

## Help Wanted with Wake County EMS History

12/13/13 1393 W - + 8 - 2

One of my holiday projects is compiling an unofficial history of Wake County EMS. The format is timeline. The milestones include facilities, vehicles, units, protocols, and notable personnel. Can you assist? Commence adding commences, or drop me a private message as desired! It's also been posted to the [History of EMS in Wake County Facebook group](#), if you prefer that forum. Thanks in advance for facts, dates, memories, minutiae, or anything in-between! (Wait, what about all the other rescue squads in Wake County, and their histories? Relax, we'll be working on those at a later time, in a later posting.)

### History of Wake County EMS

#### Pre-History Part 1

The first ambulance providers in Raleigh (and Wake County) were funeral homes. In 1953, the Raleigh Fire Department formed a rescue squad, though for first aid and rescue purposes. (They were not intended to compete with ambulance providers.) In 1962, the first county rescue squad was formed in Wendell.

Private ambulance companies replaced Funeral Homes as the primary provider(s) in Raleigh, with Beacon Ambulance Service (formed in 1967) dominating the industry by the early 1970s. They later received county subsidies for their service to Raleigh citizens.

#### Pre-History Part 2

1976

Ambulance provider for Raleigh residents is Beacon Ambulance Service, which also answered calls in Wake County. RFD has two rescue trucks, which can also transport patients if needed. Neither BAS or RFD are providing much in the way of advanced first aid.

BAS receives a county subsidy, and in 1976 they requested an increase from the prior year. This and other issues compels city and county officials to consider options for a better/best combination ambulance and EMS service for Raleigh residents.

First proposal is a joint city-county rescue medic program which would add EMT-staffed ambulances to RFD. Four units are proposed, plus the two existing rescue units. They would respond in Raleigh, and some areas outside the city limits. The plan is not adopted.

County officials proceed (as alternate? As parallel project?) with creation of a county-run ambulance and emergency medical service for residents of Raleigh.

\*\* 1976-1979

1976

July 15, 1976 - All employees have been hired, training takes place over a month:

#### Administrative staff:

Director Russell Capps

Chief Supervisor Jesse Glenn

Secretary Pauline Wood

Billing Office[r] Callie Johnson

#### Twenty-one field EMTs:

A-Shift - Alan Harris, Roger Couch, Dennis Ellis, Eddie Godwin, Bill Green, Fred Hutchins, Jimmy Mallard, Norm Ramsey.

B-Shift - John Servis, Gene Barry, Carson Brame, Barry Bunn, V. J. Hilliard, Jorge Olivia, Rick Paratski, Wallace Piper.

C-Shift – Fred Loy, Linwood Barham, Jerry Brown, Mike Hall, Harold Hamilton, Rick Holland, M. T. Johnson, Donald Powell.

Medical Director is Douglas I. Hammer, from Rex Hospital

August 15, 1976 - Wake County EMS placed in service.

- Response area is within Raleigh city limits.
- Provides Basic Life Support (BLS) level of care.
- Four ambulances, all SWAB.
- For the first few weeks (months?), all units respond out of Station: EMS 1, EMS 2, EMS 3, EMS 4.
- Support vehicles are parked in-between bay spots.

- Three station soon in service:

Station 1 - 201 W. Martin Street, one-story garage/warehouse building built 1925. One-bay building that could hold five (?) vehicles.

- EMS 1, EMS 4 .

Station 2 - 513 E. Whitaker Mill Road, Wake County Group Home (or was it Wake County Public Health?) (today Mayview Convalescent).

- EMS 2.
- Personnel occupied a room (single?) on the south side of the second floor, with outside staircase to side parking lot.

Station 3 - 5305 Six Forks Road, former Six Forks Volunteer Fire Department building, built 1962.

- EMS 3.

1976-1980

Training department created, Training Officer hired, work begins on ALS program.

\*\* 1980-1989

1980

First Responder program at RFD expands city-wide. The program was created over four years.

1981

EMT-Intermediate implemented.

Joseph Zalkin hired in November 1981, assigned unit number 105.

1983

Station 2 completed at 2024 Noble Road.

1984

EMT-Paramedic implemented.

From 1981 to 1985, the ALS program is developed. Wake County EMS conducted continuous classes on EMT-Intermediate, followed by three nine-month EMT-Paramedic classes. First two paramedic classes are held for Wake County EMS members. Third class paramedic class included members from county rescue squads. After 1985, the paramedic education program was transferred to Wake Technical Community College. During the process of training paramedics for county rescue squads, Wake County EMS paramedics are placed at county squads. This takes place over about two years, after which time the county squads have their own medics. The Wake County EMS medics are reassigned to Wake County EMS units.

1988

Snapshot:

In November 1988, the organization operated from three stations. Station 1 at 201 W. Martin Street houses three ambulances (EMS 1, EMS 4, EMS 5), and shift supervisor (EMS 103, EMS 104, EMS 105, depending on who was working. They are personally assigned unit numbers). Station 2 at 2024 Noble Road houses two ambulances (EMS 2 and EMS 6). Station 3 at 5305 Six Forks Road houses EMS 3. Each ambulance staffed with two paramedics.

