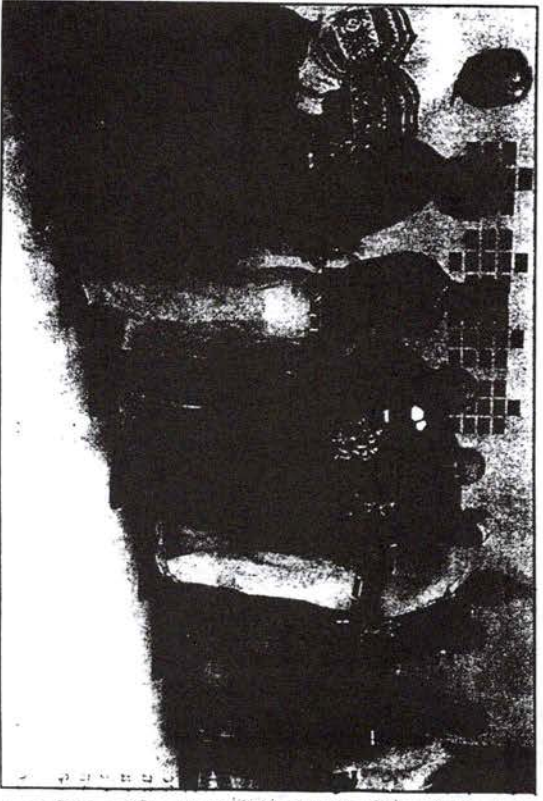
PHOTOS BY CLAY OWENS
Incoming Chief of the Preston Volunteer Fire Company Jack Garey, left, has the honorary Chief's Helmet passed to him by outgoing Chief Greg Bennett.



President Andy Garey kept the crowd entertained during the evening's festivities.



From left, Jen Garey, Jonathan Noble, Chip Verdey and Amanda Minton were the top cadet responders for 2004.



Preston Fire Company's top fire responders for 2004.

Marine, Rob MacGilliey, Troy Plutschak, W. Keith Bennett, Lee Messick, Ron Fearns, Russell Dukes, Chris Hall and Kenny Doyle. Jen Garey and Amanda Minton were named Cadets of the Year. Garey also led cadets in emergency responses with 46.

Jenny Kenton was honored for her service as company photographer and Lisa Covey and Dianne Garey received flowers in appreciation for

The fire officers for 2005 are: President: Andy Garey; Vice President: Troy Brooks; Secretary: Elaine Boyd; Treasurer: Kenny Doyle; Fifth Trustee: Donald Willoughby; Chief Jack Garey; First Assistant Chief Butch Frase; Second Assistant Chief Jimmy Cheezum; Captain Ryan Milligan.

The EMS officers for 2005 are: EMS Captain Dave Stanley; EMS Lieutenant Jimmy Cheezum and EMS Secretary/Treasurer Dianne Garey. David Wright is the Dive

GAZETTE (MOUNT AIRY)

MT. AIRY, MD
WEEKLY 10,000
FEB 24 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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Lawmakers seek to extend commission on vaccines

Volunteer group would review issues with flu immunization

by Ryan Basen

Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS — After an unexpected vaccine shortage kicked off a tumultuous, ongoing flu season, some Maryland lawmakers want to ensure the state is more prepared in the future.

The House is expected to vote Thursday on a bill to extend the Statewide Commission on Immunizations, a three-year-old, Baltimore-based commission that primarily examines the distribution of influenza and other vaccines.

The volunteer commission may also decide which immunizations to require for schoolchildren and may educate the public about vaccine shortages.

The current flu season has challenged the commission and the public, with both a shortage and then surplus of flu vaccines, and a double-whammy of respiratory and stomach viruses that have crowded hospitals.

Del. James Hubbard, D-Prince George's, who sponsored the bill that established the commission in 2002, also has sponsored this year's measure to extend it beyond its May 31 expiration.

The House Health and Government Operations Committee voted unanimously Friday to limit the commission's extension to another three years.

Lawmakers must continue the commission, Hubbard said, because of the current flu season's impact.

In fall 2004, British regulators shut down a leading vaccine producer because of contamination, causing a shortage in the United States. Marylanders followed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and reserved flu vaccines for only the most needy patients.

But by January, when hospitals were turning away patients because of high flu activity, the state had accumulated a vaccine surplus.

The commission must work ahead to prevent future flu vaccine supply problems, Hubbard said, and ensure that all vaccines are distributed evenly to the people who need them.

"We'll see what they can do to make supply versus demand early on a much easier process," said Hubbard, chairman of the House health committee's public health subcommittee. "We've got a ton of problems to deal with."

Richard Alcorta, Maryland's emergency medical services director, said the typical flu virus — a respiratory influenza — has actually been milder than normal this season. But an unusually widespread gastrointestinal virus has stuffed hospitals with sick patients.

The commission could not have predicted nor prevented this chaotic season, Alcorta said.

It will be charged with helping Marylanders adjust to such a season in the future, though.

