

History of Eaton Emergency Squad

In the 1960's, ambulance service was still ran out of local funeral homes. This was the case with the City of Eaton. Barnes Funeral Home provided ambulance service which was provided by the family and a handful of volunteers.



Chief Barnes

In 1972, the City and County researched building a county hospital to aid in quicker medical care for the community; however they quickly discover having a county hospital was not feasible. With the community still in need of emergency medical services, an official charter was established to start the Eaton Emergency Squad (EES). By April of 1973, the community started the EES with \$28,000 and would be lead by Chief Robert C. Barnes and Assistant Chief James Eikenberry. The EES was established to service the City of Eaton, Washington Twp, Dixon Twp, and portions of Gasper and Jackson Townships. The EES had 31 volunteer members assigned to a schedule. Members at this time were notified by telephone of emergency calls. Some months later, home monitors and carry-along pagers were purchased and distributed to volunteers.

In 1976 the EES back up ambulance was declared illegal due to changes in state regulations and could no longer be in service. The EES still had a primary ambulance and could still service the community; however, the city had a high call volume and required a second vehicle. Bill Withrow, the Eaton Jaycee Chairman, worked closely with Judy Ward, Captain for the EES, Steve Roach and Tom Hoskins, both squad members, to form a committee to raise money for the new ambulance. The EES and City administrators established the need for \$25,000 to purchase the new ambulance, which would become the primary response unit. The vehicle was ordered November 26, 1976 and the funds needed would be available by March 1977. The Jaycee's committee quickly got to work and mail out 4,400 letters to community members to raise the necessary funds.



The City of Eaton residents showed their dedication and concern, within two weeks of the announcement; the Eaton Jaycees jump started the drive by donating \$1,500. Shortly thereafter, Jim West, a Preble County National Bank (PCNB) employee, who was also an Eaton Jaycees member, approached the President of PCNB, William H. Hiestand, and stressed the urgent need for funds to purchase an ambulance for the EES. Mr. Hiestand returned with a check for \$2,000. Some businesses were not able to donate money but still showed their support in other ways.

The Eaton National Guard Armory did their part and donated its hall to Eaton Jaycees for a New Year's Eve dance. All proceeds from this dance were donated to the EES for the new ambulance; that amount totaled \$700. J&J Service and Mobil Gas Station donated space on their portable sign to help publish the drive. In January 1977, the Eaton Jaycees Committee received a large donation from Eaton National Bank and Trust Company, Eaton Loan and Home Aid Company, and Wrights IGA. The fund drive took off from there. Community members poured in their donations; by January 19, 1977, just over a year after the vehicle was declared illegal, the total raised was \$14,491.



In April 1977, the new ambulance arrived. A dedication ceremonial was held, Hugh Housewright of Eaton Jaycees gave the keys to Steve Roach of the squad committee while Gary Wagner of Eaton Jaycees and Tom Hoskins of squad committee watch. In 1979, the squad moved from basic life support (BLS) to advanced life support (ALS) units. Now the division operates three ALS transport units and an ALS engine.

In the 1970's the squad had thirty-one members, two drivers, eighteen EMT-A's, two advanced EMT's and nine Paramedics. Robert C. Barnes, an Eaton funeral director, served as chief of the Eaton squad from its beginning until October 1, 1976, when Assistant Chief James P. Eikenberry took over. He served until January 1, 1989, when David Daily (Current City Manager) was named chief, serving in a part-time capacity until June 1, 1990, when the position was made full-time; Marsha



Chief Eikenberry

Stonecash was the assistant chief. Squad operations were funded from the city's general fund, a portion of the city's one-half percent income tax designed for public safety, township contracts and donations.

April 4, 1982 EES celebrates 9 years of service with James Eikenberry as squad chief. When the EES started, there were 21 members and 1 ambulance. To this date, 1982, there are 35 members which of all are State Certified Emergency Medical Technicians and two operating advanced life support vehicles. 12 of these members are paramedics, 2 RN's, 1 LPN, 2 state certified instructors



and 2 local physicians (Dr. Richard Siehl and Dr. Mark Vosler) who serve as medical advisors.

In 1984, after 12 years in service, EES first took 217 calls a year to an increase of 760 calls a year. EES is lead by Chief Eikenberry and Assistant Chiefs Elton Miller, Jane Davis, and Elaine Rogers.

March of 1987, Mayor Rick Daily voiced his appreciation to Wallace and Mary Campbell for the donation of land on Lexington Road at a ceremony. The land was used to build a new public safety building which houses one ambulance and 2 fire trucks. This building was implemented due to the fact that if a train was to be stopped on the tracks and an emergency happened on the north side, the ambulance and or fire trucks would have to delay their response time to travel around the train. It was also possible that the train could block the tracks so much that there wouldn't be a way around it.

With all the changes and expansions through the years, the EES was in need of an individual who could dedicate much of their time to organize and over-see the department. Since this would take a lot of time, City Manager Marty Gabbard voted to compensate this individual. 1989, David Daily became the first full-time employed squad chief. The City Manager also noted that the EES was the only city based department that did not have a full-time position. Due to the position being part-time prior and only limited amount of hours allowed spent, duties got neglected and the department was not organized as it should be. Chief Daily now had more time to do all these things.



The call volume continues to climb, so Chief Daily he put in a request to the City Council. This request would allow Chief Daily to compensate 6 of their members for their time in covering day-time calls. The crews would be divided into “main”, “back up” and “off duty”. There was much controversy to the decision; however Chief Daily stuck by his request. July of 1995, the city council approved of their request compensating paramedics \$500 monthly and EMTs \$335 monthly along with the normal per-run rate.

In October 1997, a very big event for the City of Eaton EMS took place when they moved into a new building at 324 North Maple Street. This building offered 3 times the office space, a training room attached to a kitchen and much more storage space. They had been running out of the same building since 1973, the conditions were only worsening; it had a leaky ceiling and was in need of many other repairs. Early, in 1997, City Council revealed that the building could no longer be fixed, so the building was torn down to house the city’s new administrative offices and expand the police department.

