



For April of 2015, lets swing the spotlight over to 342 Main Street, home of the KNOX AREA VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE COMPANY INC.

Often taken for granted, the Knox Area Volunteer Ambulance Company provides a vital service to our community. They have been there for us 24/7/365 providing response to emergency calls for years now in time sensitive critical situations. NEVER has it been said: "Lets have dinner, then we'll call the Ambulance" .....Think about it folks, you KNOW when you are calling for an ambulance, you want these people showing up ASAP. We have come to trust these professional highly trained people who have a great legacy in our area. They have "been there and done that" for years now and will continue doing the same. Knox (and the surrounding areas) are fortunate we have this vital company in our community.

HISTORY..... The Knox Area Volunteer Ambulance Company began operations in Knox in 1978 over at 415 East Penn Avenue. They began working out the the garage there at Russ & Carol Cataldo's home. Russ had been working with Bill Rupert (Sr) for some time, responding to emergency calls with Bill and his (Funeral Home) "Flower Car" which was nothing more than a mid 70's Chevy Suburban that had attachments for a cart. Russ fondly remembers those days, he tells me Bill was a good guy to work with, it was the only show in the area. They did what they could. Then Fred McIlhattan called Carol & Russ one day, asked if he could come by and talk. Fred was a Clarion County Commissioner at that time and he proposed a "how would you like to start an ambulance service" idea to the Cataldos, and the rest as they say is history. Carol became the first president of the company, and Russ was the first chief and their only EMT. When I talked with Russ & Carol they stressed to me that MANY good volunteers stepped up at the time and helped with this all. At first they operated on CB radios out of their kitchen, everyone had a CB back then. They struggled to find a place to park the ambulance in the early days, parking it in their back yard much of the time, till they moved up to the old gas station at 342 Main street. Russ credits Wes Frye & Ted Tharan for removing all the car lifts and cementing the floors in this old gas station (no compensation) so they could park the ambulances in there. People stepped up and gave a hand. Fred McIlhattan helped them get grant monies to purchase the first ambulance. It was a

community effort, all volunteers serving in many different capacities. The cost of the first ambulance was a whopping \$75,000 & that was big money for those days.

TODAY.....The KAVAC answers to some 500 calls per year. Their present day yearly operating budget is right around \$285,000 with 13 total employees (11 payed / 2 volunteers) Two people are required to be "on duty" daily per state law, this can be either 1 Paramedic with 1 EMT, or 2 Paramedics. The Paramedics & EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) who work out of the station are required to be "re certified" yearly. Both attend classes (without compensation) to get the credits required yearly, 8 credits for EMTs & 18 for the Paramedics. Their CPR certification has to be updated yearly, as well as their EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operations Course) certification. These people are highly trained professionals and they are getting hard to find. All of the KAVAC Paramedics and EMT's work under the medical command based at the Clarion Hospital with Dr Michael Hoh in the medical command position.

OPERATIONS.....Donna Schreffler is the Director of Operations at the KAVAC. Donna has been onboard since September of 1985, she also is a Paramedic / EMT working out of the station daily. Donna puts in a lot of hours there supported by a board of directors (12 total) with Bill Henry – President, Nancy Reed - VP, Fran Taylor – Treasurer, and Donna Schreffler – Secretary. Other board members include residents from the areas they serve, Jack Schmader, Gerald McCall, Joanne Brothers, Lisa Renfrew, Kevin Ashbaugh, Ed Britton, Diane Lewis, and Wendy Smith.

The KAVAC is presently owned by the citizens of Knox Borough, Beaver Township, Salem Township & Ashland Township. The company relies on monies donated from the areas they serve. Medicare & other compensation from insurance does NOT cover the costs of the emergency calls, nor does it pay for new equipment. Presently the company has been in a fund raising effort to purchase a new ambulance and other state required equipment to keep the station updated. Next month they will be sending out the annual membership renewals. They have only been getting back less than one third of the 3000 mailings they send out annually. We should all try and get the annual dues payed this year.

This is a fantastic company providing services vital to our area. They have "had our backs" for years now providing life saving efforts for many in our community, and will continue to do so. We need to "have their backs" now with support for their operation. Annual membership dues are vital for their operation. Lets all get those returned this year!

I say THANKS from the entire community to the "Knox Area Volunteer Ambulance Company" And THANKS to all those great volunteers who stepped forward in those early days.....We are blessed to have them in our community!

Mayor Frank A / Knox Pa....

