



# SENECA COUNTY

## Emergency Services



## July 2020 Seneca County EMS – Operational Plan for the future

Since 2013, Seneca County EMS has organized and formed five joint ambulance districts. The organization and development of these districts has gone smoothly, but the districts are performing at a sub-optimal level. Which is to say that two of the six ambulances are out of service due to lack of manpower approximately 50 percent of the time.

### **Future Performance and Growth:**

We must continue to grow to have adequate personnel available for the EMS mission.

In Bascom, Bettsville, Hopewell, Loudon and Jackson townships it is time to move forward with a part-time or full-time system of pay for the EMS personnel. This is due to the increased call volume in those four townships.

Seneca County EMS recommends that we proceed as follows with the EMS evolution and development: **The formation of ONE county-wide joint ambulance district including all townships and villages within Seneca County.**

This would include Venice, Reed, Bloom, Scipio, Thompson, Adams, Pleasant, Liberty, Jackson, Hopewell, Loudon, Big Spring, Seneca townships, and the villages of Attica, Republic, Bloomville, Bettsville, New Riegel, Green Springs, and all unincorporated villages that lie within the aforementioned townships.

The joint ambulance district would be required to form from existing JADs by combining the existing districts and accepting the townships/villages not currently incorporated in a JAD.

The next logical step would be to research the necessary millage to account for the manpower and operational costs necessary to staff four Full-Time Advanced Life Support ambulances placed strategically throughout the county.

An estimated property tax millage for this endeavor would be approximately 3 mills to generate about \$2.5 million across 13 townships and six villages within the system. This estimation will need to be validated by the Seneca County Auditor's Office.

Seneca County would provide approximately \$800,000 in revenue and retain the Full-Time Echo unit as the EMS Field Supervisor for the County EMS system. The Countywide Joint Ambulance District would contract with the county to provide the \$2.5 million in funding for the necessary revenue to staff four ALS ambulances with one Paramedic and one EMT Basic/Advanced, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

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The logical operational locations for the full-time ambulances would be in Bascom, Old Fort, Republic and Attica. The District could retain the Compensated Volunteer Ambulance in New Riegel for the foreseeable future due to the robust community involvement in that geographical area.

The Full-Time staff would be augmented with volunteer (either compensated or true volunteer) personnel at each location for as long as they choose to operate, thereby not eliminating anyone from having the opportunity to volunteer their EMS talents to the mission. This EMS system would also require many Part-Time EMS personnel to assist in staffing the EMS units during times of surge, vacation, sick leave, injury or other unforeseen circumstances.

This EMS system would be a drastic change from what we currently operate under and would cost a considerable amount. An estimated \$3.2 million budget would be required to operate a 4 FT & 1 Volunteer EMS unit system. The estimated revenue of this model would not exceed \$400k in EMS billing and other receipts.

This change in culture and operational model would eliminate a squad in the villages of Bettsville and Bloomville. This may be hard to understand for people who recall when Bettsville was the “crowned jewel” of EMS performance in Seneca County, and Bloomville has long been the “anchor” of the east side of the county system.

According to an analysis of performance-based modeling and EMS run data, the northwestern corner of Seneca County can be effectively covered by the EMS unit in Bascom with an average response time of 10-12 minutes. The southeastern corner encompassing Bloom/Venice townships can be adequately covered by an EMS unit in Republic or Attica with similar response times. Although it may be advantageous to leave the EMS unit in Bloomville as a ready to go back up, that could be staffed by volunteer EMS personnel or call-in personnel in times of surge or necessity.

The shifting of the Bettsville EMS unit to the Old Fort area takes into account the approximately 150-200 runs per year generated in the Adams/Pleasant township area, while Sandusky County EMS can adequately cover the greater portion of Green Springs from their LifeSquad 18/15 stations. While the FT EMS unit in Republic could respond north very effectively as well.

This model will require a shift in vision and operational focus due to the need to move EMS units to centralized areas to cover during surge periods or times when a unit is out of service due to maintenance or extended scene times. The experience and tactical knowledge of experienced Echo Unit paramedics will be necessary to shift personnel as needed during those times.

