

EDITORIALS

Start planning now to maintain paramedics

Many people in the Back Mountain are justifiably concerned that Wyoming Valley Health Care System (WVHCS) may discontinue its support of paramedic services. They know — by instinct or personal experience — that the medical care furnished by paramedics can make the difference between life and death for victims of accident or illness. This sentiment is in no way meant to denigrate the important role played by volunteer ambulance personnel, who give constantly of their time and skills to serve anyone in need. Paramedics, though, operate at a higher level and are able to provide functions to critically ill or injured people beyond the "basic life support" of emergency medical technicians (EMTs). Local EMTs save several lives every year; paramedics save several more.

The Medic units and staff are under the same fiscal microscope that is pointed at other departments within the health system. Losing millions each year, WVHCS is weighing the costs and benefits of each one before deciding which to pare away and which to maintain. As the recent turnaround in its cardiac unit and food service units show, WVHCS is not unresponsive to public concerns, so the petitions that are filling with names around town may have some effect.


If the protests are to no avail, other options must be looked at so this vital service can continue. Many communities are served by for-profit paramedic units, with the cost coming from municipal treasuries. In other cases, volunteer ambulance companies have added paramedics, although that would not seem to offer that same breadth of coverage we're accustomed to.

One need not be a rocket scientist to understand that Back Mountain communities cannot each support a paramedic service, and cooperation will be required should it become necessary to take over this vital function. There's no time like the present for officials and volunteers to lay the groundwork for a replacement.



Ode to Georgia O'Keefe. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

Publisher's notebook



Ron Bartizek

Skyrocketing prices, purported shortages — can long lines at the gas station be far behind? To anyone over 30, this is, as Yogi Berra once said, "deja vu all over again."

Those of us who carried driving licenses in 1972 are familiar with high prices and shortages, real or contrived. If you are one of us, you remember long lines, eight gallon limits and prices of more than \$1 a gallon, probably equivalent to \$3 or more now. I was luckier than most people — I worked at a service station, and after hours we would shut down all the lights but leave the pumps on so we could fill our tanks under cover of darkness. We needed to be stealthy because the police were authorized to arrest anyone putting more than eight gallons in at a time. But we knew most of the cops anyway, so ending up in the hoosegow wasn't a real worry.


Then came the second "oil shock," in 1979. We lived in Lakeville, Connecticut at that time, in an apartment behind the drug store on Main Street. Since the store was directly in front of our apartment, we could see the street only from side windows. I woke up one morning, looked out the window on one side, and remarked about the line of cars. "Must be an accident," I thought. So I went to the window on the other side, and saw the line's source, a gas station! "Here we go again," I muttered. A few months later, when prices were still high due to dubious tight supplies, we drove down the East Coast to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. On the way, we crossed the Chesapeake Bay Bridge/Tunnel, and saw dozens of tankers lined up in the bay. Made us wonder about the "shortage."

Things could be worse. The 70s also saw price runups and shortages in coffee. That's when 1 lb. coffee tins shrank to 13 oz., and blends incorporating chicory became the only brand less expensive per ounce than gold.

The most memorable phantom shortage, though, was toilet paper. Now there's a precious commodity. How many of you recall hoarding rolls after once finding the shelves at your local store empty? This one turned out to be a documented hoax, but not before millions of rolls were stored in closets.

I wonder, if we started a rumor about a news shortage, would more people buy the paper? It might be worth a try.

The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

The question of the location of new economic development is an important factor in the fiscal health of communities. This is especially true in the so-called bedroom communities of Northeastern Pennsylvania such as the Back Mountain, the Abingtons, Mountaintop area and others. There is a major industrial park sponsored and promoted by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry within one of these areas, Mountaintop; otherwise the suburban areas of the region have been home to residential development but have not attracted much economic development, except along the major highways in the form of strip commerce. The results have been a great dependence upon the property tax from homes or apartments to provide most of the funds necessary to support municipalities, school districts, and counties in these communities. It is a particularly relevant problem when local governments, as they

Shared services become more important

are today, are challenged with continuing growth and the need to expand services being demanded by citizens.

Most citizens recognize that most of the taxes generated by property goes to support local school districts. The push to create more inter-municipal services and to make it easier for communities to meet financial responsibilities becomes more clear when looked at from this perspective.

