Acadian Ambulance reviews '80 highlights

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An overwhelmingly successful membership drive was a major highlight of 1980 for Acadian Ambulance Service, Inc. The successful drive, officials say, not only paved the way for continued progress throughout the 12-parish service area, but also brought national attention to the effectiveness of the subscription program as a means of funding Emergency Medical Services.

"Magazines in the emergency medical field covered the campaign in stories that pointed out not only the record enrollment but also the advances we have been able to make by using the membership program as a funding source," said AASI's chief operating officer, Richard Zuschlag. "We believe that areas of the country faced with a crisis in financing ambulance service may be prompted by the magazine coverage to explore the membership program as an alternative to tax supported services or private companies operating on an extremely costly per call basis."

The 1980 drive culminated in the enrollment of 104,119 families or individuals in Acadian Ambulance Service.

The company reported a number of other achievements in 1980.

In a major internal reorganization, the number of service districts was expanded from four to seven. The reorganization resulted in closer local control, without an increase in manpower.

A significant honor for the company was the selection of its secretary-treasurer and chief operating officer to receive the Small Business Person of the Year Award for the state of Louisiana. Richard Zuschlag was honored in special ceremonies at the White House.

The company increased the efficiency of its phone system in 1980. The new Direct-Inward-Dialing telephone system permits better communication and faster access on both emergency and business calls.

The company reports that a comprehensive energy conservation program, launched at all levels in 1980, is showing substantial results.

In May of 1980, another class of paramedics was graduated. The candidates completed the 12-month, 700-hour course which constitutes the highest level of training in the field.

Local Men

Brent LeBlanc of St. Martinville completed the 120-hour Emergency Medical Technician Intermediate (EMT-I) course and became certified to administer I.V. solutions to major trauma victims.

In June, Keith Guidry of St. Martinville completed the 81 hour Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course and was nationally registered.

EMT-Pramedic, Wilton Davis, was honored as "Medic of the Year" for outstanding care given to cardiac patients in several emergencies. Isaac Thompson, EMT, St. Martinville, received the October Medic of the Month award for the care he rendered to two firemen injured in the Cecilia High School fire.

Institution of a "trip fee" in 1980 has resulted in a reduced number of transfer calls which could be made by some less-costly means than by ambulance. Reduction in unnecessary usage of the vehicles is helping to keep the cost of operating down and is permitting greater efficiency in handling emergency calls.

The addition of Gene Salassi, EMT-Pramedic, to the Training Department enhanced greatly the company's in-service training function.

In an on-going program to upgrade its telemetry capability, AASI is adding five mobile and base stations. Within six months, telemetry capability - transmission of patient's vital signs and heartbeat directly to hospital emergency rooms - will be operational in all the 12 parishes served by the company. This will vastly increase the effectiveness of the advanced life-support system.

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