

History of Rescue Squads and EMS in Wake County

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For your Hump Day enjoyment, here's the second in a series about EMS and rescue squad histories. The first was this [history of Wake County EMS](#). Here's the larger story, of the funeral homes that provide ambulance service, the early rescue squads, and the more recent EMS agencies. It's a bit all over the place, in format and content. This thing's being cooked. But it works for a midweek blog post. Input welcome.

1935-1939

1935 - Raleigh City Directory lists three ambulance services:

- **Brown's Funeral Home** - 115 Hillsboro.
- **Martin-Yelverton Co.** - 104 S. Dawson.
- **Mitchell Funeral Home Inc.** - 222 W. Hargett.

1940-1949

1940 - Raleigh City Directory lists the following ambulance services:

- **Brown's Funeral Home** - 115 Hillsboro.
- **Lightner's Funeral Parlor** (c) - 127-129 E. Hargett.
- **Martin-Yelverton Co.** - 104 S. Dawson.
- **Mitchell Funeral Home Inc.** - 222 W. Hargett.

1945 - Raleigh City Directory lists the following ambulance services:

- **Brown's Funeral Home** - 115 Hillsboro.
- **Lightner's Funeral Parlor** (c) - 312 Smithfield.
- **Martin-Yelverton Co.** - 104 S. Dawson.
- **Mitchell Funeral Home Inc.** - 222 W. Hargett.

1947 - Raleigh Fire Chief discuss creating a rescue squad. The idea isn't pursued, due to a change of (fire department?) administration.

1950-1959

1950 - Raleigh City Directory lists the following ambulance services:

- **Brown's Funeral Home** - 115 Hillsboro.
- **Haywood's Ambulance Service** (c) - 322 E. Cabarrus.
- **Mitchell Funeral Home Inc.** - 222 W. Hargett.
- **Pennington-Smith Funeral Home** - 104 S. Dawson.

1953 - **Raleigh Emergency Rescue Squad** incorporated. The creation of a rescue squad is initially led by the city manager, the Fire Chief, and Asst. Fire Chief. The non-profit organization is operated/hosted by Raleigh FD, but includes dozens of volunteer members. The squad ends up as a first aid and rescue service, and occasionally as patient transport. (8/27/53)

Notes:

N&O story on May 6, 1966, sheds some light on the squad's role with patient transport. At a car accident in Raleigh, the police dispatcher called Raleigh Ambulance Service. They later called back and said no ambulances of theirs were available. The dispatcher then called the Raleigh squad, and Overby's Funeral Home. The first-arriving unit provide the transport, which was the Raleigh squad. It appears the Raleigh squad served as back-up or alternate, in the event the primary Raleigh ambulance provider(s) were not available.

1955 - Raleigh City Directory lists the following ambulance services:

- **Brown-Wynne Funeral Home** - 308 St. Mary's.

- **Mitchell Funeral Home Inc.** - 606 St. Mary's.
- **Pennington-Smith Funeral Home** - 104 S. Dawson.

1960-1969

1960 - Raleigh City Directory lists the following ambulance services:

- **Brown-Wynne Funeral Home Inc.** - 308 St. Mary's.
- **Mitchell Funeral Home Inc.** - 600-606 St. Mary's.
- **Pennington-Smith Funeral Home** - 104 S. Dawson.

1962 - **Wendell Rescue Squad** incorporated. (7/23/62)

Wendell memories:

- Had first SWAB ambulance in county. Was delivered in 1971. Ira C. Fuller traveled with Norman Dean and Paul White to Pennsylvania, to pick it up.
- Early locations listed in city directories as 29 E. 4th Street and 361 E. 3rd Street.

1964 - Raleigh phone book lists the following ambulance services:

- **Brown-Wynne Funeral Home** - 308 St. Marys.
- **Capitol Funeral Home** - 1012 E. Hargett.
- **Lightner Funeral Home** - 312 E. Smithfield.
- **Mitchell Funeral Home Inc** - 600 St. Marys.
- **Overby Funeral Home** - 2415 Hwy 70 E.
- **Pennington-Smith Funeral Home Inc** - 104 S. Dawson.
- **Raleigh Funeral Home** - 322 E. Cabarrus.
- **Whitley Funeral Home** - 114 3 Wendell NC.
- Apex
 - **J. W. Albright Funeral Home** - S. Salem.
 - **Apex Funeral Directors** - 105 W. Chatham.
 - 24 hours service
 - courteous & trained
 - Attendants - Modern rates
 - Each car equipped with oxygen

1965, March - Research report states that state and local governments in North Carolina should be authorized to help provide supervised ambulance service. The two-year study provides numerous recommendations, and also observes that funeral homes have ceased providing ambulance service in at least ten counties. (N&O, 3/16/65)

1965, October - Six of seven funeral homes in Raleigh cease ambulance service. The owners contended that "deficit operations were no longer worth the advertising and good will that furnishing ambulance service brought. The number of unpaid bills was increasing, and falls calls were coming more and more numerous. It was inconvenient to maintain personnel on duty 24 hours a day. Competition was also not proving to be healthy." (N&O, 11/20/66)

Only **Overby Funeral Home** continues operating ambulance service, with two ambulances. Ceasing operations are likely Brown-Wynne FH, Capitol FH, Lightner FH, Mitchell FH, Pennington-Smith FH, and Raleigh FH. (1964 phone book.) This becomes a statewide trend. In June 1966, fifty-one funeral directors in nine Piedmont counties notify city and county governments that they'll cease ambulance service. (N&O, 7/19/66).

