



Rice County Rap

Rice County, Kansas

March 16, 2010

Volume 3, Issue 11

Department Head Connection

Terry David, Emergency Medical Services Director

Terry David, EMS Director shared lots of information with the Commissioners during his Department Head Connection. He first presented the 2009 Rice County EMS Annual Report. This is sent to all City Councils within the county. Highlights included that calls were down some in 2009 (with a total of 727 responses), but already in January, 2010 there was an increase. In spite of the call volume decrease, total income was \$247,000.00. Also, write-offs were reduced by over \$26,000. Rice County EMS took in 94.9% of their billable charges in 2009, exceeding both state and national averages. Their mill levy is below 2 mills for the third year in a row. 46% of the calls in 2009 were ALS - Advanced Life Support level of care; with 59% medical call type. Other statistics show that Lyons continues to be the largest call volume with 45%, due in part to the location of the hospital and the transfers that originate there. Sterling ranks second with 21%. Personnel continues to be the largest part of the EMS budget accounting for 73%. In 2009, Chuck Butts retired after over 25 years with Rice County. Zach Biegler joined their staff and moved to Lyons.

Terry also reported that there have been two staff members hurt on the job in the last 60 days. He also expressed concern over trying to figure out a system for their services without using the "on call" system.

He discussed the vacation policy of using it in half-day increments. Alicia is going to study that and see about a change in that policy.

A new updated phone system has been implemented in Ambulance Unit 5. This is a regular phone with a device to transfer it to cell phone transmission. The system can also transmit data over this line.

Additional AED's have been purchased in conjunction with a school district grant. They are in Lyons Central School gym and Sterling Grade School.

Terry brought bill write-offs of \$10,181.57 for Commissioners' approval. These bills will go to the state set-off program. He also reported that they have used small claims cases starting in 2009 and it has been very successful.

The dates for Kid's Camp will be June 3 and 4 this year. It will be held at Sterling College. Heather is the incident commander for that activity.

Medicare has cut 20% of their funding for reimbursement of ambulance fees. RC EMS has 68% of their patient load which is Medicare pay. This has a huge impact on their operation. Terry is researching what alternatives there are for this cut in funding.

There was nothing new to report about the lawsuit against Ford Motor Company concerning the ambulance. However, there was a large repair done recently and there was no charge for that. Ford covered the entire cost.

March 16 - March 23

Birthdays

March 21 -
Cindy Dobbins

March 22 -
Scott McPherson

March 22, 2010

DEPARTMENT HEAD CONNECTION

None - Ed Feil was scheduled. He updated the Commissioners on Fire Department issues Monday, March 15.

In this issue:

Department Head Connection	1
March 15, 2010 Commission Meeting	2
Off the Wall	2

The Rice County Newsletter does not contain the official minutes of the Commission meeting nor does it convey the official county position on issues.



IRISH BLESSINGS

May your thoughts be
as glad as the
shamrocks,

May your heart be as
light as a song,

May each day bring you
bright, happy hours,

That stay with you all
the year long.



May your blessings
outnumber

The Shamrocks that
grow.

And may trouble
avoid you

Wherever you go.

Rice County Commission Meeting

March 15, 2010

The Commissioners began their day early at 8 am with the review of mid-month vouchers. First on the agenda for the regular meeting was Jill Nichols, Coordinator and Economic Development Director. She reported that the Energy Manager Grant had been submitted and a favorable email response had been received. She is researching a possible grant possibility for an energy saving plan for solar water heating for the some of the Rice County facilities. The Commissioners signed an inter-local agreement with Stafford County for e-waste collection and Jill reported on the e-waste collection event in Nickerson on Saturday, 3-13. She asked for signature on a Proclamation declaring April as Fair Housing Month.

Gayla Godfrey, Rice County Appraiser brought one estimate for repairs on her Blazer vehicle. The Commissioners asked her to get other estimates for those repairs. Gayla reported on going to Topeka for the legislative hearings concerning migrating gas. She said there is some that is migrating as much as five to six miles near the Cunningham facility. There is a well that has been there since 1953 that hasn't always pumped, but is now pumping the stored gas out. They can identify the difference between stored and new gas. This is a hot topic and will be interesting to watch. Gayla reported that change of value notices will go out April 1 and oil and gas and personal property will go out May 1.

Ben Timberlake, Temp-Aire came to visit with the Commissioners about the awarding of contracts and the procurement policy. The Commissioners took into advisement his concerns and will get back with him.

Marci Leake, Health Department Administrator asked for signature on the Health Department grant applications for state funds for \$38,247.00. The applications were due that day. Marci also reported that she and Tim Weaver, Detention Supervisor had discussed several matters concerning the working together on the TB tests for inmates and other working arrangements.

Alicia gave a report on the Work Fit program and her conversation with the insurance carriers. Kent Anthony, our insurance agent spoke with the attorney for their work comp and he said that the Work Fit program has never been tested in the courts in Kansas. There is no guarantee of what would happen if there was an issue using this data. They still were under the impression that it could help our insurance rating and perhaps lower our rates. Alicia also reported that Work Fit does not do random drug screens. They are not set-up to be able to make a random selection. The Commissioners are still interested in the program, but there is not any need for action at this time. Alicia shared that she is getting in information from other counties on sales of fire works in the county.

Ed Feil and Russell Stephenson came to share updates with the Commissioners from the Rice County Fire Department. Ed reported that they have used just 6% of their budget so far for 2010; however, they are getting into a busy quarter of the year. He discussed that the 6 X 6 truck in Little River from the forestry service has to go back to them. They are now working on some conversions on the other 6 x 6. The Ellsworth prison does a lot of the work and we provide the materials. There will be expenses coming in for that work. They are looking into putting an auto dump on it. That can dump a full bed of water in a portable pond for fire fighting. Ed also shared that he has talked with some service providers and will be talking with some others who might be interested in doing the inspections for the smaller fire trucks. Ed and Russell commented on the idea of having fireworks stands in the county. They didn't see any problem with it. Stands have to be inspected under local fire department jurisdiction. This covers the safety issues.



**HIGH
ON RICE COUNTY**