

## **DISTRICT 7 – Suffolk County**

COMMACK VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE, Suffolk County, has approached town officials in Huntington and Smithtown about funding a \$5.2 million dollar expansion of its present quarters in Huntington. Construction would include a new ambulance bay and sleeping quarters for emergency crews. Newsday indicates the ambulance corps wants to finance the expansion by issuing tax-exempt bonds through Huntington Town's Local Development Corporation with taxes collected by the two towns from residents served by the squad going towards paying off the bonds. Formal proposals have not yet been submitted and no official reaction to the idea has been reported. Commack VAC serves residents in Commack, East Northport, Elwood, Hauppauge, Huntington and Smithtown with about two-thirds of area in the Town of Smithtown and one-third in the Town of Huntington. It operates four ALS ambulances and three ALS First Responder vehicles responding to about 2,700 calls annually.

FISHERS ISLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT, Suffolk County, is involved in developing a pilot distributive learning on-line web based EMT training course. The Suffolk County DOH EMS Division worked with the Town of Southold IT Department on the project which is pending NYS DOH approval. Fishers Island FD then has to have a critical mass of students before proceeding.

PATCHOGUE AMBULANCE COMPANY, Suffolk County, is one of the latest services to consider billing patients. Established in 1934, the organization has grown to the Advanced Life Support level serving the Village of Patchogue, Blue Point and portions of East Patchogue. Staffing includes both paid and volunteer members. The current half million dollar budget is covered by village taxes.

PORT JEFFERSON VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE, Suffolk County, started billing patients in 2010. A Newsday article reports the service received \$491,000 from the Village of Patchogue in 2011 and was able to return \$80,000 recouped through insurance billing. Port Jefferson operates at the EMT-P level and serves Belle Terre, Mt. Sinai, and Port Jefferson.

SHELTER ISLAND TOWN, Suffolk County, has taken over the AEMT-CC level ambulance service formerly operated by the Shelter Island Chapter of the American Red Cross - the only EMS service in the country that was owned and operated by the Red Cross. The national Red Cross has been on a reorganization and consolidation program over the last few years combining some chapters, eliminating positions, cutting back services and raising fees and divestiture of the ambulance service was at the initiative of the central organization. The Shelter Island ambulance service was begun in 1936 with a special built Packard which accommodated a wheelchair. \$59,350 was allocated in the 2012 municipal budget to run the Town of Shelter Island Emergency Medical Service, however, costs may be significantly higher as a paid executive director and assistant is planned to replace the former volunteer CEO who oversaw 25 to 30 volunteer squad members. A local news report indicates there are "simmering doubts" among members of the Shelter Island Fire Department as to why they were not asked to take over the ambulance service.

SUFFOLK COUNTY DOH EMS DIVISION was facing a 2012 budget cut and layoffs but a major effort seems to have resulted in the restoration of funding. Among the measures proposed was cutting the EMS Division's budget which could have involved laying off 3 Senior Instructors out of a total staff of 11 employees. Some legislators have even proposed selling off assets including the H. Lee Dennison Building in Hauppauge where the EMS Division has offices. The EMS Division is a critical part of the county's EMS system, involved with instruction and certification courses, mutual aid, communications, medical control and major support for REMSCO and REMAC. Other budget resolutions, however, could have an effect on the EMS Course Sponsorship of the Suffolk County Police Academy. There is concern that the program could be shut down, civilian instructors split between the DOH EMS Division and the Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services (FRES) and EMT training for police officers changed to CFR level or eliminated completely.

