

FAREMS

Rural Dispatch

Quarterly Newsletter

FAREMS' mission is to provide a unified voice for EMS providers at a state and local level to expand and improve the delivery of pre-hospital emergency medical service in the rural areas of Florida. Winter 2009

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Rural Emergency Medical Services: The Florida Approach

In 1973, the Florida legislature passed and Governor Rubin Askew signed into law Chapter 73-126 Laws of Florida, which later became Chapter 401 Florida Statutes and is referred to as the "EMS ACT." Over the past 35 years a few updates were made to the "EMS Act."

One requirement in the statute has never changed and that is the requirement that all applicants for licensure as an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provider must meet the same criteria. If you are a paid, volunteer, urban or rural, or fire or non-fire provider the licensure criteria is the same for all.

The legislation creating the EMS statute became effective on October 1, 1973. I started with the Florida EMS program in February of 1974. When I began, rural areas of Florida had many types of transport vehicles: hearses, pick-up trucks with camper tops, panel trucks and, in one instance, a tow truck. Over the next few years the rural counties worked toward providing the best care possible with limited resources; this continues today. In the early 1970's every rural county, except Lafayette, received a state grant to purchase at least one ambulance. (Lafayette County was provided coverage by Suwannee County in those days.) Today, all 33 rural counties, as defined by statute, have at least one paid EMS provider and state-of-the-art ambulances.

Today rural county EMS agencies and personnel can stand tall. Rural EMS personnel over the years have become known for their ability to provide optimal care and treatment. This is accomplished, in most instances, with only a paramedic and emergency medical technician on scene, although sometimes they receive assistance from volunteer firefighters or local or state law enforcement officers.

Rural EMS has come a long way since the early days of EMS in Florida, and those who work or have worked in rural EMS agencies over the last 35 years can be proud of their accomplishments. The creation of the Florida Association Rural Emergency Medical Services (FAREMS) has created a forum for all rural agencies to band together and identify and address mutual concerns. This organization has provided a significant amount of statewide exposure to the needs of rural counties and has generated a better understanding of rural EMS not only in the state but nationwide as well. These efforts need to continue.

Ed Wilson

Retired, Florida Bureau of EMS

(Mr. Wilson was instrumental in the establishment and early success of FAREMS. We sincerely thank him for his work and dedication to rural Florida EMS.)



PO Box 358582
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Dates

June 16, 2009
Summer 2009 Paramedic
and EMT Scholarship
Application Deadline

June 29, 2009
General Meeting
Orlando

Our Partners



Recruitment and Retention

Year after year, rural healthcare agencies struggle to find quality personnel to fill the needs of their communities. Studies have determined that healthcare workers not raised in a rural area were significantly less likely to come to a rural area for their job than individuals who grew up in these communities. Through the Florida Office of Rural Health FLEX Grant program, FAREMS is actively supporting Florida EMS agencies with recruiting and retaining EMS professionals in the rural areas. To encourage and educate youth in rural communities to follow a career in

EMS, FAREMS is producing videos, PSAs and brochures highlighting the benefits of the EMS field and targeted toward rural high school students. FAREMS also continues to offer scholarships for EMS-minded individuals in rural areas to pursue EMT or paramedic schooling. Leadership training will also be offered to select rural EMS agency directors who show promise as outstanding leaders, but may need or desire additional skills training to be most effective. For more information about these efforts, contact Tracy at 352-256-5503.

Training Opportunities

FAREMS has secured a contract with the Florida Department of Health to provide Advanced Stroke Life Support (ASLS) classes to EMS providers in rural Florida. These classes will be taught by newly trained instructors mentored and monitored by staff at the Neuroscience Institute at Shands Jacksonville. Textbooks and educational

licensing materials will be available for new instructors to continue the program.

FAREMS is also coordinating citizen CPR training with local EMS agencies through Florida Bureau of EMS funding.

If your agency would like to host one of these classes, contact Tracy at 352-256-5503.

Summer 2009 Scholarship Applications

Summer 2009 EMT and paramedic scholarship applications are now available. Visit our website, www.farems.org, to download applications. Since spring 2007, FAREMS has awarded 36 paramedic

scholarships and 14 EMT scholarships to individuals committed to living and working in one of Florida's rural counties. The application deadline is June 16, 2009.

Visit our website:
www.farems.org