Greg Reed, the commission's staffer for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, said addressing vaccine shortages and studying a current controversy over mercury levels in vaccines will be two of its top priorities.

Many researchers, including Rockville geneticist Mark Geier, attribute a surge in brain-development disorders like autism to high levels of mercury in vaccines given to small children.

Reed said the commission meets about once every quarter and costs the state very little, probably less than \$1,000 annually. There are 13 volunteer doctors on the commission.

"It's nice to have an independent entity that's capable of providing factual information and opinions," Reed said, "regarding some of the problems and challenges that we're facing."

The commission is already studying next season's flu vaccination supply because companies start working on producing the vaccines months in advance.

"That's the reason we need to keep (the commission) around," said House health committee Chairman John Adams Hurson, D-Montgomery. "We need to have a better handle on how you make vaccines... I think that's why the bill's going to pass."

GAZETTE OF POLITICS AND
BUSINESS

GAITHERSBURG, MD
WEEKLY 10,000
FEB 25 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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ER addresses critical need

The heart surgeon R. Adams Cowley, a pioneering trauma specialist at the University of Maryland, decades ago recognized that rapid treatment for severely injured patients could exponentially improve their chances for survival.

Montgomery County

He is credited with coining the phrase the "golden hour" in trauma care — receiving critical care within 60 minutes after a major injury can make the difference between life and death.

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need for a northern satellite. The hospital estimates that about 40 percent of the people treated in the ER at its Rockville hospital were from upper Montgomery County.

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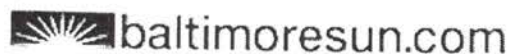
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<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/obituaries/bal-md.ob.riley25feb25,1,670559.story>

Charles Riley, 75, was firefighters' advocate

By Frederick N. Rasmussen
Sun Staff

February 25, 2005

Charles W. Riley, a longtime volunteer with the Abingdon Fire Co. and lobbyist for the Maryland State Firemen's Association, died Sunday at St. Joseph Medical Center from complications of heart bypass surgery. He was 75.

Mr. Riley was born in Harford County's Upper Crossroads Village and raised in nearby Perryman. He was a 1948 graduate of Bel Air High School, where he starred on the track team - a sport that won him an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Maryland, College Park.

From 1951 to 1959, he was a chemical technician at Edgewood Arsenal - leaving to take a job with Chemical Products Co. in Aberdeen.

He became an owner of Chemical Products in 1965, and a partner in Paidon Products Co. in Aberdeen in 1982. The two businesses manufacture chemical products, janitorial supplies and Kwik paint remover. He retired in 1991 after selling his interests in them.

Mr. Riley became a volunteer firefighter in 1953 when he joined the Abingdon company, and remained a firefighter and emergency medical services responder until 1990. He remained active in an administrative capacity until his death.

Through his more than 50 years of service with the fire company, Mr. Riley was credited with helping guide its development in becoming a highly trained and well-equipped organization.

"He was a driving influence and leader in the department. He was also one of the older members you went to when there was a problem or you needed advice," said Chief Albert H. "Cubby" Bair, who has headed the department for 30 years.

Since 1954, Mr. Riley has been a member of the Harford County Volunteer Fire and EMS Association, also serving as vice president, secretary and treasurer. He joined the Harford-Cecil Firemen's Association in 1957 and was inducted into its Hall of Fame in 1989.

For more than 30 years, Mr. Riley was a member of the Maryland State Firemen's Association. He was a former president and chaired its legislative committee - a role that made him a familiar figure in Annapolis lobbying on issues involving firefighters and emergency medical services personnel.

"He'd go to Annapolis for the 90-day session and paid his own way. He worked hard on bills and legislation that would benefit firefighters and emergency medical services in Maryland," said Benjamin W. Kurtz, a member of the Jarrettsville Volunteer Fire Dept. and treasurer of the Harford-Cecil Firemen's Association.

Mr. Riley in 1985 helped secure passage of Senate Bill 508, known as the William H. Amoss Fund, which

provides monetary support for volunteer and career fire, rescue and ambulance companies in Maryland.

He helped create the Fire Service Low Interest Loan Program - a revolving \$1 million low-interest lending program for volunteer fire, rescue and ambulance companies acquiring equipment. He also helped secure state financial support for five regional training centers across Maryland.

"Charlie was the kind of man who said what he thought and was straight up. He did everything he could to help protect the citizens of Maryland. It was the primary drive of his life," said William J. Dousa Jr., an Abingdon Fire Co. board member and trustee. "He was well respected in Annapolis because he was so knowledgeable and the easiest guy in the world to talk to."

Mr. Riley was a longtime member and chairman of the Harford County Liquor Control Board.

He was a 50-year member of Cokesbury United Methodist Church, where he had been chairman of the board, caretaker of its cemetery and a Sunday school teacher.

Services with departmental honors will be held at 10:30 a.m. today at the Abingdon Fire Co., 3306 Abingdon Road, and his casket will be transported aboard Engine 414, a Pierce white-and orange pumper, to the church cemetery.

