

# THE BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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## Board of Commissioners

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## Garrett County Government Press Release September 13, 2016

As with many volunteer organizations, it's becoming more difficult for our rescue squads to recruit and retain personnel to meet the demands of a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or paramedic.

In 2015 the county's emergency medical services responded to 3,917 calls for service, a 16% increase over 2014 calls (3,284).

The Board of Garrett County Commissioners is committed to providing the highest level of emergency medical services available and has authorized the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management to implement a plan for the County to provide emergency medical services to supplement the volunteer rescue squads.

Garrett County Emergency Services has begun operations as Company 11, Medic 951 and Chase 11 and will be dispatched for all calls within the McHenry first due service area and provide back-up to the entire County. The operations will be housed, on a temporary basis, at the Deep Creek Volunteer Fire Company.

### History of Emergency Medical Services in Garrett County

In 2006, the Garrett County Emergency Services SWOT Task Force (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) in conjunction with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) reviewed the emergency medical services system in the county. This report, and a follow-up study completed in April 2015 made several recommendations, including:

1. Consider consolidation of stations
2. First and Second due crews in station at all times
3. Consolidation of ALS into a single county system – all under the County.
4. Since 2008 Garrett County has provided paid, career Emergency Medical Technicians/Advance Life Support Technicians to supplement coverage at both Northern and Southern Garrett Rescue Squads.

In 2008, the County began providing paid EMS personnel to the volunteer rescue squads to supplement their volunteer staff. The original agreement was to provide one (1) paid EMT/Paramedic from 6:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. The squad was responsible for manning the ambulance at all other times.

Since then the program has evolved to include coverage when the rescue squads are unable to fill a particular shift. This means the County provided some level of emergency services coverage seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day.

Even with the increase in County staffing, we still experienced problems providing adequate volunteer coverage at the volunteer rescue squads and delays in providing adequate emergency medical services.

The Board of Garrett County Commissioners approved a county-wide approach to emergency medical services. The intent of the plan is to supplement volunteer staffing while encouraging continued volunteer support and to ensure citizens and visitors to the county continue to receive the best emergency care possible.

Garrett County Emergency Services Company 11 will be staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week by county career emergency services personnel. The staff will operate an ambulance and chase vehicle out of the Deep Creek Volunteer Fire Department and provide first due coverage to the McHenry service area as well as back-up to the rest of the County.

The County will continue to provide county career emergency medical personnel to Northern and Southern Rescue Squads.

### **Budgetary Considerations**

Staffing: In FY 2015 Garrett County Emergency Services had 16 emergency services personnel, ten full-time and six part-time providers. In order to provide the additional coverage, the Department recently hired twelve additional emergency services providers; five full-time and seven part-time personnel.

During the FY 2017 budget process the Public Safety/Emergency Services budget was increase by \$876,901 to \$1,517,854 as the County began working to develop a comprehensive plan to provide adequate emergency medical coverage for the entire County.