Raleigh Funeral home memories:

- **Gray Funeral Home** (renamed from Overby Funeral Home) operated four ambulances during late 1970s to early 1980s, as convalescent service.
- They acquired one or two of Clayton Rescue Squad's van ambulances, when CRS got rid of them. [JT]
- They had a 1969 Cadillac/Superior combination car, a 1971 Cadillac/Superior combination car, a 1969 Superior/Pontiac 48-inch high-top ambulance, and a 1972 Cadillac/Superior 54-inch high-top ambulance. [DJ]

1965, November 1 - **Ambulance Service of Raleigh** begins operation.

Notes:

- Operated by Gene Clark.
- Later named **Raleigh Ambulance Service**.
- Has four ambulances, either immediately or within a few months.
- Answers the majority of Raleigh ambulance calls, including "police calls."
- Loses money from the beginning, due to patients who won't or can't pay.

1965 - **Wake Forest Rescue Squad** incorporated. (1/19/65)

Wake Forest Rescue Squad memories:

- First located at 132 Dunn Avenue.
- Later at 149 E. Holding Avenue.
- One-story building with 2,016 square-feet, built 1940.
- One of the first squads to purchase a Hurst tool in the 1970s.
- Randy Bright (WFFD board and Bright funeral home) and Buddy Willis (Willis' hardware downtown Wake Forest) were charter members and used to respond using the funeral home hearses.

1966 - Raleigh phone book lists the following ambulance services:

- **Ambulance Service of Raleigh Inc.** - 500 Pershing Road - 828-0737.
- **Overby Funeral Home**, Raleigh.
- **Screws & Hudson Funeral Home**, Zebulon.
- **Wendell Rescue Squad**.
- **J. W. Albright Funeral Home**, Apex.

1966 - Ambulance service issues and events in Raleigh include:

- City adopts ordinance regulating ambulance service in Raleigh on April 18, 1966. (N&O, 4/19/66)
- **Raleigh Ambulance Service** and **Overby Funeral Home** subsequently awarded licenses.
- RAS continues to lose money, on patients who won't or can't pay for transport costs. Owner Gene Clark requests city and county subsidies, and/or help collecting unpaid bills, and eventually threatens to (but doesn't) stop answering certain call types on April 30, unless he receives some assistance.

1967 - Legislation is passed at the state level, about ambulance operation:

- Legislation authorizing counties to "assure adequate and continuing ambulance service" is placed into the law on the Friday before May 6. The bill grants counties power to "grant franchises, subsidize private companies, or set up public operations to ensure that ambulance service continues." Counties have the power to levy taxes without vote, if money is needed to finance such services. A grandfather clause provides that a county can grant a franchise to any private firm presently offering service, if it meets the "specifications of the law." The bill "sets up various requirements of personnel and equipment for ambulances licensed under the law." (N&O, 5/6/67)
- Licensing regulation for operators of ambulances is adopted by the state board of health. The rules include a thirty-one point list of equipment features that ambulances must contain. There's also a fourteen-point list of sanitary standards. Permits to operate ambulances must be obtained on an annual basis. (N&O, 10/13/67)

1967 - Ambulance service issues and events in Raleigh that year include:

- **Ambulance Service of Raleigh** is renamed from **Raleigh Ambulance Service**. They receive a rate hike in February, but are still losing money. They warn the city and county in January that they could go out of business, if they don't receive some financial assistance. The company soon demands an annual subsidy for their services.
- **Ambulance Service of Raleigh** merges with **Ambulance Service** of Rockingham County in April. The Raleigh company is dissolved, and the Rockingham County company continues to keep the Raleigh services operating. Original owner Gene Clark owns a majority share of the merged company.
- **Ambulance Service of Raleigh** stops answering county emergency calls on August 21, and halts city emergency calls on September

18. County officials arrange temporary service from Wake Memorial Hospital, Overby Funeral Home, and three rescue squads. City officials use the Raleigh Rescue Squad and Wake Memorial Hospital. **Overby Funeral Home** continues ambulance operation. County officials study alternatives to subsidizing the Raleigh ambulance firm.

- In October, county officials decide to contract with a private ambulance firm, to provide service to those county areas without it. They request proposals and then bids from a number of firms, including **Ambulance Service of Raleigh**. The process takes a number of months.

1968 - Ambulance service issues and events in Raleigh that year include:

- **Ambulance Service of Raleigh** awarded county contract, for service in Raleigh and county areas where funeral home ambulance service isn't available. The annual subsidy is \$31,780, though the initial contract expires June 30 and must be renewed. The contract states that ASR will provide 24-hour service with three ambulances that meet state regulations, and will answer all calls from police, sheriff, and highway patrol, and all other emergency calls. They will charge \$20 for transport within Raleigh, and add 65 cents per mile one-way, if transporting outside the city limits. (N&O, 4/5/68)
- County plans to subsidize funeral homes in Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Wake Forest, Wendell, and Zebulon with \$1,500 annually, so they'll continue ambulance service. (N&O, 4/5/68)

1969, around - **Beacon Ambulance Service** renamed from Raleigh Ambulance Service. First appears in Raleigh phone book in 1969 yellow pages.

