



TOWN OF CANTON VOLUNTEER Fire & EMS Department



Valuing Life...at a Moment's Notice

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution

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Canton's New Ambulance Officially Launched at Sam Collins Day *Residents, Organizations & Businesses Raised Nearly \$130,000.00 Towards Purchase*

Canton, CT September 20, 2008.... In a town that regularly celebrates the richness of its history and community, what better place to acknowledge the generosity of Canton's residents, organizations and businesses than at the annual Sam Collins Day.

So, for a few moments the music stopped and people gathered around the Main Stage to listen to Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department Fire Chief Richard Hutchings, publicly thank local business man Jim Volovski for spearheading a fundraiser that collected over \$130,000.00 for a new ambulance.

Volovski, owner of Stone Man Masonry Company, in turn thanked the friends, neighbors, social organizations and business owners whose donations paid for over 75% of the total costs for the new ambulance.

The Reverend Jon Widing, a Canton volunteer EMT, asked all gathered to, "pause for reflection, a word of thanksgiving and a blessing of dedication." Widing gave thanks for the "ambulance angels" and so many in the community who "looked beyond their own needs to give so that others in need, sickness or injury may be assisted and transported to hospitals of care." *(please see attached excerpts of the blessing, below.)*

"We are extremely proud of this new ambulance," began Hutchings. "It was put on the road through the generosity of and as a show of respect from our community."

"Because of this generosity," added Linda Scarchuk a veteran volunteer EMT, "we're able to have the type of ambulance that will not only facilitate our work, but also make it much safer. We've come a long way since we responded to calls in a converted Cadillac."

A Cadillac? In 1957, the Canton Memorial Ambulance *was* a converted Cadillac. This was an upgrade from the first ambulance, a converted 1949 Dodge limousine, which made its maiden voyage in December, 1950.

That first 'sed ambulance' was purchased in much the same way as 2008's ambulance; through the generous contributions of local businesses, organizations and individuals. Total cost? \$4,000.00. At that time, the Canton Memorial Ambulance charged \$5.00 for local calls and slightly more for non-residents on mutual aid calls to Burlington, Simsbury, New Hartford and Avon.

From its initial ride, the Canton Memorial Ambulance was making history:

- It was the *first* volunteer ambulance to serve the Farmington Valley.
- In the 1980's, it became the *first* volunteer ambulance service certified to perform *advanced life support* emergency medical treatment in the Farmington Valley.
- In 1985, Canton's volunteer EMTs were the *first* to request the *Life Star* helicopter – *4 hours after its debut in Connecticut*. Canton's EMTs thus added working beneath whirling copter blades to their resume of specialty skill sets.

Fast forward to 2008. Perhaps the best way to describe the new ambulance is to borrow from the Olympic credo of *faster, higher, stronger*. It's built on a Chevy chassis C-4500, which is a significant step up from the previous ambulance. This upgrade provides the ambulance with more power to get over Avon Mountain, for example, even with a full crew on board.

Looking to increase security and efficiency, the Ambulance Planning Committee, comprised of Hutchings, Scarchuk and veteran EMT Mike Zimmerman, also purchased an enhanced safety package which includes a camera to assist in backing up the vehicle and high visibility detailing on the outside of the rig. A GPS navigation system is another new feature; an invaluable asset not only given all of the new real estate developments in Canton, but also for mutual aid calls to neighboring towns.

Canton has 17 volunteer EMTs and an additional 9 voluntary EMTs who *also* have certifications as volunteer firefighters. EMT training involves a formal certification process which requires 140 of skills training at the 'Basic' level. Additional training can lead to 'Intermediate' certification where EMTs perform advanced medical treatment. All training is free of charge to volunteer members.

"Canton's volunteer EMTs and firefighters respond to over 1,000 emergency calls per year - *24 hours a day, 7 days per week*," states Hutchings. "So, when you call 911 at 2:00 in the morning, remember, those are volunteers - leaving their own homes and families - coming to your rescue as they've done for the past 58 years for so many others."

"At a time when so many people are looking out for themselves, the commitment and skill of our volunteer EMTs and firefighters never ceases to inspire and amaze me," concluded Hutchings. "Obviously, given the generosity of our community in donating this new ambulance to our Department, others feel the same way too."

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department can visit www.cantonfireandems.org, email recruitment@cantonfireandems.org or drop by the Collinsville, North Canton or Canton firehouses any Monday evening during the Department's weekly practice drill at 7:30 p.m.

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Blessing for Town of Canton Volunteer Fire & EMS Department's New Ambulance
(excerpts)

We bless the Town of Canton Memorial Ambulance. May it be as true in design as in operation and service and prove over the coming years to be a safe, reliable, resilient and enduring vehicle of rescue and transfer.

May those who ride in it as emergency medical technicians, do so with skill and discernment; working with confidence and quick, decisive action.

May those transported as patients find their lives sustained, supported and delivered swiftly and safely to hospitals of care.