

## EMS Profile: Austin County Emergency Medical Services



*From left: R. Jewell, EMT-I; B. Kanak, EMT-I; J. Turnbull, EMT-P, deputy director; B. Cariota, EMT-P, captain; G. Atherton, EMT; R. Ostwald, EMT-P, captain; D. Fisher, EMT; L. Toman, EMT; K. Willingham, EMT-P, lieutenant; J. Scarborough, EMT-P; G. Scarborough, EMT-P, deputy director.*

**Number of personnel:** Austin County Emergency Medical Services has a staff totaling 55 led by EMS Director Ron Dille, EMT-P; Medical Director Mark Murray, MD; Deputy Director Jim Turnbull, EMT-P; and Deputy Director Gary Scarborough, EMT-P. Tammy Wendel serves as our department coordinator. We have 23 paramedics, six EMT-intermediates, 23 EMTs and one ECA. The field supervisory staff members are Capt. Randy Ostwald, EMT-P; Capt. Brian Cariota, EMT-P; Lt. Kenny Willingham, EMT-P; and Lt. Mark Karonika, EMT-P. Austin County EMS maintains interlocal agreements with Washington, Fort Bend and Colorado counties, as well as Waller County EMS, for mutual aid response. There are nine volunteer fire departments within Austin County and each supports EMS with fire-rescue response.

**How many years of service:** ACEMS was created by executive order of the Commissioners Court under the direction of County Judge Lee Dittert in 1994. Over the past 12 years, ACEMS has risen from two basic response units to seven fully equipped BLS with MICU-capable units and paramedic squads that are strategically located throughout Austin County. We provide patient transfer services, when

units are available, to Bellville General Hospital, a tertiary Level IV trauma facility. ACEMS serves seven municipalities and five communities with units dispatched from five stations, with one unit each in Sealy, Bellville, Industry, Wallis and Cat Springs. Critical reserve units are located in Sealy and Bellville.

**Number of units and capabilities:** The fleet consists of six Type I units manufactured by Frazer and two Type III units manufactured by McCoy-Miller. Two primary units operate 24-7, and the peak-hour truck operates 70 hours a week (10-hour days) in Industry. There are two paramedic response vehicles, with one serving as a supervisory response unit.

Another peak-hour truck will begin service this year in Wallis. During off-peak hours, units in Wallis, Industry and Cat Springs are staffed by off-duty response personnel. ACEMS transports to hospitals in Katy, Richmond, Houston, Eagle Lake, Brenham and Columbus.

**Number of calls:** The ACEMS response area encompasses 663 square miles, with more than 25,000 county residents and an estimated 50,000 people per day traveling throughout the 9-1-1 response territory. We responded to more than 3,000 EMS calls in 2006. ACEMS provides clinical sites for three main EMS training programs: Blinn College in Brenham; Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX); and Wharton County Junior College. Clinical sites also are provided for Emergency Consultants EMS classes, Golden West EMS classes and our own agency-sponsored EMT program through TEEX.

**Community Projects and Programs:** Austin County EMS sponsors community CPR programs for area residents; community blood drives; AED/CPR for local police departments; first aid classes to community groups; and school visit programs. Vial-of-Life Programs also are encouraged throughout our community. ACEMS continues to vigorously promote the TABC-UT Health Science Center Program – Shattered Dreams throughout Austin County.

**Awards:** Austin County EMS received the 2006 Shattered Dreams Program Outstanding Follow-Up Project Award from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) in July 2006 for its cooperative effort with Third Realm Communications in the production of the Brazos High School Shattered Dreams video. Austin County EMS was recently recognized with the Public Information/Public Education Award during Texas EMS Conference 2006.

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