Beacon locations included:

- 202 New Bern Avenue (1969 phone book).
- 209 Hillsborough Street (1970-1973 phone book).
- 3207 Hillsborough Street (1970 phone book, later cited as location for **Ambulance Aid Inc.**).
- 615 N. Boylan Avenue (1974 phone book).
- 207 Oberlin Road (1975 phone book).
- 811 Hillsborough Street (1976 phone book)

Beacon memories:

Fred Loy:

- RAS bought by two men from Washington, DC, who renamed the company. They were Ted Bacon and Chuck Daughtry.
- He started working at Beacon in 1968. He had joined Clayton Rescue Squad in 1964. He was one of their first paid employees, the other being M. J. Johnson, now a Raleigh fireman.
- At that time, the only rescue squad that was transporting was Wendell, with Norman Dean and his crew. They had the first SWAB ambulance in the county.
- In 1968, Loy was offered a chance to purchase part interest in the company. He later sold his part to Jim Huffstetler and Albert Brown.
- Loy was later one of the original Wake EMS employees, and later one of the first shift supervisors.

Resident next door, July 1973 to March 1978:

- BAS operated from an office beside Boylan Apartments, which is beside/back up to present State Employees Credit Union.
- BAS operated four to six units.
- Two Cadillac ambulances, one Pontiac ambulance, two to four Chevy Suburban (ambulances?) operated at any given time.
- Responses left using the rear parking lot, to Hargett Street.

Jason Thompson:

- Beacon stationed an ambulance at the Garner police station at night. Before this time, Clayton Rescue covered a lot of the "Garner district."
- Beacon also provided service in Durham, with an ambulance housed at Durham Fire Station 1.

1970-1979

1970, by - Funeral homes are getting out of patient transport business. Raleigh phone book that year lists only two funeral homes (Raleigh, Wendell) under Ambulances. Raleigh city directory lists none under Ambulances.

County ambulance company memories:

Community Ambulance (Zebulon area) operated an older Cadillac as a convalescent unit, believed a 1967 Cadillac/Superior that was metallic blue.

County funeral home memories:

- **J. W. Albright** and **Apex Funeral Directors** (Apex) operated ambulances.
- **Bright Funeral Home** (Wake Forest) and **Lewis Funeral Home** (Wendell) operated ambulances. Lewis had one hearse/ambulance combination, and after ceasing ambulance service, retained it for funeral service.
- **Screws & Hudson Funeral Home** (Zebulon) operated an ambulance.
- **Suggs Funeral Home** (Fuquay-Varina) operated ambulances for some time, including a convalescent service that continued long after Fuquay-Varina Rescue Squad started.
- **Whitley Funeral Home** (Wendell) operated an ambulance.

1970 - **Ambulance Aid Inc.** is listed in Raleigh phone book. Address is 3207 Hillsborough Street. They are listed along with **Beacon Ambulance Service**, which is also operating a medical rental and sales division by that year.

1971, circa - **Overby Funeral Home** ceases ambulance service. They are not listed in the 1971 phone book.

1971 - **Ambulance Aid Inc.** at two locations (613 W. North Street and 3207 Hillsborough Street) listed in Raleigh City Directory, along with **Beacon Ambulance Service** at 209 Hillsborough Street. The company is not listed in the Raleigh phone book for that year, nor appears in any directory or phone book in 1972 or later.

1971 - **Cary Area Rescue Squad** incorporated. (10/29/71)

Cary memories:

- Early location was 310 N. Academy Street (source: phone book).
- Established in October 1971, after a boy struck by a car died after waiting forty-five minutes for an ambulance from Raleigh.
- Had first Hurst tool in North Carolina, followed by Clayton Rescue.
- Became first nationally accredited volunteer rescue squad in 1999. (N&O 3/23/99)
- By June 1997, the organization had relinquished technical rescue services to the Cary Fire Department. Their heavy rescue truck was transferred to the fire department.
- On June 30, 1997, the organization filed a name change with the state, and renamed itself Cary Area Emergency Medical Services.

Fred Loy memories, about October 1971 pedestrian struck call that led to creation of the squad:

- Beacon Ambulance received the call, from either Raleigh PD or Cary PD. Beacon #6 was dispatched, with Loy driving. They were dispatched from their base on New Bern Avenue. Route of travel was through town, and out the "three way" to Cary. Had no radio capability, other than with their base. Had no ability to communicate with Raleigh or Cary.
- Since the dispatched address was a new subdivision, not on a map, he contacted Beacon base, and requested they call Cary PD on the phone, and meet use along the "three way" and escort them to the accident scene. As they entered Cary, Officer Padgett met them, and took them toward the accident site.
- About a mile or two into the escort, the Cary police car ran off the road, off the right side, and down a ravine. The Beacon unit stopped to get him out of the car, and he called for another police unit to escort. No police unit was available, so Cary Fire Chief Terry Edmundson met them at the next intersection, and escorted.
- Beacon transported the boy to the hospital. The response took forty-five minutes, which could have taken longer with no radio communication, no maps of new areas, and no street signs. At the time of the incident, Beacon covered 90% of the county with four units. More often, with only three. There were a few funeral homes also still offering ambulance services. After this incident, Beacon placed in ambulance during day hours.

