

## **The Community Ambulance Service of Preston/Miles Kick-off Fund Raiser**

Community Ambulance Service of Preston/Miles is kicking off a major fund raiser to purchase two much needed ambulances. The service was founded in 1976 by a group of community volunteers who recognized the need for Emergency Medical Services in Preston, Goose Lake, Miles, Spragueville and the surrounding areas. This EMS service is not affiliated with the fire departments or cities. Community Ambulance Service is an independent, volunteer service.

The first ambulance for this service was a Cadillac Hearse donated by Reynold Miller. Several of the founding group of volunteers is still active members on the service today. Over the years this group of volunteers has served a 15-mile radius of territory, providing emergency medical care to individuals of all ages. Care is provided no matter the age of person or the medical condition requiring care. The volunteers respond no matter what time of day or night in all types of weather providing 24 hr/day 365day/yr coverage. It requires three trained personal to take each ambulance on a run. That means that the volunteers on this service put in a total of 504 hours in just one week and 26,208 hours in a year.

The mission of all the volunteers that serve on Community Ambulance is to provide the highest quality of care to the people in our communities. We are committed to this goal. In order to do this, the equipment used needs to remain current and dependable. This includes the ambulances in which the care is provided.

Just 10 years ago, the cost to replace an ambulance would have cost somewhere around \$90,000. Today we are looking at a cost of \$135,000 to \$150,000. This is not replacing any of the medical equipment required by the medical personnel to provide care. The cost of medical equipment is high also. For example, the cots used to move people from the home or accident scene into the back of the ambulance run between \$7,000 and \$15,000 each. The cost of one cardiac monitor and defibrillator is even higher--\$30-35,000.

Medicare and Medicaid payments in the past did not come close to meeting the cost of making an ambulance run. It is very difficult to determine how cuts that are coming in health coverage will affect the ambulance service, but we do know it won't be positive. Insurance companies follow Medicare's lead in determining payment trends. The Community Ambulance Service is not tax-supported, so the residents in our area are not taxed to pay the cost of maintaining the service. Both Jackson and Clinton Board of Supervisors each year pay a small subsidy to the service, but this does not amount to much over \$10,000.

The ambulances that Community Ambulance currently use are in need of replacement. Three ambulances are part of this service. They range in age from 13 to 20 years old. All of these ambulances are having reliability issues, which could affect our ability to respond to your call.

We are asking for the communities to support us in this endeavor. We all know economically times are tough. A group of community leaders has volunteered to undertake this fundraising to guarantee that our families and friends continue to have Emergency Medical Services in a timely manner, without the delay of waiting for an ambulance to have to be dispatched from Maquoketa, Clinton or Bellevue. Please be generous in helping us to meet our fundraising goal.