

Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corps are ready to roll

By Melody Burri, staff writer

Messenger Post

Posted Mar 01, 2012 @ 07:56 AM

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Victor and Farmington, N.Y. — This year an estimated 3,000 emergency calls will come in for crews at **Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corps**, and one thing is certain — this army of first-responders will be ready to roll.

Emergency calls, as reported by the Corps, have grown by 84 percent in the past 10 years and are expected to increase yet again in 2012. It's no wonder. This team is responsible for covering a hefty 75 square miles of rapidly-developing countryside, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corps plays a vital role along with all emergency responders in our growing community," said Farmington Town Supervisor Ted Fafinski. "Their emergency medical response role has been expanded significantly since 9/11, along with the demands of our town's population growth."

Victor Supervisor Jack Marren echoed Fafinski's accolades.

"The efforts and professionalism of the Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corps — along with their dedication," he said, "provide peace of mind for our residents and quality of life for the Victor community."

That peace of mind is no accident. The Corps beefed up its personnel schedule considerably in recent months so it could provide ambulance and advanced life support services to multiple 911 emergency requests that come in at the same time.

According to Director of Operations Jeremy Hotchkiss, "staffing multiple duty crews has allowed the Ambulance Corps to maintain high call coverage — about 96 percent — and reduce the need to request mutual aid (assistance from neighboring ambulance districts) for emergency services."

It's a trend Corps members are proud of.

Capital improvements

In addition to logging in more hours, the Corps has made a number of capital improvements since 2000 to keep pace with growth, including a significant building expansion and the purchase of a fourth ambulance in 2006.

"The agency (also) added two emergency response vehicles this past year to aid in both paramedic and basic medical care responses," said Corps President Brianna Hutton.

But she believes there is still more to accomplish. Two of the four ambulances are due for upgrades in 2013 and 2014. These upgrades, which take several months to complete, would leave just three ambulances available to handle an ever-increasing number of incoming 911 calls.

"Our agency has two or three ambulances dispatched simultaneously to various emergencies ... several days each week," said Hotchkiss.

To fill in the gap, the Volunteer Corps board of directors has plans to add a fifth ambulance to the fleet at an estimated \$100,000 or more. Hutton said the Corps will launch a capital fundraising campaign this year in order to raise a majority of the \$100,000 for a new ambulance and to help cover other increasing costs.

"This is extremely important for times when the demand for services is high," Hotchkiss said. "During the summer months, it's frequent that all four ambulances are staffed with duty crews to cover both emergencies and numerous community events, leaving no buffer for the unexpected."

As the call volume continues to increase in the coming year, the Corps' staff of eight full-time, certified and experienced EMTs and paramedics will increase to nine full-time employees.

Hutton said that while the Corps' primary source of revenue is third party billing to insurance companies, it also makes regular application for federal, state, and private grants to upgrade equipment. Recently the Corps, along with three other emergency responders, was awarded a FEMA grant of \$382,180 for upgrading their radio systems.

Volunteers needed

Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corps is currently in search of volunteer members to become qualified as dispatchers, drivers and medics and perform administrative duties. The corps has 40 active members who donate 20,000 hours annually.

More information about volunteering is available at (585) 202-1708, or www.victorfarmingtonambulance.org. Residents may inquire in person at the Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance headquarters on 1321 East Victor Road. Contributions should be made payable to Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance and sent to 1321 East Victor Road, Victor, NY 14564.

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