The organization was led by Director Gerald Brown (EMS 100). He supervised Operations Director Linwood Barham (EMS 101) and two Training Officers, Joseph Zalkin (lead) and Steve Gardner (assistant).

1989

Station 5 completed at 4704 Hargrove Road.

\*\* 1990-1999

1990

Station 4 completed at 4017 District Drive.

December 1990 - EMS 6 placed in service at airport, in a retrofitted old house on east side of Airport Boulevard, just south of Aviation Parkway. Ambulance is stored in A-frame garage building with single door that was added to site.

1991

Station 1 completed at Public Safety Center at 330. S. Salisbury Street. Four bays, each two vehicles deep. EMS station faces Davie Street. The facility also houses administrative offices of Wake County EMS.

February 1991 - Wake County EMS assumes primary service in Fuquay-Varina. EMS 9 deployed shortly thereafter.

1994

Second district supervisor added, with two per shift. They are assigned the unit numbers 104 and 105.

1994-95

Wake County EMS extends service to Rolesville and Wake Forest.

District Chief placed in service in Rolesville.

EMS 10 placed in service to provide service to Wake Forest. Housed at Northern Wake Hospital, and later WFFD Station 1.

1997

Station 6 opens on National Guard Drive at the airport. Houses EMS 6.

1998

Station 7 completed at 2910 Kidd Road.

Station 10 completed at 706 S. Franklin Street in Wake Forest.

Wake County EMS provides one full-time paramedic and ALS supplies to Holly Springs Fire Department, which begins EMS service on April 1, 1998. The town provides on ambulance, driver, and BLS equipment. The ambulance is operated for over a decade.

1999

Station 8 completed at 1361 Varsity Drive.

\*\* 2000-2009

2003

Wake County EMS has total staff of 170, including full- and part-time personnel.

2005

March 2005, Skip Kirkwood named Director of Wake County EMS. Fourth person to hold position.

2006 (?)

Radio system changed from UHF to 800 mhz VIPER system.

2007

April (?) - Truck 1 placed in service at Station 1, a 2007 Sterling/Hackney heavy rescue. WCEMS begins (?) providing responder rehab at

incidents. Truck also has MCI capabilities.

First call answered on April 17, 2007, to house fire on Fayetteville Road in Fuquay-Varina.

November 28, 2007 - New Wake County EMS System unit numbering becomes effective.

- Ambulances are numbered EMS 1 through EMS 39, including Holly Springs ambulance now EMS 17.

- District Chiefs are District 1, District 2, District 3

- Administrative Chiefs are Chief 100 through Chief 109

- Operations Chiefs are Chief 200, Chief 201

- Special Event Chief is Chief 202

- Medical Director staff is MD-1, MD-2, MD-20

2008

Wake County reorganizes all county departments, and Wake County EMS became its own department. Dr. Brent Myers, the EMS System Medical Director, appointed as the new EMS Director.

2009

January 6, 2009 - APP program placed in service. First units are M91, M92, M93, (and others?).

October 13, 2009 - DC4 placed in service, operated by Six Forks EMS.

\*\* 2010 to present

2010

May 31 (?), 2010 - Garner EMS ceases operation. Wake County EMS assumes role of provider for their response area.

Three units placed in service: EMS 16 at GFD 2, EMS 18 at GFD 3, EMS 19 at GFD 4.

November 8, 2010 - Durant Road EMS station opens at 10000 Durant Road. Houses EMS 15, which had been based outside RFD 22 for several years. Also houses EMS 33 at night, relocated from SHFD 1.

2011

May 3, 2011 - Six Forks EMS ceases operation. Wake County EMS assumes role of provider for response area. Four units placed in service: EMS 34 at facility on Mt. Herman Road (0800-2000), EMS 35 parked at RFD 17 (0800-2000), EMS 36 at Bay Leaf 3 (full-time unit), EMS 22 at Bay Leaf 2 (full-time unit). DC4 remains in service, continues to operate from Bay Leaf 3. Some (all?) SFEMS assets transferred to county.

December 29, 2011 - North Hills EMS station at 5305 Six Forks Road closed, after damage from vehicle fire. EMS 3 relocated Six Forks Main EMS station at 1431 Lynn Road.

2012

June 12, 2012 - North Hills EMS station re-opens.

Date? - First 2012 Ford Explorer placed in service for APP, replacing Dodge Charger.

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June 30, 2005 Zebulon and Knightdale EMS agencies merge into Wendell Rescue in anticipation of merger on July 1, 2005. Wendell Rescue was the surviving agency and began operation as Eastern Wake EMS on July 1, 2005

**Brandon** - 12/14/13 - 15:11

Truck 1 ran it's first call on April 17, 2007 to a house fire on Fayetteville Rd in Fuquay.

February 1991 EMS assumed primary service in Fuquay. EMS-9 deployed shortly afterwards.

More will come...

**Olson** - 12/18/13 - 22:02

Name: (real name preferred)

E-mail: (optional)

Web Site: (optional)

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No

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