AT ACadian Ambulance in Peak

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fourth in a series of articles on the operations of your local ambulance service.

"The ambulance is on the way!" These or similar words convey what is the turning point in the chain of events that will strike you, a loved one, a friend, or relative. This message, having been delivered, sets in motion the best in the life-saving realm of men and equipment. For many South Louisianians, Acadian Ambulance has been the difference.

It takes a tremendous amount of effort, effectively channeled, to provide the cost-worthy emergency service that is available to everyone in time of need. A study and learn. Intensive training, clinics, General Motors Training Center, and personal study have and continue to be a cornerstone in the shop's success.

The modular design of the ambulances is an important aspect of the condition of the fleet. Every two years, or roughly 150,000 miles, the module is removed, refurbished and placed on a new cab and chassis. Once completed, this process assures a safe and reliable vehicle and also aids in maintenance. Joe Barel, Jiminy training the $250,000 yearly cost for maintenance.

In an effort to contain fuel costs, the diesel engine has become the power plant of the new cab. The increase in fuel mileage, once the entire unit is converted, will yield substantial savings.

Sophisticated electronic equipment carried on board each unit is maintained by three electronic experts. As with any mechanical problems, on-the-spot assistance is available for thorough and rapid repairs. The electronic shop is equipped with modern testing equipment allowing bench work on most damaged components.

The technicians are also responsible for electronic maintenance of the complex communications center. They must keep the four radio consoles and seven lower transmitters in peak performance for year round operation.

Roland Dugas, president of AASI, attributes the exceptional care of the ambulances to a sense of pride and a dedication to the company's life-saving goals on the part of the maintenance crew.

"They share our commitment," Dugas said. "They know how essential their work is to the overall job of meeting the emergency medical needs of Acadiana."