Acadian Ambulance Service prepares for membership drive

Renewal applications are being mailed this week to members of Acadian Ambulance Service as the company prepares for its 19th annual membership drive. Present members will be able to renew by mail prior to the beginning of the drive during the first week of August.

For the seventh consecutive year, the membership fee remains at $46 for the year, for an entire family. This year, members will have the option of a two-year renewal, which will not only eliminate the procedure of re-enrolling next year, but will guarantee that the rate will remain the same in the following membership year.

The membership benefits include emergency transportation by ground ambulance or Air Med helicopter ambulance to any hospital in Louisiana, and physician-authorized non-emergency transportation to any medical facility in the service area. Members are covered in any of the 21 parishes served by Acadian.

Acadian Secretary-Treasurer Richard Zuschlag said the ability to keep the membership fee at its current level despite continuing increases in the cost of providing medical care results from the Third Party Reimbursement Program, under which the company bills the insurance carrier of those using the ambulance service who have such coverage.

"With this method, the program is supported by the users of the service. The 75 percent of the members who are fortunate enough not to need ambulance service during a given year are not faced with rate increases to cover those who do. Whether or not there is insurance coverage, members pay no out-of-pocket expense unless transportation is to a non-hospital facility outside the 21-parish coverage area." Zuschlag said many people are still under the impression that, because they have insurance coverage, the membership would offer no benefit.

"The fact is that a single ambulance call for a non-member can cost as much as $395," he said.