

Local & Regional EMS News

by Kathy Clayton



Photo by Diana Jean Rodriguez/HFD EMS.

Heroes events honor HFD

Two events in September honored the Houston Fire Department. During Heroes' Night at Robertson Stadium during a University of Houston football game, cardiac arrest survivor Edna Baylor was reunited with the HFD team who helped save her. Pictured above, from left to right, are EMS Supervisor 82, Captain Larry Batiste; firefighter-paramedic

Ryan Smith; firefighter Michael Agina; firefighter Jesse Woolley; engineer/operator Zach Maher; engineer/operator-paramedic Jacob Johnson; Raymond Baylor; Edna Baylor (survivor); and senior 9-1-1 telecommunicator Earletha Land.

Also, five HFD members of Texas Task Force-1 honored the memory of their colleague, Captain Anthony

Tortorice, as they threw the ceremonial first pitch at Heroes' Night with the Houston Astros on September 11. Tortorice, a 34-year veteran of HFD, died January 4, 2011, after a four-year battle with lung cancer, believed to have been caused by exposure to contaminants while working at Ground Zero. Pictured below, left to right, are Rescue Team Manager, District Chief Steven Sparks; Rescue Specialist, Senior Captain David Swanson; Rescue Squad Officer, Captain Eddie Mathison; Rescue Specialist, Captain Todd Kahney; and Logistics Specialist, Firefighter Jason "Bear" Wilson.



Photo by Diana Jean Rodriguez/HFD EMS.

UMC Brackenridge receives OSHA designation

University Medical Center Brackenridge is the first Level I trauma center in the U.S. to earn the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) designation from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Fourteen other hospitals are VPP-certified, but none of them are Level I facilities. A special, full-size "VPP" flag was presented by OSHA to UMC Brackenridge safety team leaders and members during a ceremony in September.

UMC Brackenridge earned

"Merit"-level VPP status after employees and managers developed and implemented safety processes and procedures that already are decreasing accidents and eliminating risks to nurses, physicians and others who work in the hospital. Designation as a VPP program is OSHA's official recognition of efforts by employers and employees working together to achieve exemplary occupational safety and health. Guided by OSHA, management and labor develop and establish cooperative relationships at workplaces and

implement a comprehensive safety and health management system.

In the U.S., injuries such as back strains and needle sticks among health care employees are trending downward, but health care injury rates are not improving as quickly as injury rates in most other occupations. At UMC Brackenridge in 2008, the injury illness rate was 7.5—slightly higher than today's national average. But today, after a three-year focus on improving safety, the rate is 5.0—a 33 percent improvement.

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Following a collision between a pick-up truck and a school bus, the EMTF 8 ambulance stationed at Schertz EMS was called into action for the first time. On the morning of September 4, a Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City Independent School District bus was rear-ended near Steele High School. After assessment and contacting the children's parents, the Cibolo Fire Department and Schertz EMS worked together to load 11 students and one adult onto the 20-person ambulance. They were then transported to Northeast Methodist Hospital. Without the ambulance, six ambulances and crews would have been utilized.

HCEC receives donation from Baker Hughes



In September, Houston-area nonprofit Harris County Emergency Corps (HCEC) received a \$100,000 donation from global oilfield services company Baker Hughes for the creation of the Baker Hughes-HCEC Education Center.

The Education Center will be located at HCEC's headquarters in

Houston and will be used to educate HCEC and other local paramedics on new advances in prehospital medicine. It will also serve as a center for community education initiatives, such as community CPR, first aid/safety courses and local community emergency response team classes.

HCEC and Baker Hughes first began collaborating when Baker Hughes approached HCEC regarding training for medical first responders for its Rankin Road campus in northern Harris County. That grew into training opportunities for other Baker Hughes facilities and mutual collaboration on community initiatives.

ETMC EMS bicycle response team responds during fair



East Texas Medical Center EMS's new bicycle response team had their first save on their first day at the East Texas State Fair in Tyler in September. While on patrol at the fair, the team received a call for assistance and was able to respond within two minutes to a cardiac arrest patient. Over the course of the fair, the bike team responded to more than twenty calls, including hypertension, hypo/hyperglycemia, heat exhaustion, abrasions, lacerations, falls and dizziness.

ETMC EMS bicycle response teams include 12 paramedics and EMTs who meet physical fitness standards, possess superior cycling skills, have a positive history with ETMC EMS and have completed training to ensure safe and efficient operations. Each EMS bike team is comprised of a paramedic and EMT. The team carries basic life support and advanced life support equipment, as well as other supplies to respond to any emergency. Most EMS cyclists utilize a rear rack bag to store the equipment on the bicycle.

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Cypress Creek EMS earns national award



Pictured, from left to right are Nick Cecere, Bradley J. England and Ruben Gonzales, Jr.

Cypress Creek Emergency Medical Services (CCEMS) was recently recognized for management excellence. An independent panel of judges selected Cypress Creek EMS as one of the Principal Financial Group's 10 Best Companies for

Employee Financial Security for 2012, for linking employee health to employee long-term financial security. The judges credited CCEMS for recognizing the critical tie between physical health and future financial health

and by maximizing a wide range of benefits designed to keep employees well.

In October Nick Cecere, Vice President of Principal Financial Group, presented the award to Ruben Gonzales, CCEMS Board president,

and to Bradley J. England, CCEMS Executive Director, at a community-wide event. This is the eleventh year for the nationwide award program that celebrates employers who are committed to providing for their employee's financial future and security. As part of the award, the Principal Financial Group gave \$2,500 to the charity of CCEMS' choice: His Grace Foundation, a Houston organization that provides physical, emotional and financial support for patients and families in the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at Texas Children's Hospital. During the event, Patricia Harless, a state representative in District 126, also honored CCEMS with a resolution and the gift of a Texas state flag flown over the Capitol.

HCC Public Safety Institute open house debuts new technologies

The Houston Community College Northeast Public Safety Institute (PSI) recently received a donation from the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo (HLSR) earmarked for the Emergency Medical Services department for the purpose of updating their existing technology. PSI simulation facilities now include patient simulation manikins that are capable of replicating human vital signs and receiving medication. A control room equipped with video and computer monitoring technology allows HCC Northeast instructors to observe students and control the manikin. An ambulance simulation lab features a fully equipped ambulance and communications system that will enable students to practice communicating with other first responders to coordinate care for patients. And an apartment simulation room lets students train for in-home



emergencies in a life-like setting.

At an open house held in September, Johnny Sessums, PSI director; Vickie L. May, Emergency Medical Services program director; and John Mayes, Fire Technology program director, led tours of the simulation facilities and expressed

their appreciation to HLSR donors. All of the public safety programs at HCC Northeast—police, fire technology and EMS—share the hands-on training facilities, including the new EMS simulators, a firing range, fire-rescue training tower, six-story burn building, driving track and water rescue pond.