
Best Practices in Emergency Services

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On Community Service

February 2003

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While working on a project at Fort Wayne Fire Station Number 4, I heard the radio crackle. I couldn't hear exactly what was said, but it sounded like something about being "on patrol." I asked EMS Chief Bob Amber what was said, and he replied, "School's getting out, and they are just going out on patrol." When he saw the perplexed look on my face, he explained: "At the beginning and end of every school day, all of our rigs that aren't on calls go out and drive around the elementary and junior high schools in the city. It's just to make things a little safer for the kids. You know how things are these days."

I don't know about you, but in my 28+ years in this business, I've never heard of a program like this. It turns out that it is just one of dozens of little extra things that the Fort Wayne Fire Department quietly does to serve the community. They offer blood pressure checks at each of their stations. They raise more money per capita for muscular dystrophy than any other fire department in America. Their Safety Village, in which they cooperate with the police department, trains tens of thousands of young children each year how to escape from a house fire, how to be a safe pedestrian and how to call 911.

Fort Wayne Fire Department offers these community services both matter-of-factly and humbly. What kinds of things does your organization do for your community that have nothing to do with responding to calls or generating good PR?

This publication is about best practices. Fort Wayne Fire Department is the best I've seen in this category. Of course, I haven't seen everything. If your organization has a cool, community service practice that would surprise others, please pass it along, and we'll see if we can spread the idea around.

Contact Mike at www.emsleader.com.

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