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### **Operational Direction & Control**

The operational direction and control of the Seneca County EMS system would be the responsibility of the Seneca County Board of Commissioners through the County Emergency Services Director.

The only commitment that the Joint Ambulance District would have to this project would be financial support for operational costs countywide.

This is a major change in the way that we operate EMS today. The Joint Ambulance District, consisting of the townships and villages, would enter into a contract with Seneca County EMS to provide EMS service to the entire county (minus both cities and Clinton and Eden townships')

The county having direction and control includes the Human Resources responsibility of hiring, management and payroll of 24 full-time EMS providers, 10 part-time EMS providers and an unknown number of volunteer EMS personnel to staff the EMS units in New Riegel, Bloomville or other stations as needed. This is a large endeavor that would tax our current administrative staff and would be difficult to manage without professional Human Resources consultation. Another benefit of this program is that it would create 24 full-time jobs in Seneca County.

The township and village elected officials would have no responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the EMS system. Their involvement would be limited strictly to financial support. The Joint Ambulance District Board, consisting of one elected official from each township, village or municipality should meet monthly to discuss needs, wants or other issues with the EMS director. The board should also include members of the community, business leaders, public health officials, physicians and civic leaders that have a vested interest in EMS and the mission to protect lives and preventable deaths within Seneca County.

### **Dispatching & Communications**

Dispatching an ambulance to the scene of a 911 response would not change dramatically. Seneca County would maintain the primary 911 PSAP at the Seneca County Sheriff's Office.

Radio communication would remain as it currently is operated and would support Fire/EMS communications operations throughout the county.

The major changes to dispatch and communication would be where the ambulances are located, which would require training for the dispatchers to understand the scope and purpose of where to send which ambulance, and when to shift EMS units to cover areas during times of surge, or heavy call volumes.

Expanding the use of the communications package "IamResponding" by the dispatchers and all EMS personnel will aid in the communications necessary to be more effective county-wide and potentially decrease our cost of having multiple agencies decreased to one unified contract. In essence, all EMS personnel will be aware of where all EMS units in the county are, and if they are busy, out of service or available to respond.

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### **Station Locations & Staffing**

The logical locations for the four (4) full-time EMS stations would be Bascom, Old Fort, Republic and Attica. Ideally, we would build new EMS stations in Old Fort, Republic and Attica to more centrally locate them geographically to optimize response times.

Purposefully built EMS stations could be simple structures that would house two ambulances and four people with office space, living quarters and secure storage for medical supplies. This could be as simple as a pole building type structure, similar to the fire stations, or more elaborate construction if the cost was not an issue. Realistically, we will be housed within the fire stations where the ambulances currently sit, however it will require a moderate amount of upgrading and “home improvement” to the fire stations that currently house an EMS unit.

Currently, the volunteer fire stations are quite capable of housing an ambulance and equipment, but personnel living in them 24/7 is quite another matter.

Building stations is the ideal situation so that we could customize our response areas geographically and meet all necessary building codes and fire codes for residential structures.

Cost to the townships and villages will also need to be accounted for because once we move to a full-time system, they will certainly need to charge us for living in their buildings. Additional costs of furnishing, utilities, appliances and assorted living necessities will also need to be budgeted.

Each station location would have a shift supervisor per crew, and an overall station commander (senior-most person at the station) that would oversee maintenance and upkeep of the facility daily. The crews would work on housekeeping, lawn maintenance, daily maintenance and would always keep the station ready for visitation from the public. Community outreach would also be a large part of station life with school visitation, community education, CPR training, car seat safety and many other day-to-day activities, along with running the 911 EMS responses.

Staffing would be one Paramedic and one Basic EMT per crew, and advanced EMTs could also be included to help bolster our ALS capabilities.

Keeping compensated volunteers running at our New Riegel and Bloomville bases would be beneficial to fill our ranks of paid employees. The career path for EMS would deepen, and we could become self-sustaining in the future. Personnel turnover is a constant struggle in EMS due to people furthering their education to move into careers in nursing, medicine or other endeavors that satisfy their thirst for knowledge and service.

Having a full-time EMS system feeds the medical industry and provides an excellent career path for young medical professionals.

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