Survivors include his wife of 54 years, the former Phoebe "Sis" V. Nichols; two sons, Charles A. "Chip" Riley and Bruce R. Riley, both of Bel Air; a brother, Bradley M. Riley of Perryman; and three grandchildren.

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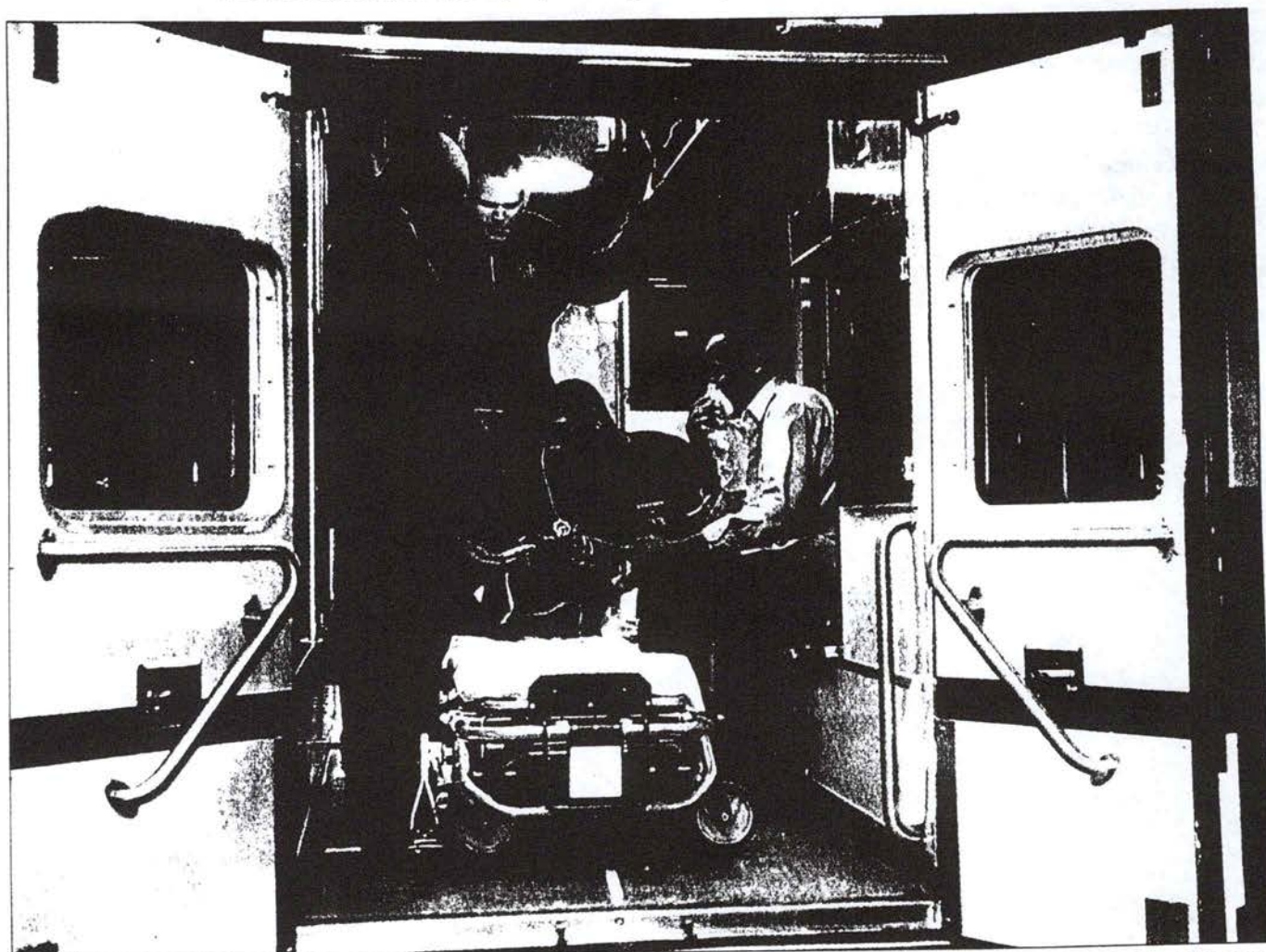
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"These are transferable health skills. It's another way for students, especially on the west side of the county, to get allied health skills."

Rhonda Hoyman, technical programs supervisor for Baltimore County Schools



GENE SWEENEY JR.: SUN STAFF

Lt. Phil DePalo (center, standing) watches Woodlawn High students and EMT trainees Wesley Watson (left), Jeriel Waters and Keith Carr perform a training exercise inside the Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Company's ambulance.

