Air Med ... A liftoff of hope

Successfully meeting the demands of such a high, diversified area is a service which employs three strategically located Air Med helicopters configured to Acadian specifications. One of the main goals was to provide a communication capability, one of the biggest is within minutes flying time of any of the 1.2 million people in the 13,500 square mile area served.

Based in Baton Rouge, Lafayette and New Orleans, Air Med's primary purpose is to be a first responder in appropriate emergency situations. It enhances the existing capabilities of the total system.

The Lafayette based Air Med is jointly underwritten by Lafayette General Medical Center, Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center, and the Lafayette County Medical Society. The New Orleans based Air Med is underwritten by Charity Hospital, Tulane University Hospital and Ochsner Medical Center. The Baton Rouge based Air Med is underwritten by Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center. However, patients and their families may choose any of the 10 hospitals in the coverage area. The decision is based on the medical needs of the patient, but transport to the hospital of the patient's choice.

Richard Zochling, Secretary-Treasurer of Acadian stated, "We have been able to provide a comprehensive, reliable service to the hospitals we serve by ensuring that our patients receive the highest level of care available."

"Our pilots are highly trained and experienced in emergency medical situations," Zochling said. "They are able to provide life-saving procedures while in flight, which can mean the difference between life and death for a patient."

"The hospitals we serve have the latest technology and equipment available, and that's why we are able to provide such a comprehensive service," Zochling added.

To a large degree, these transported by Air Med are awarded to the Acadian membership program. This program provides the unique benefit mechanism which has sustained the impressive growth of the company since it began operations in 1971 with 10 ambulances and eight medics. Under the program, members pay a one-time fee of $150 to be included in the membership. The membership fee pays for the pilots, medical staff, and all other expenses associated with the service.

"The membership fees are used to cover the costs of maintaining the helicopters and providing the specialist medical care," Zochling said. "Our goal is to keep the service affordable for all families who need it."