1971 - **Apex Rescue Squad** incorporated. (9/8/71)

Apex notes:

- Began service with an ambulance donated by Johson-Melver Funeral Home of Apex.
- One year later, Bill Geringer of Geringer Chevrolet Company announced he would donate a 1973 van to the squad, for use as their "rescue unit."

- During the first year, the squad answered 167 calls.
- Received new ambulance on March 27, 1973, built by the Superior Coach Company of Dallas on a Chevrolet chassis, and driven to Greensboro, where it was accepted. The squad's other vehicle is a 1972 van (?) will be used only to answer accidents and other incidents where rescue equipment is needed.
- In 1977 (?), hired their first full-time employees: Kirby McQueen and Willie Yates.
- By October 1997, the organization had ceased technical rescue services.
- On October 27, 1997, the organization filed a name change with the state, and was renamed Apex Emergency Medical Services Inc.
- Apex EMS merges with the town and becomes part of the fire department, around July 2011.
- Corporate dissolution is filed July 8, 2011.
- Apex EMS is separated from the fire department after about a year.

1972 - **Furina Rescue Squad** incorporated. Legal name is simply **Furina Rescue Inc.** Likely named after the rural fire district of the same name. More commonly called **Fuquay-Varina Rescue Squad.** (4/21/72)

Fuquay-Varina memories:

- Early location is 137 S. Fuquay Avenue.
- First ambulance was a 1975 Chevrolet Suburban with Modular Ambulance Corporate ZEPHYR 54 conversion. Apex, Wake Forest, and Wendell also had ZEPHYR conversions.
- Scandals would plague the squad in its last decade. Twice in ten years, between 1981 and 1991, members were convicted of embezzling squad funds. (N&O 4/4/91)

1974 - Last year that a funeral home is listed as an ambulance service in the Raleigh phone book.

1974 - **Zebulon Area Rescue Squad** incorporated. (2/28/74)

Zebulon memories:

The first vehicle acquired by the Zebulon Rescue Squad was the 1954 GMC panel van that originally and initially served the Raleigh Emergency Rescue Squad. The vehicle was given free of charge, with only 18,000 miles on odometer. It would be used as a utility vehicle, to carry heavy rescue equipment and tow the rescue boat. Source: Zebulon Record, November 21, 1974.

1975 - Beacon seeks increasing county subsidy. Other issues related to Beacon also happening.

1975 - **Garner/St. Mary's Rescue Squad** incorporated. (January 13, 1975)

Garner memories:

- First location was rented house.
- Second location was old fire station building on Pearl Street.
- First operated as first responder service, then added an ambulance.
- First truck was a medical responder unit built by members in 1975, using a CP&L equipment truck.
- First ambulance was home-built on an early 1970s Ford Econoline van, purchased by Dudley Buffalo. The call sign was 881.
- They also operated a 1974 Dodge Polara (sedan?), ex-highway patrol. Call sign 861.
- First call answered in March 1975.
- Added an original 75-pound Hurst tool (and crash truck?) in 1976.

1976 - Raleigh Fire Department/Wake County "rescue medic" program posed, rejected.

Legeros summary:

- Funeral homes haven't been transporting patients for about a decade. Various private ambulance companies have come and gone.
- The current provider for Raleigh residents is Beacon Ambulance Service. They also answer calls in northwestern Wake County.
- The Raleigh Fire Department's two rescue squads can also provide patient transport. Neither fire nor ambulance personnel are providing much in the way of advanced first aid. Fire department EMTs are still a few years away.
- Outside of the city, there are rescue squads operating in Apex, Cary, Wake Forest, Wendell, and Zebulon. Some of those have been around for over a decade; others are fairly new.
- Beacon's been receiving a subsidy from the county, and they have asked for an increase the prior year. This and other issues have both

city and county officials considering their options for the best combination ambulance and medical service for Raleigh residents. Thus the proposed Rescue Medic program, a city-county initiative to add Emergency Medical Technician-staffed ambulances to the Raleigh Fire Department.

- Four two-person medic units at Station 1, Station 10, Station 6 or Station 14, and Station 4 or Station 15. The department's two rescue squads would be located at Station 2 and Station 9. And their response areas would include some territory outside the city limits.
- The proposal was created by Lee Gupton for the Wake County Office of Emergency Management, including staffing, equipment, response projections, and alternate models.

Tuesday before April 21, 1976 - Wake County Board of Commissioners rejects a proposed city-county ambulance, and instead votes to create a county-financed ambulance service for Raleigh and northwestern Wake County. The Raleigh City Council approved the plan two weeks prior, but the commissioners were split on approving the city-county plan, or continuing to subsidize Beacon Ambulance Service Inc. The compromise vote, for county-only service, was four to one. The estimated cost of the new service was set at \$388,000, a figure based on purchasing four new ambulances and hiring about twenty-six people to operate them. After collecting ambulance fees, the net cost for the county was estimated at \$298,000. This contrasted with the county's \$345,000 cost before collections, of the city-county plan. And the Beacon subsidy would have cost \$194,500. (N&O, 4/21/76)

1976 - **Wake County EMS** placed in service on August 15, 1976. They responded to nineteen ambulance calls. They responded in less than five minutes to twelve of the calls. Five were automobile accidents. Two EMS stations are opened: Station 1 at McDowell and Martin streets (EMS 1, EMS 4) and Station 2 at the Wake County Home on Whitaker Mill Road (EMS 2). The third station on Six Forks Road would be opened in several weeks (EMS 3). The original staff consists of twenty-six employees: Director, Chief Supervisor, Three Shift Supervisors, and twenty-one field EMTs.