Students respond to class

that teaches EMT training

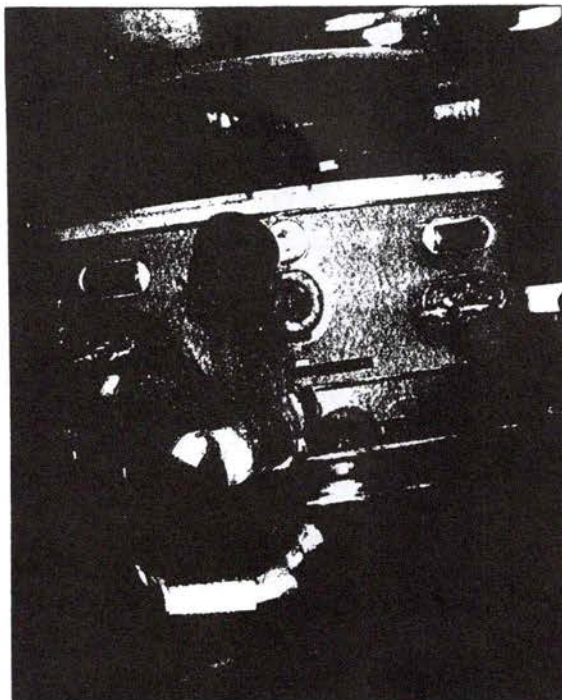
Paramedics: A Baltimore County program helps teens learn medical treatment in an effort to recruit more blacks in the Fire Department.

By ANICA BUTLER
SUN STAFF

On a recent frigid and wet evening at the Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Company, students from Woodlawn High School bundled up and happily shoveled the snow from the front of the station.

Then the alarm sounded. Wesley Watson, a 17-year-old junior, raced into the firehouse and hopped aboard an ambulance with two of the department's paramedics. They raced — sirens blaring and lights flashing — to a car accident on Dogwood Road, where Watson helped take an injured person's vital signs.

Watson and the other students are enrolled in a new Emergency Medical Services and Fire Rescue class at Woodlawn High. Offered elsewhere in the county since 1996, the class was introduced at Woodlawn in late fall, though a shaky start meant the students were without supplies and a regular teacher until last month.



CHRISTOPHER T. ASSAF: SUN STAFF
Wesley Watson, 17, gets ready to respond to an emergency call. He has been out on 30 calls, more than any other student.

But school and Baltimore County fire officials are working to get the program on track. It's important, they say, not just for the students, but also for a department that is trying to recruit more emergency medical workers and attract more blacks to the department.

"We do want a fire department that represents the community," said Capt. Glenn A. Blackwell of the Fire Rescue Academy.

The Woodlawn class meets at the high school from 11:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. five days a week. Students learn CPR and how to take vital signs and administer medical treatment — the skills they will be tested on to be certified as emergency medical technicians, or EMTs, when the class is done.

Watson is hoping for a career in the department — one that will take him to captain or even chief.

As part of the class, the 16 students must join the Woodlawn department. After completing a checklist of such skills as learning to operate a stretcher, fill oxygen bottles and take inventory of the ambulance, students are eligible to go on ride-alongs with the medical personnel. After passing tests, the students are allowed to take vital signs and help out on the calls.

"There's a huge difference between working on a mannequin and working on a real human," said EMS Lt. Philip DePalo, who works with the students.

Not all the students are interested in joining the Fire Department. For many, the class, and the resulting certification, is a first step to other medical careers.

"I've always wanted to be a doctor," said 16-year-old [See EMT, 2B]

unny snow day

A federal judge sentence Baltimore man yesterday to

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

The president of the Baltimore community outcry. Francis X. Kelly, indicated that the senior housing proposal faced an uphill battle. The decision to shelve the Essex project came in the same week.

ideas and, essentially, given that property to a developer. "The fiscal impact," he said, "was tantamount to giving away prime real estate and that makes no sense for a college system with a \$6 million deficit." Dennis Eckard, president of

WESTERN MONTGOMERY BULLETIN

POOLESVILLE, MD
WEEKLY 10,000
FEB 26 2005



Capital Clipping Service

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GOV. EHRLICH HOLDS 13 EVENTS IN COUNTY

Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. and his executive cabinet held thirteen events in Montgomery County last week, highlighting several of Governor Ehrlich's successful initiatives. Governor Ehrlich, Lt. Governor Michael S. Steele, and their executive cabinet also gathered at Rockville City Hall to hold a Cabinet Meeting hosted by Rockville Mayor Giammo in the City Council Chambers. The meeting was broadcast on the local cable access channel. 47FB

"Today's events demonstrate my deep commitment to the concerns of the citizens of Montgomery County," said Governor Ehrlich. "The initiatives we highlight today are making Montgomery County and all of Maryland a cleaner, safer and more prosperous place to live."

Some of the highlights of the events were:

Inter-County Connector (ICC) Tour: The Governor and state agencies provided an overview of environmental projects related to ICC construction followed by a tour of the ICC route. The ICC is Governor Ehrlich's top transportation priority. Agencies: Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Planning, and the Department of the Environment.

