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SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: NORTH SCOTT COUNTY AMBULANCE DISTRICT



By Heather Scruton
Missouri EMS Connection Editorial Advisor

Photos provided by NSCAD

North Scott County Ambulance District (NSCAD) Chief Larry Chasteen is justifiably proud of his team. “We’ve been here since 1987, after an approved property tax provided funding. Our community approved a sales tax in 2020 to expand support for our services, which helped tremendously. We’re here to take care of that community,” said Chasteen.

NSCAD headquarters is located in Scott City, Mo., just south of Cape Girardeau. They provide 24/7 Advanced Life Support ambulance services for a district that covers the northern half of Scott County. They serve the towns of Scott City, Chaffee, Oran, Benton, Morley, New Hamburg, Commerce, Perkins, Kelso, Rockview, and others. In a county of 37,840 residents, the service covers approximately 17,000 of them.

Chief Chasteen reports transport times of 10-30 minutes, for calls including falls, traumas, mental health and overdoses, cardiac, respiratory issues, and more. He said, “We really run the gamut from minor calls to multi-casualty traumas, since we’re responding to residential calls, Interstate 55 accidents, Cape Girardeau airport, and a wide swath of Scott County. We also provide pediatric specialty transport in partnership with

Cardinal Glennon in St. Louis.” NSCAD responds to pediatric calls over a multi-state area, including Illinois, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri. The service offers multiple advanced procedures, and is trained for 12-lead application, interpretation and transmission, cardiac and other emergency medications, and respiratory support including intubations, ventilators, and bi-pap.

The service runs five ambulances, but has six including the Cardinal Glennon pediatric rig. They staff two paramedic/EMT or paramedic/paramedic teams 24 hours a day. NSCAD runs out of two stations



and responds to more than 2,200 calls per year. It employs 16 full-time staff members, including 11 paramedics and five EMTs. Two paramedics are critical care trained. The team is also supported by two administrative coordinators. “Our administrative support team does a little bit of everything: billing, accounts receivable, board meetings, you name it,” said Chasteen. In addition to full-time staff, the service employs six PRN paramedics and eight PRN EMTs.

Staffing stability and longevity is a point of pride for Chief Chasteen. “We have pretty low turnover. One of our employees has been here over 40 years, a couple of us are 30 years in, and there are several over 20 years. We have in-house training and education and provide PALS and ACLS in the station. Geographically, we’re a good place to work. We have competitive pay and benefits and our run volume is manageable,” he said. Chasteen chuckles when reminded that employees have been shown to stay or leave a job because of their management. “I try to be an advocate for my team,” he said. “I’m fair. Pay is equitable. And people talk. I’d like to think I’m a good person to work for.”

The district supports continuing education for the team in a variety of ways. In addition to the in-house training and education, NSCAD supports career advancement through continuing education. The district provides tuition support for paramedic training with a three-year contract. Critical care physicians and nurses from Cardinal Glennon are actively involved in multi-disciplinary training. “I’m never going to discourage anyone from going back to school or getting



more education. I support students of all disciplines. We definitely want to help everybody improve themselves,” remarks Chasteen.

North Scott County AD employees are actively involved with their community. Chasteen commented, “We love being a part of our community. We assist schools and health agencies with education and training. We attend health fairs and other events. We provide outreach education through CPR classes, ACLS/PALS for other healthcare providers and pre-prom teen classes. We will do stand-bys for community events. We pride ourselves on being involved with our county’s residents.”

To say Chief Chasteen is busy is an understatement. Scott County recently passed a 911 sales tax to help dispatch services. He has been integrally involved





and committees across the region. He takes seriously the responsibility he carries to ensure safe, timely medical response to his state's residents. Chasteen states, "I really try to stay involved in regional and state committees, but it does keep me busy."

Chasteen entered EMT school in 1989. He became a paramedic in 1992. He joined North Scott County Ambulance District in 1991 and stepped into a leadership role in 1994. "My mom was a nurse, and I always admired what she did. I admired the paramedics and EMTs on the ambulances," he explained. "When

with implementing changes and improvements with dispatching capabilities. He serves on multiple regional and state committees including the Missouri Ambulance Association Board of Directors, chairman of the Scott County 911 Board of Directors, chairman of the Scott County Health Department Board of Directors, prior president of the Southeast Missouri Emergency Medical Services Network, and many other multi-disciplinary teams



I decided to become an EMT, my wife was pregnant. I figured, well, at least I could learn how to deliver a baby! Learned how, but never had to do it." Chasteen says that first response emergency care has been very challenging, but extremely rewarding. He encourages those considering the field to make sure it's

something they want to do, as it's not an easy path. He said for the right candidates, EMS can be an exciting, rewarding career. ✱

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