1976 - Beacon Ambulance Service loses its contract and \$8,400 subsidy from Wake County on August 15. Owner James Huffstettler creates a new company, **Medical Transport Services**, which provides convalescent transport on a "cash and carry business." The new company is located at 2232 Wake Forest Road. The assets of his former company are seized by the IRS in September, which wants to collect \$25,000 in unpaid federal taxes. The company has six ambulances, along with medical and office equipment. They are sold at auction starting on the Wednesday after September 28, 1976. Local fire departments and rescue squads are notified of the auction. Huffstettler had previously asked the county for both an increase in monthly subsidy, and help collecting unpaid bills. Neither request was granted. (N&O, 9/28/76)

Convalescent services that have operated in Raleigh over the years/decades have included:

- **AMR** (took over Nova).
- **Capital EMS** (operated out of a building along the railroad tracks on Jones Street)
- **Garner Rescue Squad**
- **Medical Transport Services**
- **Mobile Medical Care** (successor to Medical Transport Services around 1978)
- **Nova Medical Transport**
- **Piedmont Ambulance**
- **SAS Ambulance**
- **Samaritan**
- **Southeastern Medevac**
- **Triangle Ambulance**

1976 - Raleigh FD begins training firefighters as EMTs, for eventual city-wide First Responder program.

1976 - **Six Forks Rescue** incorporated. (12/30/76)

Six Forks memories:

- Organized by members of Six Forks FD, believe after a bad car accident and waiting for ambulances.
- Only rescue squad in Wake County not affiliated with a municipality.
- For first ten years, members required to be member of spouse of SFFD.

Six Forks notes:

2005, October - Placed ambulance in service at airport-owned warehouse building at 6901 Mt. Herman Road. The 1972 building was obtained by the airport in 1990. Two rescue boats and a light trailer are also/located there.

1977 - **Knightdale Area Rescue Squad** incorporates. (3/30/77)

Memories:

- Started as first responder service, prior to purchasing ambulance.
- Crash truck with Hurst tool added in 1978.
- EMS station started as two-bay building.
- Three-bay addition added, and original section converted into other functions.

1980-1989

1980 - Raleigh FD first responder program expands city wide, April 1, 1980.

1984 - **Wake County EMS** advances to EMT-Intermediate.

1981 - **Northern Wake Rescue & EMS** created, renamed from WFRS.

NWREMS memories:

- In its heyday, Northern Wake Rescue and EMS operated two stations: one in Wake Forest and one in Rolesville.
- The Rolesville station was the old fire station.
- They basically served the entire northern area of Wake County from Falls Lake in the west, to Buffalo Road in the east.

1982 - **Fairview FD** becomes first Wake County fire department to offer First Responder service. Chosen due to location between four rescue districts: Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, and Garner. March 1982.

First responder memories:

- Swift Creek FD begins first responder - fall 1993.
- Zebulon Rural FD begins first responder - 1999
- Wake Forest FD begins first responder for county calls - 2000.

1982-83 - New UHF radio system installed for EMS agencies and rescue squads.

1984 - **Wake County EMS** implements EMT-Paramedic. County rescue squads soon begin receiving training for personnel, and/or deploying Wake County paramedics for their units. Some county squads continue using WCEMS paramedics through 1999. [Alternate year is 1983. N&O, 9/10/91]

1986 - Paramedic service added at **Cary, Garner, and Six Forks** rescue squads. (N&O, 9/10/91)

1989 - **Rescue, Extrication, & Delivery Specialists** or **REDS** incorporated. (May 11, 1989).

1990-1999

1990 - Citizen's committee recommends that the county place paramedics at all six rescue squads for three years to provide uniform service. The cost is estimated at \$500,000 for nine paramedics and their supplies. (N&O, 9/10/91)

1990 - **Furina Rescue Squad** ceases operations, after town votes to cease funding. The squad operates from a town-owned building, and was receiving a \$3,000 allocation this year. The town asks the county to provide "full rescue services" until a new squad is organized, and approved by both Wake and Harnett Counties. The town board had a "long-standing desire" to improve rescue services in Fuquay-Varina, and particularly keep a paramedic on duty around the clock. (N&O, 11/1/90)

1990 - **Wake County EMS** establishes service at RDU Airport (EMS 6), first unit stationed outside city limits, December 1990.

1991 - **Fuquay-Varina Area Rescue Squad** incorporated on February 6, 1991. Wake County EMS assumes primary service in Fuquay-Varina.

Notes from April 4, 1991, News & Observer:

- Begins responding to calls the week of April 4, 1991.
- Spent two months preparing to take place of **Furina Rescue Squad**.
- They reorganized, recruited volunteers, and arranged to pay more than \$39,000 in debt from their predecessor.
- The interim Chief is Donald R. Powell. They have twenty members.