Project Lead the Way: Lt. Governor together with seven state agencies highlighted the interagency collaboration between education K-16 and workforce and economic development. They visited Magruder High School to interact with students and staff involved in the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) pre-engineering Program. This is a national program administered through the State Department.

of Education with guidance from other agencies, as well as the Maryland business community. PLTW is designed to help schools give students the knowledge and skills they need to excel in high-tech fields, such as engineering. Agencies: Department of Education, Department of Business and Economic Development, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Department of General Services, Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism, Maryland Higher Education Commission

Collaborative Supervision and Focused Enforcement Initiative (C-SAFE): The Lt. Governor joined the state agencies and community groups in highlighting the International C-SAFE initiative. This public safety program combines state and local planning, policing, adult and juvenile probation offices, support of addiction recovery, community mobilization, community prosecution and nuisance abatement to fight crime in the local area. Agencies: Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Juvenile Services, State Police

Health and Medical Homeland Security Event: Governor Ehrlich's homeland security team demonstrated results of Homeland Security grant funding and toured state-of-the-art displays at the Emergency Operations Center. From there, the event moved to the Shady Grove Hospital where the Secretaries toured hospital decontamination tents and viewed system static display coordinated system with all hospitals. NCR CASI purchase of inter-hospital communication (Radio Demo). Agencies: Office of Homeland Security, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

local NEWS

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FEAT

Emergency rooms busy as flu season kicks in

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BALTIMORE (AP) -- State health officials say if you just have the flu, don't go to the emergency room.

Widespread influenza cases are crowding emergency rooms across Maryland. Health officials say the emergency rooms should only be used for true emergencies.

Governor Ehrlich says no one should hesitate to seek emergency services. But he adds, "when calling 911, be sure there is a true emergency situation."

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TELL US

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Research Note

February 2005

DOT HS 809 847

Driver Cell Phone Use in 2004 — Overall Results

Donna Glassbrenner, Ph.D.

During the typical daylight moment in 2004, 5% of drivers on the road were holding cellular phones to their ears, compared to 4% in 2002, and 3% in 2000. These results are from the National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), which provides the only probability-based observed data on driver cell phone use in the United States. The NOPUS is conducted annually by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The NOPUS's finding of 5% use of hand-held phones in 2004 translates into an estimated 800,000 vehicles on the road during the typical daylight moment in 2004 driven by someone holding a phone. It also means that approximately 8% of drivers were using wireless phones in some manner, whether they were holding the phone or using some hands-free device. These results were obtained by combining results from the NOPUS with data from the National Household Travel Survey and the research studies (Boyle et al., to appear) and (Stutts et al., 2003).

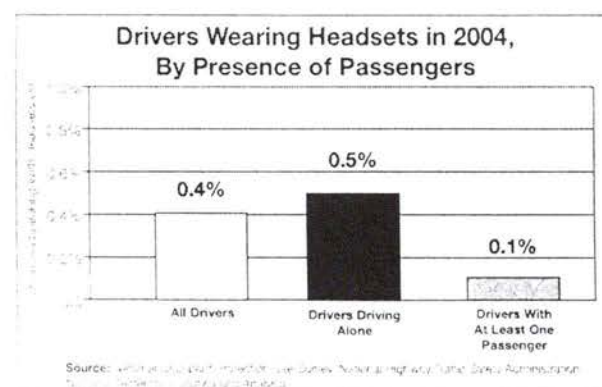
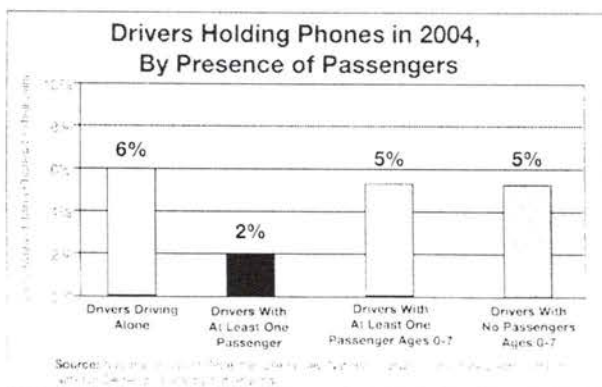
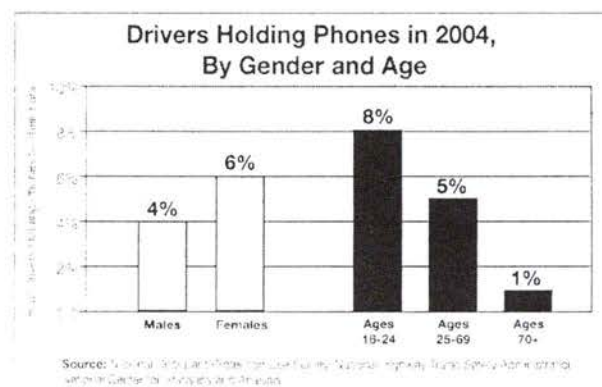
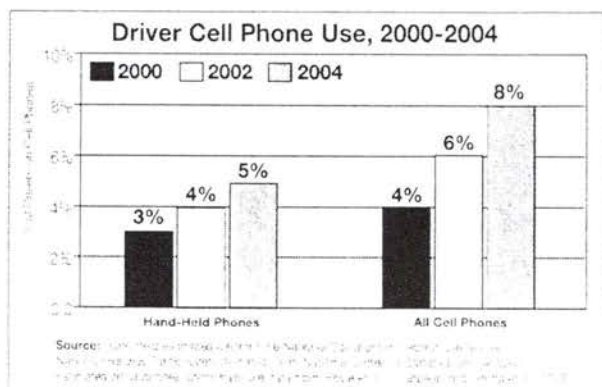
The 2004 NOPUS also found the following:

