



Expanding Emergency Medical Services Should Be Top Priority in Virginia Beach

The future of volunteer rescue squads in Virginia Beach may hinge on a decision by City Council to expand the number of first responders available throughout the day.

In the view of the Foundation of the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad, this would be a wise action but should be funded within existing revenues. The accompanying letter was sent to all members of Virginia Beach City Council.

Dear Members of Virginia Beach City Council,

We, the board members of the Virginia Beach Rescue Squad Foundation, thank you for your service to our City and for the many hours you devote to making wise decisions regarding the health and welfare of our citizens. Now, another important decision is before you: how to finance necessary enhancements to our emergency medical system with the goal of reducing response times?

We are very aware of the cost of these improvements, which include the hiring of additional ALS providers. We believe, however, that a thriving city of 425,000 persons, with an annual budget of roughly \$1-billion, can find the funds required to supplement a municipal function that is most critically needed when its consumers are at their most vulnerable.

The raising of citizens' real estate taxes specifically for this purpose would, we believe, unjustly anger the public toward our EMS workers (who, we believe, deserve citizens' thanks, not their criticism).

We also feel that billing users for ambulance rides (for the first time in our city's history) is also inadvisable, since it would require the establishment of a costly new bureaucracy, would be unfair to individuals least able to afford it, and would jeopardize the future of the nation's largest volunteer rescue



EMS volunteers learn how to extricate car accident victims during a simulated vertical crunch

program, of which all of us in Virginia Beach are justifiably proud.

In addition, we urge you to **oppose** billing for services because we are concerned that many volunteers will opt out of the squads, upset that the City is "profiting" from their free labor. Further, we fear that residents would be less likely to continue supporting these heretofore all-volunteer organizations (with an average of \$3-million per year in personal and corporate donations) if they know that they, or their insurers, will have to pay for ambulance transport, which might cost hundreds of dollars per occurrence, based on call distance.

We know that the cost of government services is high. But Virginia Beach has been fortunate. Since 1952, our volunteer rescue squads have saved us as much as \$8-million annually in the cost of emergency medical care.

We therefore urge you to fund a plan recommended by City Manager James Spore — but to do so within **currently available and forecast revenues**, thereby demonstrating both your appreciation of the delicate situation involving our volunteers, and your commitment to the proposition that the saving of lives is truly our city's number one priority. ■ ■ ■

**Yours in service to Virginia Beach,
Virginia Beach Rescue Squad Foundation
Board of Directors**

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Our Mission

The mission of the Virginia Beach Department of Emergency Medical Services is to respond to the community to preserve life, improve health and promote safety through emergency response, public education and safety initiatives which are valued by our customer and which achieve the City Council goals and vision for the future.

The Virginia Beach Department of EMS Call Stats 2003

	CALLS FOR SERVICE
1st Quarter	7,781
2nd Quarter	8,405
3rd Quarter	8,957
4th Quarter	8,491
Total	33,634

THE COUNCIL OF VIRGINIA BEACH VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUADS, INC. INCLUDES:

Ocean Park Volunteer Rescue Squad
Davis Corner Volunteer Rescue Squad
Chesapeake Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad
Court House Volunteer Rescue Squad
Creeds Volunteer Rescue Squad
Kempsville Volunteer Rescue Squad
Blackwater Volunteer Rescue Squad
Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad
Plaza Volunteer Rescue Squad
Sandbridge Volunteer Rescue Squad
Virginia Beach Volunteer Water Rescue Team

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**VOLUNTEER
RESCUE SQUADS OF
VIRGINIA BEACH**

1917 ARCTIC AVENUE, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23451
757-437-4850

Public Safety is our Greatest Concern

EMS Week 2004 Set for May 16 – 22

This May, Emergency Medical Services Week 2004 will bring together our local community and medical personnel to publicize safety and honor the dedication of those who provide essential lifesaving services everyday in Hampton Roads. Sponsored by the American College of Emergency Physicians, this year's theme is EMS: *There When You Need Us*. Watch the Virginian Pilot for information on where Virginia Beach EMS personnel and vehicles will be on display to educate the public about injury prevention, safety awareness and medical emergencies.



Rescue Squad Professionals volunteer their time at last year's EMS Week exhibit at Lynnhaven Mall.

New Traffic Law Protects Rescue Workers on Highways



New traffic law requires cars to move over at least one lane on highways, giving rescue workers a protective zone to do their work.

