



Above: (l to r) Todd Fisk, Aaron Reinert, Kerry Degen, Heather Jarbis, Suzie Daley, Ken Larson.

LAKES REGION EMS does more than provide ambulance rides and respond to 911 calls. It provides a plethora of important services to Chisago County.

Lakes Region is a not-for-profit organization that serves Chisago County. Its corporate headquarters is located in North Branch in the industrial park. Aaron Reinert, executive director, said Lakes Region EMS has four pillars it focuses on. They are: state of the art patient care, dedication to the community, outstanding customer service and to be financially healthy and responsible.

"These four things are the things we try everyday to meet and exceed," Reinert said.

To help serve the community they offer a variety of educational classes such as CPR instructions, first aid classes, work with the schools and provide car safety seat programs. Reinert said they focus on serving the community they work and live in.

"Our role is not just responding to ambulance calls," Reinert said.

However, ambulance calls are an easy recognizable way they serve the community. Lakes Region EMS takes an average of 10 ambulance calls a day. Annually they receive 3,400 requests. To fill these requests they have 32 full-time and eight part-time employees.

Lakes EMS has a large collection of vehicles. In its fleet they have five ambulances (one lasts four years after 200,000 of miles), two emergency response units and three crews operating 24-hours a day. Crews are located in Rush City, North Branch and Chisago City.

Lakes EMS is always on the go, with 45,000 people to serve and 450 square miles of turf to cover. The ambulances are constantly moving so each ambulance is strategically located. The goal is to have an ambulance no further than 10 minutes away from any area in the county.

The ambulances are not cheap; they cost around \$150,000 to \$180,000 fully equipped. Reinert said they put 50,000 miles on them a year.

Typically, two people go on an ambulance call. One person drives while the other works on the patient. These people are not volunteer workers. They are professionals with countless hours of training and expertise. The paramedic has a two-to three-year program to complete before starting. The paramedics are able to provide advance life support, and administer medications among many other tasks.

When people in the community hear the ambulance, Reinert wants people to remember to pull over and come to a complete stop. Ambulance drivers die everyday going on calls, he said.

Lakes Region EMS

39840 Grand Ave., North Branch **651-277-4911**