Hand-held cell phone use increased among drivers between the ages of 16 and 24, from 5% in 2002 to 8% in 2004.

Hand-held cell phone use increased among female drivers, from 4% in 2002 to 6% in 2004.

Drivers are more likely to use their phones when they are driving alone. In 2004, 6% of drivers observed driving alone were holding cell phones, compared to 2% among drivers who had at least one passenger.

In the first nationwide observed estimate of driver headset use, the NOPUS found that 0.4% of drivers were speaking with headsets on in 2004.



Drivers Holding Phones, by Major Characteristics

Driver Group ¹	2000		2002		2000-2002 Change		2004		2000-2004 Change		2002-2004 Change	
	Drivers Holding Phones ²	Significantly High (H) and Low (L) Use Rates ³	Drivers Holding Phones ²	Significantly High (H) and Low (L) Use Rates ³	Change, in Percentage Points	Confidence in a Change in Use ⁴	Drivers Holding Phones ²	Significantly High (H) and Low (L) Use Rates ³	Change, in Percentage Points	Confidence in a Change in Use ⁴	Change, in Percentage Points	Confidence in a Change in Use ⁴
All Drivers	4%		4%		1	77%	5%		2	95%	1	75%
	4%		4%		1	81%	4%		1	93%	0	0%
	4%		4%		1	59%	6%		3	96%	2	92%
Drivers Who Appear to Be ⁵												
Ages 16-24	3%		5%		2	83%	8%	H	5	99%	3	99%
Ages 25-69	3%		4%		1	70%	5%		2	96%	1	59%
Ages 70 and Up	1%	L	1%	L	0	0%	1%	L	0	0%	0	0%
Drivers Who Appear to Be ⁵												
White ⁶	4%	H	4%		0	0%	5%		1	81%	1	85%
Black ⁶	4%		5%		3	95%	5%		2	94%	0	0%
Hispanic ⁶	5%		5%		3	87%	3%	L	1	78%	2	66%
Drivers on												
Expressway Exit Ramps	NA		4%		NA	73%	6%		NA		2	93%
Surface Streets	3%		4%		1		5%		2	87%	1	40%
Drivers Traveling Through												
Light Traffic ⁷	3%		3%		0	0%	5%		2	42%	2	64%
Heavy Traffic ⁷	NA		5%		NA		NA		NA		NA	
Clear Weather Conditions	3%		4%		1	76%	5%		2	98%	1	75%
Drivers of												
Passenger Cars	3%		4%		1	77%	4%		1	89%	0	0%
Vans & SUVs	5%	H	5%		0	0%	6%		1	60%	1	64%
Pickup Trucks	2%		3%		1	72%	5%		3	99%	2	99%
Drivers in the												
Midwest ⁸	3%		3%	L	0	0%	3%	L	0	0%	0	0%
Midwest ⁸	4%		5%		1	44%	5%		1	39%	0	0%
South ⁸	4%		3%		4	13%	6%		2	82%	3	92%
West ⁸	2%		5%		3	87%	6%		4	93%	1	33%
Drivers in												
Urban Areas	2%		5%		3	94%	7%		5	99%	2	98%
Suburban Areas	3%		5%		2	61%	4%		1	50%	-1	18%
Rural Areas	3%		2%	L	-1	52%	6%		3	92%	4	98%
Drivers Traveling During												
Weekdays	3%		4%		1	56%	5%		2	95%	1	80%
Weekends	2%		3%		1	57%	5%		3	99%	2	99%
Weekdays Night Hours	5%		5%		0	0%	5%		0	0%	0	0%
Weekdays Non-Rush Hours	2%		4%		2	78%	3%		1	97%	-1	29%
Drivers of Vehicles in Which ⁹												
They Are the Sole Occupant	NA		NA		NA		6%	H	NA		NA	
There Is At Least One Passenger	NA		NA		NA		2%	L	NA		NA	
Drivers of Vehicles in Which ⁹												
There Is At Least One 17 Year Old Passenger	NA		3%		NA		5%		NA		2	63%
There Are No 17 Year Old Passengers	NA		4%		NA		5%		NA		1	82%

¹ Drivers of passenger vehicles with no commercial or government markings stopped at a stop sign or stoplight between the hours of 8 AM and 6 PM.

² The percent of drivers who appeared to be holding a phone to their ear.