- They signed a contract with the county the week before, to provide rescue services and received \$23,115 in startup money. This grant, plus funds from the town and Northern Harnett Rescue, will pay the former squad's debts.
- They have obtained an ambulance, a 1987 Ford.
- The rescue station has been refinished with paint, carpeting, and other repairs. It's ready for county personnel to move in.
- The county set a pair of deadlines:

By April 15:

- Be ready to answer rescue-only calls, those not requiring emergency patient care or transport.
- Maintain enough staff to keep response time below eight minutes.
- Provide place to house personnel and equipment from Wake County EMS.
- The WCEMS unit has been housed in the volunteer fire station since February.
- They'll receive a \$1,222 monthly subsidy.

By December 31

- Provide a vehicle and a driver to assist Wake County EMS paramedics.
- Drivers must be certified EMT-I.
- They will remain stationed in town.
- Once this is met, FVRS can respond to calls for emergency patient care and transportation.
- They'll receive a \$3,666 monthly subsidy when this is met.
- After this time, the squad will receive 60 percent of charges for EMS services currently paid to the county. \$148 for basic services, \$208 for ALS.

1992 - **Garner EMS and Rescue Squad** created, from Garner-St. Mary's Rescue Squad. The name change is filed December 31, 1992.

1992 - **Northern Wake Rescue & EMS** votes to reorganize in June. Wake County EMS begins providing EMS service in August, while reorganization takes place. County commissioners, notes the N&O story, expect to provide service countywide by 1994. (N&O, 2/4/93) Horace Macon takes charge of squad and "turns it around." They have twelve EMTs then, but June 1993 they have thirty-five, with plans for more than dozen to be paramedics within a year. (N&O, 6/2/93)

1993 - County commissioners approve a plan allowing all county residents the option of paying annual subscription fees, the way that those served by rescue squads have done for years. Residents can pay \$50 per year, or be billed between \$109 and \$300 for calls. (N&O, 3/2/93)

1993 - Paramedics added at **Wendell** and **Zebulon**, after July 1. (N&O, 3/2/93)

1995 - **Wake Forest EMS** created, renamed from Northern Wake Rescue & EMS. Name change filed August 28, 1995.

1995 - **Rolesville EMS** incorporated on February 2, 1995.

Rolesville memories:

- Proudly formed as a new non-profit corporation by the citizens of Rolesville and many of Rolesville EMS's charter members were past members of Northern Wake Rescue and EMS (who lived in or close to Rolesville). Northern Wake's organization was in turmoil and the community action to form another EMS service in Rolesville was necessary to provide coverage to Rolesville.
- Occupied the **Northern Wake Rescue** Station 2 facility, which was the former fire station. Building is donated by the squad.

From N&O, 3/16/95:

- Cary Area EMS donates a used ambulance to serve as a back-up truck.
- Some twelve EMTs and paramedics have volunteered to staff the new station.
- Town will sell annual EMS memberships for \$50.
- Fundraiser started by town last month, to raise \$175,000 for the squad.
- They've raised \$10,000 so far.
- County has told town that if they can raise the money, get the volunteers, and meet state and county certification requirements by July 1, they'll be granted a county EMS franchise.

It would provide service to nearly 4,000 homes and 20,000 people within a six-mile radius, and dividing in half the area currently served by **Northern Wake Rescue**.

From N&O, 8/10/97:

- Started fundraising campaign last year to buy third ambulance. Have raised \$45,000.
- Borrows ambulance from Fuquay-Varina, after REMS unit is damaged in collision on Wednesday before 8/10/97. Ambulance is re-ended on Highway 96 while returning from a call, by driver later charged with DUI. Two EMS members suffer neck and back injuries.

1997 - **Fuquay-Varina EMS**, renamed from FVARS. Name change filed March 25, 1997.

1997 - **Cary Area EMS** created, renamed from CARS. Name changed filed June 30, 1997. Also by that time, they had ceased providing technical rescue services.

1997 - **Apex EMS** created, renamed from AVRS. Name change filed October 27, 1997.

1998 - Wake County EMS adds ambulance in Wake Forest, in advance of **Wake Forest EMS** ceasing service. (Before February 1998)

1998 - County commissioners as county staff to develop short-term improvement plans, to provide EMS service to Holly Springs and Wake Forest. The county has received complaints from both towns about inadequate service. Holly Springs has asked to start its own EMS service, and has purchased two ambulances and equipment. The town has also asked the county for help financing the service. Currently, ambulances from Apex and Fuquay-Varina answer calls in Holly Springs. In Wake Forest, the rescue squad is disbanding by March 31. That will leave only one county ambulance to serve the town. Wake Forest officials want a second ambulance. The commissioners also discuss hiring a consultant to study the county system and make recommendations county-wide. (N&O 2/3/98)

1998 - County commissioners approve the structure of a twenty-five member task force, to oversee a study of EMS services in Wake County. (N&O, 3/11/98)

1998 - **Wake Forest EMS** disbands in March. The town is left with only one "county ambulance" to serve the area. The corporate dissolution is filed November 25, 1998.

1998 - **Holly Springs Fire Department** begins EMS service on April 1, 1998. They are licensed as a BLS provider, and Wake County provides one full-time Wake County paramedic and ALS supplies. The town provides one ambulance, a driver, and all equipment. Source: Wake County Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes, February 16, 1998.

They operate an ambulance for over a decade, including later with a full-time paramedic provided by Wake County EMS.

1999 - TriData's *Comprehensive Assessment of the Wake County Emergency Medical Services System Final Report* received.

