

# The EMS experience

## Saluting those with 20 years or more in EMS

This month, we introduce Tim and Leslie Thorp, married 31 years and working in EMS together for more than two decades.

### Thomas M. "Tim" Thorp, EMT-P Sutton County EMS

**When was your first day on the job?**

March 1982

**Which services have you worked for?**

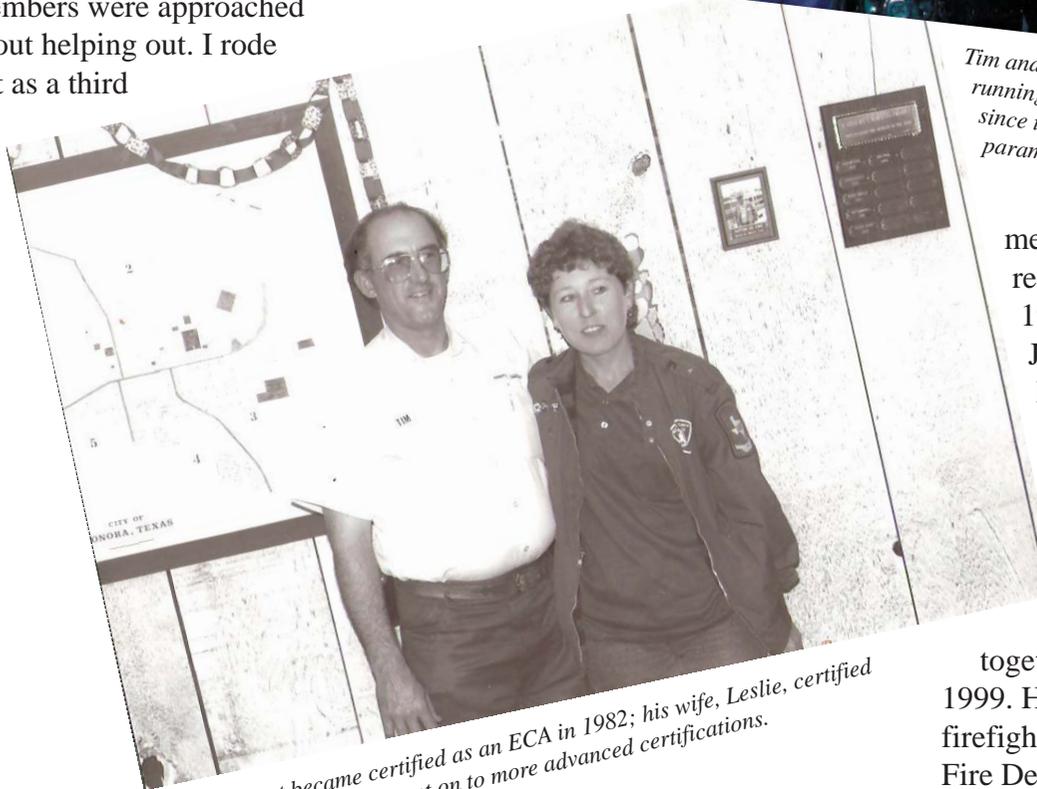
Sonora Volunteer Fire Department, 1972 to 2004; Sutton County EMS, 1982 to present

**Why did you get into EMS?**

Sutton County EMS was a hospital-based service in 1982 when the county commissioners decided to take over the operation. Some of the Sonora Volunteer Fire Department members were approached about helping out. I rode out as a third



*Tim and Leslie Thorp have been running EMS calls in Sutton County since the 1980s. Son T.J., at left, is a paramedic/firefighter in Kerrville.*



*Tim Thorp first became certified as an ECA in 1982; his wife, Leslie, certified as an ECA in 1984. Both went on to more advanced certifications.*

member until 1982 when I received my ECA. In June 1984, I became an EMT. In July of 1997, I became an EMT-Intermediate, and was awarded outstanding student of the class, a real honor. Two years later, I went through paramedic training. My son T.J. and I took our EMT-P training together and were certified July 1999. He is presently working as a firefighter/paramedic at the Kerrville Fire Department.

**How has the field changed since you've been in it?**

Sutton County EMS has been blessed with great leadership and support over the years. Under the leadership of Dr. Charles Pajestka, Keith Butler, LP, and Patrick Campbell, EMT-P, our service went from basic life support to BLS with ALS capabilities in 1996. Carla Garner, EMT-I and county judge, and the commissioners have met any reasonable need for funding and equipment. Those four people are still my mentors today.

**Was there a particular moment or call that stands out?**

In July of 1982, on a fire call to an MVA, we came up to four badly burned patients. As a new ECA, I triaged the patients and cared for a young boy the same age as my son at the time until EMS arrived. I've had many calls with joy and many with heartbreak over the years since we know a majority of the people we care for.

**What is your favorite part of your career in EMS?**

Caring for people in need. I always try to remain upbeat and compassionate on calls. Teaching is also important. You are rewarded

by former and present students confiding in you and asking for help on situations they encounter.

**Leslie Thorp, EMT-I  
Sutton County EMS**

**When was your first day on the job?**

I started as an ECA in 1984, went on to get EMT-B in 1986 and EMT-I in 1996.

**Which services have you worked for?**

Sutton County EMS

**Why did you get into EMS?**

My husband made me! We had acquired a ranch 30 miles from town and had no phone service. We had two young children at the time and Tim asked what I would do if something happened to him or our children. I didn't realize I would start volunteering my time to the service and still be here after all these years. It's been 23 years and still going!

**How has the field changed since you've been in it?**

The training and equipment we have now helps us monitor our patients so much better. When

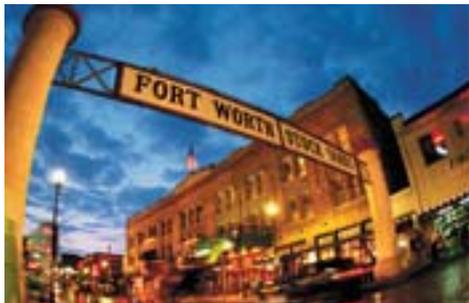
I started running on the ambulance in 1986 we went on a wing and a prayer. Thanks goes to Keith Butler and Pat Campbell for helping us go forward in our training and getting new equipment that helps us take better care of our patients. With training and knowledge we can better care for our patients.

**Was there a particular moment or call that stands out?**

I had the honor of taking my EMT-I training with my son, T.J. He took it very well that I had to follow him around and do our ER time and ride-outs with the San Angelo Fire Department.

**What is your favorite part of your career in EMS?**

I work with a great bunch of people. It's like working with family. Of course, working with my husband can sometimes be like butting my head against a wall. But working with family and friends through the years has been a great part of my career in the EMS. I like being able to take care of people and help in any way. Helping with EMT classes by teaching skills and see students go on to further their education and help others. It's all been an honor!



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