³ Rates flagged with an "H" or "L" are statistically high or low in their category at a 90% confidence level.

⁴ The degree of statistical confidence that the use rates in the two specified time periods, e.g. 2000 vs. 2002, differ.

⁵ Based on the subjective characterization of observers.

⁶ Among passengers observed in the right front seat and the second row of seats.

⁷ NA: Data not collected or not sufficient to produce a reliable estimate.

⁸ Source: National Occupant Protection Use Survey, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Center for Statistics and Analysis

Drivers Speaking with Headsets On, by Major Characteristics

Driver Group ¹	Headset Use ²	Significantly High (H) and Low (L) Use Rates ³
All Drivers	0.4%	
Males	0.5%	
Females	0.2%	
Drivers Who Appear to Be⁴		
Ages 16-24	0.8%	
Ages 25-69	0.3%	
Ages 70 and Up	NA	
Drivers Who Appear to Be⁴		
White	0.3%	
Black	0.3%	
Members of Other Races	0.2%	
Drivers on		
Expressway Exit Ramps	0.4%	
Surface Streets	0.3%	
Drivers Traveling Through		
Light Precipitation	0.1%	
Fog	NA	
Clear Weather Conditions	0.4%	
Drivers of		
Passenger Cars	0.4%	
Vans & SUVs	0.3%	
Pickup Trucks	0.4%	
Drivers in the		
Northeast	1.0%	
Midwest	0.2%	
South	0.4%	
West	0.3%	
Drivers in		
Urban Areas	0.9%	
Suburban Areas	0.2%	
Rural Areas	0.4%	
Drivers Traveling During		
Weekdays	0.4%	
Weekday Rush Hours	0.6%	
Weekday Non-Rush Hours	0.3%	
Weekends	0.2%	
Drivers of Vehicles in Which⁵		
They Are the Sole Occupant	0.5%	H
There Is At Least One Passenger	0.1%	L
Drivers of Vehicles in Which⁵		
There Is At Least One 0-7 Year Old Passenger	NA	
There Are No 0-7 Year Old Passengers	0.4%	

¹ Drivers of passenger vehicles with no commercial or government markings stopped at a stop sign or stoplight between the hours of 8 AM and 6 PM.

² The percent of drivers who appeared to be wearing a headset with a microphone, and who appeared to be speaking.

³ Rates flagged with an "H" or "L" are statistically higher or lower than the overall rate of 0.4%.

⁴ Based on the subjective characterization of observers.

⁵ An "Other" passenger observed in the vehicle was not included in the "Other" category.

NA: Data not available or not applicable.

Source: National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) data from the National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

Survey Methodology

The National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) is the only probability-based observational survey of driver cell phone use in the United States. The survey observes usage as it actually occurs at a random selection of roadway sites, and so provides the best tracking of driver cell phone use in this country.

The survey data is collected by sending observers to a set of probabilistically sampled intersections controlled by a stop sign or stoplight,

Sites, Vehicles, and Motorists Observed

Numbers of	2002	2004	Change
Sites Observed	1,200	1,200	0%
Vehicles Observed	37,000	38,000	3%
Drivers Observed ¹			
Ages 16-24	4,000	5,000	25%
Ages 25-69	30,000	32,000	7%
Ages 70+	3,000	2,000	-33%

¹ Estimates do not sum to totals due to rounding.

where motorists are observed from the roadside. Data are collected between the hours of 8 AM and 6 PM. Only stopped vehicles are observed to permit time to collect the variety of information required by the survey, including subjective assessments of motorists' age and race. Observers collect data on the driver and observe the presence of a right front passenger and up to two passengers in the second row of seats. Observers do not interview motorists, so that the NOPUS captures the untainted behavior of vehicle occupants. The 2004 NOPUS data were collected between June 7 and July 11, 2004, excluding the period July 2-5.

Because the NOPUS sites were chosen through probabilistic means, we can analyze the statistical significance of its results. Statistically

significant increases in hand-held phone use during the periods 2000-2002, 2000-2004, and 2002-2004 are identified in the table "Drivers Holding Phones, by Major Characteristics" by a result that is 90% or greater in columns 7, 11, and 13, respectively. Significantly high and low levels of cell phone use, such as the higher hand-held use rates by drivers between the ages of 16 and 24 in 2004 compared to older drivers, are identified by H's and L's in columns 3, 5, and 9 of the table "Drivers Holding Phones, by Major Characteristics", and in column 3 of "Drivers Speaking with Headsets On, by Major Characteristics". Such comparisons are made within categories, such as age group, delineated by solid horizontal lines in the table. The exception to this is the grouping "Drivers Traveling During ...", in which weekdays are compared to weekends, and weekday rush hour to weekday non-rush hour.

The NOPUS uses a complex multi-stage probability sample, statistical data editing, imputation of unknown values, and complex estimation and variance estimation procedures. See the NHTSA Technical Report referenced below for more information on these procedures.