2000-present

2001 - **Fuquay-Varina EMS** ceases operation on April 1. (N&O, 2/17/01)

2001 - Zebulon Area Rescue Squad renamed **Zebulon EMS**. Name change filed July 27, 2001.

2003 - Wendell Rescue Squad renamed **Wendell EMS**. Name change filed April 25, 2003.

2005 - **Eastern Wake EMS** formed in July 2005, as a merger of Knightdale Area Rescue Squad, Wendell EMS, and Zebulon EMS.

Documents:

- Knightdale Area Rescue Squad merger filed May 12, 2005.
- Zebulon EMS merger filed May 12, 2005.
- Wendell EMS renamed Eastern Wake EMS. Name change filed April 21, 2005.

Notes:

- The three departments began discussing a merger after the three departments received budget cuts in 2004-05.
- After numerous meetings with the three Boards, each agency voted to move forward with the merger. A steering committee consisting of three members of each agency and the County Manager were put together to spearhead these efforts. They were tasked to write policy and procedures, bylaws, personnel policies and to put together a budget on behalf of all three departments. The name of Eastern Wake Emergency Medical Service, Inc. (EWEMS) was chosen by a vote of t
- Wendell EMS was formulated as the first EMS agency in Wake County in 1962 and they were chosen to be the surviving agency.

Wendell officially became Eastern Wake EMS on May 1, 2005. Knightdale and Zebulon folded into Eastern Wake EMS on July 1, 2005. During this process we worked closely with Dr. Myers, our system Medical Director, and Ryan Lewis, the system QA Coordinator, for the Wake County EMS System on how many ambulances are needed in Eastern Wake County to provide the service and where those ambulances need to be positioned in order to improve response times. We took an EMS System approach instead of a territorial approach as we made these decisions.

2006 - Radio systems are changed from UHF to 800 mhz VIPER system, January 2006.

2007 - **Wake County EMS** adds Major Operations Support Unit and begins providing rehab / greater rehab service at fires and major incidents. First call answered on April 17, 2007.

2008 - **Rolesville EMS** merges with Eastern Wake EMS. Merger document filed May 13, 2008.

2009 - **Wake County EMS** adds Advanced Practice Paramedic (APP) program, January 6, 2009.

2010 - **Garner EMS & Rescue Squad** ceases EMS operations on/around May 31, 2010. Service assumed by Wake County EMS. Around the same time, the squad ceases providing rescue services. Its remaining operation is providing non-emergency medical transport services.

2010 - Holly Springs loses county subsidy for salaries of three paramedics, to staff the fire-rescue ambulance.

2011 - **Apex EMS** merges with town, becomes part of fire department for about a year. Corporate disillusion filed on July 8, 2011.

2011 - **Six Forks EMS** ceases operation. Service assumed by Wake County EMS. Organization files corporate dissolution with the state on July 27, 2011.

2011 - **Garner Rescue Squad** merges with **REDS**.

Mike, I cant state for sure when the dates were but Wake New Hope started offering first responder not too long after Fairview...I know I was in the first class and that had to have been around 1982-5? Also WNH had a Rescue bodied truck that was a 1974 Chevrolet 3500 with a Murphy body and if memory serves me right, that was almost the same body that was on the two Raleigh Rescue trucks that were similar vintage (Rescue 6 and Rescue 7?)...New Hope's was a 350 powered truck with a three speed manual shift. The Murphy body was remounted on a 1991-2 3500 with a 454 engine that I recall overheating a lot...not sure where the truck went after that...the unit looked like an ambulance but really was used to carry the Hurst tool and motor along with other miscellaneous tools. I cant say for sure when the department got the Hurst tool but it was the original Chrysler power unit with the large jaws much like the one that Six Forks had..it was certainly there when I first went in 1980.

Mike Hodgson - 01/15/14 - 22:43

Couple of things-

Raleigh-Durham Airport CFR started responding to medical calls in late 1977/early 1978. RDU CFR was not at that time a 'first responder' agency, but they were approved by NCOEMS as a "rescue only" provider and had to have certain required equipment. At that time Cary Area Rescue responded to calls in the terminals and the South Ramp area, while Six Forks Rescue Squad responded to the areas north of the airport. At that time medical calls on the airport were called in directly to the fire station or to the police department. RDU CFR would respond to the call and determine if transport was needed. Usually, there was only one person that responded on CFR-1 on the medical calls, but in the case of something like a cardiac arrest we would try and send some help. At any rate, I spent quite a bit of time by myself pumping on someone's chest or wishing that the ambulance would hurry up. And of course, in those days, the rescue squads, like the fire departments, were very territorial. I remember one night spending over thirty minutes on an Eastern Airlines 727 doing CPR with a stewardess (or are they all flight attendants now?) helping me.

In early 1978, medical calls were answered in either CT-1 (1957 Chevrolet pick-up) or CS-11 (1975 Plymouth Fury station wagon). For a while, we had one of the 'big green boxes' for the medical kit, and since we did not know exactly which unit we would take at any given time, the green jump kit was kept in the station. In 1979 CT-1 was replaced by a 1979 Chevrolet K-30 with the utility body (there is a picture of me and this truck with all of the equipment in one of Mike's Wake County Firefighting books) and shortly after the station wagon went to the police

department.

