For the second consecutive year, the Acadian Ambulance membership drive has set a new record for enrollment. Company officials say final tabulations show that last year’s enrollment — which was record-setting — was exceeded by three percent.

The final figure of 132,538 family or individual memberships was achieved as every parish in the service area except St. Martin met or exceeded its goal, according to Acadian Ambulance Secretary-treasurer Richard Zuschlag. “With St. Martin at 99 percent and other parishes ranging as high as 123 percent, the campaign was a total success,” he said.

“We are now at a record 160,000 memberships, firmly establishing our position as the largest ambulance service of its kind in the nation. The figure of 166,000 includes those areas where contractual arrangements provide memberships for all residents. In Iberville Parish, the sheriff contracts for memberships for all citizens as does the parish council in St. James Parish and the Central LaFourche Ambulance District.”

Zuschlag said total memberships generated by the successful campaign represent 23 percent of the company’s $26 million operating budget for this membership year. The budget is designed to fund an anticipated 110,000 ambulance calls.

Zuschlag said the substantial increase in enrollment for the past two years are an encouraging economic indicator for South Louisiana.

“We are particularly grateful for the efforts of tellers and bank managers in this campaign. The last minute surge, which resulted in over 30,000 enrollments the final day of the campaign, placed a severe strain on the banks, but they handled the crush with amazing efficiency. Without the efforts of the banking personnel, we would not be able to conduct a drive of this magnitude. We are deeply appreciative.

“We are also grateful to the communications media for once again doing an outstanding job of keeping our message across. A significant part of the success of the drive is due also to the support and cooperation of the medical community and elected officials. We are grateful to them and to the members of our own staff who worked so hard in the campaign while still maintaining the highest standards in providing pre-hospital care.

“Our deepest gratitude, of course, goes to the people who again showed their faith in our ability to provide for their pre-hospital emergency medical needs. The continued support of the membership drive has permitted us to establish a regional pre-hospital care system that ranks with any in the nation. We pledge our continued effort toward the ongoing enhancement of our ability to serve.”