The estimates of the numbers of drivers on phones and the percent of drivers using cell phones hands-free were derived via calculations that use data from the publications (Boyle et al., to appear) and (Stutts et al., 2003), and from the Department of Transportation's National Household Travel Survey. These calculations are explained in detail in the upcoming publication "Driver Cell Phone Use in 2004 - Analysis", expected to be published in the Spring of 2005.

Data collection, estimation, and variance estimation for the NOPUS are conducted by Westat, Inc. under the direction of the National Center for Statistics and Analysis in NHTSA under federal contract number DTNH22-00-D-07001.

Definitions

Drivers were counted as "using a hand-held phone" if they were holding to their ear what appeared to the observer to be a phone. In particular, drivers holding Personal Data Assistants PDAs or corded car phones to their ears might have been counted as holding a phone. (They would have been so counted if the PDA or car phone appeared to the observer to be some type of phone.) Drivers need not have been speaking into the phone to be counted as using the phone. Drivers who were dialing or otherwise manipulating a phone, but not holding it to their ear, were not counted as holding a phone, as such activity cannot be reliably observed from the roadside.

Drivers were counted as "using a headset" if they appeared to have on their head a device that had a microphone, and they appeared to be speaking. The microphone might be on a wand or other visible attachment. Devices identified as headsets need not have a headpiece (i.e. a piece of plastic running across the top of the head), and need not have a wire attached to them. Drivers identified by the survey as using headsets might have been, for instance, using voice-activated software on a laptop seated on the seat next to them, rather than speaking on a cell phone. Observers did not attempt to distinguish these two behaviors because they cannot be reliably distinguished from the roadside. Likewise, drivers identified as using headsets might have been speaking to a passenger or him- or herself, rather than speaking into the headset.

We note that there are means by which drivers can use a cell phone that would neither be recorded as holding a phone nor as using a headset in the NOPUS. For instance, some phones have a push-to-talk feature, in which the user pushes a button on the phone when s/he wishes to speak and releases the button when s/he wishes to hear the person(s) on the other end of the line via a speakerphone built into the cell phone. Additionally some cell phones have a built-in speakerphone

via which a driver can converse on a phone hands-free. Drivers conversing on phones via either of these technologies would not appear to roadside observers to be holding phones to their ears (assuming the push-to-talk users are not holding the phone to their ear), and would not be wearing headsets.

The racial categories "Black", "White", and "Other Races" appearing in the tables reflect subjective characterizations by roadside observers regarding the race of motorists. Likewise observers' recorded the age group (8-15 years; 16-24 years; 25-69 years; and 70 years or older) that best fit their visual assessment of each observed motorist.

"Expressways" are defined to be roadways with limited access, while "surface streets" comprise all other roadways. All expressway data in this report were collected at exit ramps having stop signs or stoplights.

Driver cell phone use is largely unrestricted by State laws. No States ban use outright. Two States and the District of Columbia ban the use of hand-held phones while driving. One of these bans took effect in 2001 (New York), and two in 2004 (New Jersey in May 2004 and D.C. in July 2004).

A small number of States otherwise restrict the manner of use, e.g., by requiring sound to travel unimpaired to at least one of the driver's ears or requiring at least one hand on the steering wheel at all times. A few States ban use in certain situations, such as when operating a school bus or public transit vehicle. In addition, some major cities have hand-held bans or otherwise restrict use.

Driving while using a headset is even less restricted by traffic laws. No States or major cities ban use outright. As with driver cell phone use, a small number of States restrict the manner of use, e.g., by requiring sound to travel unimpaired to at least one of the driver's ears, or ban certain types of use in certain situations, such as by banning cell phone use (whether hand-held or hands-free) when operating a school bus or public transit vehicle.

For More Information

For detailed analyses of the data in this publication, as well as additional data and information on the survey design and analysis procedures, see the upcoming publication "Driver Cell Phone Use in 2004 – Analysis", expected to be available at the website <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/AvailInf.html> in the Spring of 2005.

States with Laws Banning Hand-Held Cell Phone Use While Driving

2002 ¹	2004 ²
New York	New York
	New Jersey

¹Laws in effect as of June 30, 2002.

²Laws in effect as of July 30, 2004.

The NOPUS also observes other types of restraints, such as safety belt use by adult motorists and the use of motorcycle helmets and child restraints. This publication is part of a series that presents overall results from the survey on these topics. Please see other members of the series, such as "Safety Belt Use in 2004 – Overall Results", and the corresponding NHTSA Technical Report "Safety Belt Use in 2004 – Overall Analysis", for the latest data on these topics.

References

Boyle, J., Vanderwolf, P., 2003 *Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey, Volume 4, Crash Injury and Emergency Medical Services Report, NHTSA Technical Report*, to appear.

Federal Highway Administration, *Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey, 1995*, and *National Household Travel Survey, 2001*.

Stutts, J., Hunter, W., Huang, H., *Cell Phone Use While Driving: Results of a Statewide Survey*, Transportation Research Board, Annual Meeting CD-ROM, 2003.