Apex EMS became part of the Town of Apex in March 2010. The merger into the town had been proposed several times but was not given the 'go ahead' until early 2009. It was originally supposed to take place in October 2009, but was postponed a couple of times until March 2010. In March 2011 it was proposed to turn EMS over to Wake County, but it was decided in June 2010 or so to retain EMS as an agency of the Town of Apex, but it was separated from the Apex Fire Department in FY2011-2012. There was only one ambulance that was ever lettered for "APEX FIRE & EMS", although all of them had the short-lived Apex Fire & EMS emblem on the doors.

Medical Transport Service (MTS) was the immediate successor to Beacon Ambulance. They had four ambulances for a while- two 1972 Pontiac/Superior 54" ambulances, a 1970 Cadillac/Miller-Meteor 48" ambulance, and a 1967(?) Oldsmobile/Cotner-Bevington combination car.

DJ - 01/15/14 - 23:21

Thanks DJ and Mike. That raises a good question, should my timeline track the introduction of rescue services in each of the fire departments as well? I will give that some thought!

Legeros - 01/15/14 - 23:51

For the list of convalescent/transport services, please add Metro Ambulance Service. They ran in the early 1990's and had an office in Raleigh and Benson. A lot of our local rescue and EMS personnel worked with them.

Jason Thompson ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 01/16/14 - 01:22

Random Thoughts About EMS and Stuff

1. Johnston Ambulance (now known as 'JAS') also maintained an office in Raleigh (they still do). During the late 1990s they were based in the same building as the 24-hour emergency veterinary clinic on South Wilmington Street.
2. A lot of fire apparatus also sported the Civil Defense logos. I remember specifically a 50's model Ford/Howe based in Fuquay-Varina. I don't ever remember seeing the Civil Defense logo on EMS or rescue trucks, other than the RFD Reo, but there were a couple of patches worn on uniforms that were based on the Civil Defense logo (I have a couple of those in my patch box).
3. Not sure if anyone around here used it, but when I was going to the NC Rescue College in Durham, there was an extrication device called "Cecil's Rig" that was demonstrated several times. Apparently, a rescue squad member from the western part of NC named Cecil designed it.
4. Sometime during the 70s the Garner panel truck was replaced by a Chevrolet Step-Van, which was later sent to 50-210 Comm. FD.
5. One year during the Garner Fireman's Day parade (late 60s/ early 70s) an ambulance from Overby FH was included. It was a mid 60's Ford station wagon, light blue, with the single Federal 17 Beacon Ray light, plus red headlight bulbs.
6. One of the EMS agencies around here had a red station wagon that was used as an ambulance in the late 60s. Growing up in SE Raleigh I used to see it driving out New Bern Avenue with lights and sirens, but it went by so fast that I never saw the name on it.
7. Saw several patients transported on the RFD rescue units, especially the 1966 Chevrolet.
8. Cary Area RS originally carried their Hurst tool on their second ambulance, a 1973 or 1974 Chevrolet/Murphy, which was based on the design of the Swab ambulances. They transferred it to the original #581, which was a 1975 or so F350 (later sold to Fuquay-Varina RS, then acquired by the Town of Holly Springs, and later seen in private ownership in Holly Springs). When I joined CARS in 1979, the old Chevy/Murphy (#572) had a permanent 'lean' which a couple of older members told me came from carrying the old Hurst tool which was a beast.

DJ - 01/16/14 - 18:17

One memory I have is of RESCOM dispatching us out at Clayton. Back then EVERYONE regionally was on 155.280 and if they needed Clayton then RESCOM paged us out. I also remember units having to request "10-39 clearance" to come through Raleigh. You would give your route of travel to RESCOM and after a pause would receive, "No known obstructions at this time, you are cleared authority of PD Raleigh." I may even have some tapes somewhere with that on there. I have some audio recordings of dispatches from the 80's and early 90's on cassette tape in storage. I also remember the dispatcher having to "Patch" you to the hospital on the UHF med channels. It seems like it was most commonly Med 7 or Med 5 and then dispatch was on Med 9 for city units.

Jason Thompson ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 01/17/14 - 05:37

Going way back, it seems like the only folks not on 155.280 around here were Orange County, Durham County, and Franklin County. The Town of Cary also was dispatched on a different channel, and Cary Area Rescue Squad was dispatched on that channel. Otherwise, from our perch out at RDU, we could hear Moore, Lee, Chatham, Granville, Nash, Johnston, Wayne, and Harnett Counties (or at least specific agencies in those counties) all dispatching their local "rescue monitors" or "rescue pagers", telling them to "go 10-8, go 10-8". The radio power of some of those dispatch points was pretty strong- people I know from down around Washington and Plymouth had heard "Selma PD, Selma Rescue, Selma PD, Selma Rescue, go 10-8, go 10-8, you have a rescue call". Locally, I remember hearing Apex, Wendell, Zebulon, and Wake Forest all dispatched by their local PD on 155.280.

JT- I had forgotten all about "clearing" through Raleigh. Used to hear them call it out on Raleigh One (RPD)- "Attention all units, clearing 10-52 Clayton Rescue, 10-39 to Wake ER, KSC-446".

Sigh...vast repository of useless facts...

DJ - 01/17/14 - 09:25

Yep....155.280....KUZ732, WZX555, KNCM293 Raleigh Rescom.....not to mention KIQ206 and KII313

:)

Mike Hodgson - 01/17/14 - 23:12

KSZ446, WNCK345

Russell - 01/18/14 - 08:43

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