A new traffic law is now in effect which helps protect the safety of emergency vehicles and rescue workers at the scene of highway accidents. The regulation requires drivers to move over at least one lane, giving emergency crews more room to do their important work. Violations constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor and penalties may apply: "...if reasonable, with due regard for safety and traffic conditions, (drivers must) yield the right-of-way by making a lane change into a lane not adjacent to that occupied by the stationary emergency vehicle or if changing lanes would be unreasonable or unsafe, proceed with due caution and maintain a safe speed for highway conditions."

FOCUS ON: The Bike Team

Organized in May 1997, the Bike Team serves as an additional means to deliver emergency medical services. With the increasing number of mass gathering events like the American Music Festival, Boardwalk Art Show and July 4th Fireworks, the mobility of the bikes allows quick response in highly congested areas where ambulance access may be limited.

Commanded by Captain Deb Fry, the Bike Team has 24 members who use twelve 24-speed mountain bikes with front suspension. Each bike is outfitted with headlight systems, warning lights, a rear gear rack and saddlebags to carry equipment. Each team carries a full set of EMS equipment. The Basic



Life Support bike, operated by an EMT-Basic, carries complete BLS equipment, including basic assessment and first aid supplies. The Advanced Life Support bike, operated by a Shock Trauma Technician, Cardiac Technician or Paramedic, carries basic and advanced

airway and breathing apparatus to start intravenous lines. Each member wears a highly visible uniform and takes along a portable radio to communicate with the Incident commander or other units operating at an event.

The Bike Team is open to those who are EMT-certified and members in good standing of the Virginia Beach Department of EMS for at least one year. Call 437-4850 for more information.

New to the Crew

The Volunteer Rescue Squads of Virginia Beach welcome the following new volunteer professionals, who recently began running with Virginia Beach EMS:

Marine Rescue Team

Bernard Ogg
Joshua Derryberry
Robert Huebner

Plaza

James Smith, EMT
Shawn Constine,
First Responder
Holly Engelbrecht,
First Responder
John Shrum, First Responder
Jacki Morrell, First Responder
Steven Wells, First Responder

Kempsville

Patrick Wallace, EMT
Robert Nuckols, EMT
Sarah Pratt, First Responder
Jessica Fleek, First Responder
Lisa Walsh, EMT
Elizabeth Fedak, EMT
Richard Carroll, First Responder
Eddy Cairns, EMT
Thomas Sasso, EMT
Amanda Thompson,
First Responder
Michael Cawthon, EMT

Virginia Beach

Benjamin Preston,
First Responder
Stephen Kissell, EMT

Sandbridge

Paul Rousseau,
Administrative Member
Rita Rousseau,
Administrative Member

Ocean Park

Greg McMaster, EMT
Harry Drake, EMT
Mark Weiss, First Responder

Princess Anne Courthouse

Silvia Phoebus,
First Responder
Jody Allen,
First Responder
Christine Stinnette,
First Responder
Virginia Fike,
First Responder
Brian Heath,
First Responder

Tracy Hegglund,
First Responder
Cristi Holland,
First Responder
David Mathews,
First Responder
Kristine Merritt,
First Responder
Frank Minkewicz,
First Responder
Nena Nerino, EMT

Davis Corner

Christopher Wilson, EMT

Open House - You're Invited!

The Princess Anne Courthouse Volunteer Rescue Squad will hold its 1st Annual Open-House/American Red Cross Blood Drive on Sunday, April 25, from 1-5 p.m.

The event will be held at Station 21, located at 1468 Nimmo Parkway. Contact Joe Tottossy at 757-403-6460 or Lyndee Nelson at 757-403-3410 for more information.

Rescue Briefs

Plaza Volunteer Rescue Squad

Station 16 celebrated its 42nd annual banquet on January 17 and honored several members: **Debbie Brennaman**, 15 years of service; **Mark Collins**, Rescue Squad Member of the Year; **Susan Doyle**, 5 years of service; **E.J. Isajewicz**, Rookie of the Year; and **Patsy Rowland**, Administrative Person of the Year.

Princess Anne Courthouse Volunteer Rescue Squad

Station 5 honored four members at its annual banquet December 20: **Phil Dalton**, ALS Provider of the Year; **Crystal Leech**, BLS Provider of the Year; **Shannon Reichert**, Member of the Year; and **Robert Taylor**, Rookie of the Year. The squad also received a Certificate of Achievement for covering 90 special events throughout the year.

Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad

Rescue 14 honored the following members at its 52nd annual banquet on January 10: **Chris and Teresa Ashcraft**, Rookies of the Year; **Jerome Crain**, Administrative Member of the Year; **Bobby Hill**, Captain's Choice Award; **Judy Jackson**, Squadsman of the Year; and **Emily McCrory**, Volunteer of the Year.

Chesapeake Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad

Rescue 4 honored the following members at its annual banquet on January 10: **Mike Hawkins**, Rescue Member of the Year; **Boyd Layton**, Member of the Year and President's Award; and **Amanda Lee**, Rookie of the Year. ■ ■ ■

Volunteer Professional Profile – Robin Helfant

Name: Robin Helfant

Birthdate:
January 20, 1961

Hometown:
Warren, Michigan

Occupation:
Client Account Manager,
Real Estate Finance,
Wachovia Bank

Current squad positions: Squad Commander/President

Number of years with Virginia Beach EMS:
six years

Squad training/certification: EMT

What inspired you to become a Rescue Squad Volunteer Professional? A neighbor went into cardiac arrest, and although I stayed calm, I had no real training to help him. The Princess Anne Courthouse Rescue Squad arrived and as I watched, I thought... if only I had known. As I was leaving I noticed "Volunteer" on the side of the ambulance. It didn't take me long to realize it was an omen... a good omen!

How has working with the Rescue Squad changed you as a person? It has strengthened my mind, body and soul. Most of all it has humbled me. To be a part of this team, at Stations 5 & 21, working with Firefighters, Police Officers and Rescue Members, is an honor.

Why do you continue your work with the EMS? Our community has counted on us for over 55 years. We have made a commitment and will continue because we are needed... all of us.

A memorable rescue call: I delivered a baby boy named "Brian." It doesn't get any better than that.

Words from the wise: If you do today, what you did yesterday... then you will only get tomorrow, what you got today. ■ ■ ■



Robin Helfant,
captain, Princess Anne Courthouse Rescue Squad

MRI & CT Diagnostics

is proud to support the Volunteer Rescue Squads of Virginia Beach and the publication of RESCUE LINES.

New Recruits Needed

The Virginia Beach Department of EMS is looking for new volunteers. As the nation's largest volunteer rescue system, the roles our members play are vital to the safety of our community. Rescue squads, including paramedics, lifeguards, EMS safety educators and others, work together with the Virginia Beach Fire Department and Virginia Beach Police Department as an integrated emergency response system.

What to do if... someone is choking

- Call 911.
- See if there is a foreign body which can be swept out.
- Attempt rescue breathing
- If breaths are not possible because of the foreign body, perform abdominal thrusts.
- If unsuccessful, attempt to sweep out foreign body.
- Provide breaths.
- Repeat abdominal thrusts if necessary.

Volunteer Opportunities

Medical training is provided at no cost to volunteers. You must commit to 48 hours a month (one 12-hour shift per week); be at least 18 years old with a high school diploma or GED equivalent; and also submit to a background check and provide a driving record from the DMV.

EMS volunteers come from all walks of life, from stay-at-home parents and bank tellers, to attorneys and real estate agents. Some are students, some are in the military, others work in some aspect of the health-care field. To learn more about joining the team, call 757-437-4850, email ems@vb.gov or visit www.vabeachems.com.



To learn more about joining the the Virginia Beach Department of EMS, call 757-437-4850 or visit www.vabeachems.com. All training is provided at no cost to volunteers.

Types of Volunteer Opportunities

Operational (first responders, EMTs, paramedics)

Administrative (e.g. clerical, fundraising, maintenance)

Special Teams (e.g. water rescue, search & rescue, support truck)

If you can't contribute time but would like to contribute financially, please send tax deductible donations to your local volunteer rescue squad or to:

Council of Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squads

1917 Arctic Ave.

Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Gifts mailed to the Council will be distributed among all ten rescue squads.

Don't visit us by accident

AVOID DEADLY DRIVING DISTRACTIONS

Dialing for Disaster – Pull off before using mobile phones.

Crash Diet – Don't try to eat while driving.

Looks Can Kill – Keep your eyes on the road, not on roadside activities.

Turning Knobs Means Turning Your Head – Pre-set your radio stations. Let someone else select the next CD.

Dress Before You Drive – Don't shave, style your hair or apply makeup while driving.

Pets and Children – Make sure they are properly secured before driving.



SENTARA

Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital

A community service message brought to you by the Trauma Center at Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital.