

## REGION 2 – Northern NY

CORINTH TOWN, Saratoga County, has begun operating the Town and Village of Corinth EMS, also known as the Jessup's Landing squad, under a temporary two year Municipal Certificate of Need. In order to avoid the significant costs involved in converting the temporary CON into a permanent one it is contesting the sale of Corinth Emergency Squad's Ambulance Operating Authority to Empire Ambulance Service, a commercial provider. Corinth severed its relationship with the volunteer squad over a dispute about paid paramedics provided by the town and took back the ambulance it owned. On 10/24/11 the Hudson-Mohawk Valleys Regional EMS Council voted 11 to 0 with 7 abstentions to oppose the proposed sale to Empire. The council also questioned whether the certificate was valid since Corinth EMS hasn't been active in the previous 30 days, having last responded to a call in June. In its last days the volunteer squad reportedly hired Empire to respond to calls. This may be a non-issue as there is no indication the NYS DOH held a hearing to revoke to certificate. The proposed transfer now goes to the NYS DOH for review and decision.

ELIZABETHTOWN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL (ECH), Essex County, has obtained a NYS DOH Ambulance Operating Certificate and is operating a new ambulance service. It had previously relied on CVPH Medical Center's Westport based ambulance or a private service such as Varin's for interfacility transports but CVPH now has its ambulances based in Plattsburgh. Waiting 40 minutes for a transport unit and then another 40 minute drive to another facility was not acceptable. The Type II van ambulance was purchased in late 2011 and the hospital hired a driver, full time AEMT-CC and part time AEMT-CC to staff it and work in the Emergency Department when not on the ambulance. Other hospital staff are on call for evening and overnight coverage. Trauma, stroke and other critical transports are taken to Fletcher Allen's Level 1 Regional Trauma Center in Burlington, VT by medivac helicopter.

ESSEX COUNTY's radio system replacement project is moving forward with \$1.7 million of a \$10 million bond issue allocated to buy microwave equipment for the new county communications network's radio towers. \$24,800 was also allocated to buy Daniels Electronics VHF low-band radios to be used for emergency paging. Purchases of vehicle radios, consoles and base radios will follow. Local news reports indicate the county is replacing a 1950's era analog system with a digital network. Fire, EMS and other emergency responders will use VHF low-band frequencies for initial dispatch and VHF high-band frequencies for communications between mobile units and with the 911 Center in Lewis. The system design calls for 95% radio coverage throughout the county through a network of 17 tower sites. NYS Electric & Gas, NYS Police and others will contribute \$1.4 million in exchange for placing their antennas on the county's towers. With timely agreement from the Adirondack Park Agency, the system is expected to be operational by Spring 2013.

JEFFERSON COUNTY is reportedly seeking to establish its own medivac helicopter program through a private company as an alternative to calling on Onondaga County Sheriff's resources. The plan is for residents to buy a subscription through a company which would transport them in time of need without further cost. The problem is that such subscriptions programs are considered by the NYS Department of Financial Services to be insurance that can only be sold by licensed insurance companies. Ground ambulance services have already gone this route and had to discontinue subscription programs. Bills were introduced in the Senate and Assembly last year that would exempt air ambulance subscription services from the definition of an insurance company but stalled in the Assembly.

LEWIS COUNTY is making plans to upgrade its radio system after a reviewing the results of a \$53,000 study. The present system has a number of deficiencies including spotty coverage in many areas of the county, little interoperability between emergency agencies and the need to implement narrowband frequencies. According to a local news report, the study by a company called Federal Engineering, provided two cost estimates, one at \$6.4 million and the other at \$11.6 million. Both estimates included a new transmitter system, four new towers, equipment for all paid and volunteer emergency personnel, site development project management and contingency costs. The lower estimate figured in shorter

towers, one fewer console at the dispatch center, minimal costs for acquisition of tower sites and lower-tier user equipment. NY Office of Homeland Security officials are slated to visit Lewis County to look over the present radio system and equipment and county officials then plan to submit an application for funding to help start the upgrade process. More than \$20 million was awarded in the initial round of funding for emergency communication projects throughout the state, and Federal Engineering officials said there will be three more rounds later this year. Narrowbanding costs are projected at about \$75,000 and will be handled separately from the radio system upgrades, since narrowbanding will need to be in place by 1/1/13.