Some attempts have been made in the past in the Back Mountain and in other parts of suburban Northeastern Pennsylvania to encourage the joint delivery of services, such as police and others. For example, the Back Mountain Citizens' Council, when it existed, sponsored a survey of municipal governments in the Back Mountain looking toward the possibility of a regional police force. This was never implemented.

Two municipalities in the Clarks Summit area, Clarks Green Borough and Clarks Summit Borough, did some preliminary examination of the possibility and feasibility of merging, but this never happened.

Short of mergers and consolidations, there are many other opportunities for joint or inter-municipal service delivery which could be explored in the Back Mountain and other suburban

areas in this region.

Nowhere is it more important to explore new ideas and initiatives for service delivery than in these locations, where growth continues and where it is extremely difficult to know which municipality a traveler may be located in.

Technical support and assistance are available to communities considering joint delivery of services. Among these are the Pennsylvania Economy League, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP), the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Scranton Regional Office, higher educational institutions serving these areas, and other sources.

Several steps can be taken by a number of municipalities in the suburban areas of the region to begin an evaluation process. Among them are the following:

- Designate a committee of the local governing body to be specifically responsible for examining new opportunities for the delivery of services.
- Create a partnership with citizens and/or local institutions willing to have representation on a committee or task force designed to study this issue.
- Contact appropriate technical assistance or support organizations to determine their inter-

est in participating in some type of evaluation.

- Examine what has been accomplished elsewhere in the state or, where applicable, out of state to begin to assess examples of inter-municipal service delivery.

- Set a schedule and target date by which an evaluation can be completed.

- Organize a public information program to periodically inform the general public, all appropriate officials, and any other pertinent group which might be interested in the study, evaluation, and its results.

- Set a time schedule to obtain the necessary support for this process, and its results, and the implementation of recommendations.

Inter-municipal service delivery is not suitable for all regions. Some evaluation, however, would seem logical for most municipalities to undertake in order to determine what the best course of action would be for that municipality to meet its obligations and responsibilities in this, the 21st century, for the benefit of the citizens of today and the generations of tomorrow.

Howard Grossman is Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - June 20, 1930 SOLOMON'S RESTAURANT BURNS TO THE GROUND

Solomon's Restaurant, formerly the Lake Breeze boarding house in Harveys Lake burned to the ground. The building was unoccupied at the time. Volunteer firemen organized a bucket brigade which fought the fire until the pumping engine of the Lake fire department arrived at the scene. In spite of the large amounts of water pumped from the lake to extinguish the blaze, the building could not be saved. Traffic around the Lake was tied up for over an hour by the line of hose that was stretched across the highway.

60 Years Ago - June 21, 1940 MOTORISTS NOT OBEYING STOP SIGNS

Concerned by complaints that

motorists in the borough were ignoring stop signs, particularly on Machell Avenue and Huntsville Street, Chief of Police Walter Covert was instructed to watch for violators. Several people had had narrow escapes when motorists had driven through the stop signs.

Sportsmen from the area who made frequent trips to Canada to hunt ducks were dismayed by the announcement that they would not be permitted to carry firearms across the border, while the war was on. No passports were required to enter Canada to hunt, but passports were necessary for Canadian's entering this country.

50 Years Ago - June 23, 1950 DAIRY BARN CELEBRATED FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Forty Fort Ice Cream Company celebrated the first anniversary of the opening of its Dairy Barn by giving away one pint of Freezer Fresh ice cream with every half gallon purchase of any of its 16 flavors. Since opening, the Dairy Barn has served as many as 5,000 customers in one day.

A capacity crowd danced at the Kunkle Community Hall to the music of the Fire House Five for

the Jackson Township Volunteer Firemen's Dance. Over \$60 in prizes was given away at the second annual dance.

40 Years Ago - June 23, 1960 MCCRORY DEPARTMENT STORE OPENS IN DALLAS

The McCrory Department Store was set to open in the Back Mountain shopping center in August. Thomas Hobbs, store manager, planned to open the store with approximately 40-50 local employees. The store was expected to operate on a two-shift basis and be open every weeknight until 9 p.m.

A strawberry festival, sponsored by the Trucksville W.S.C.S. was held on the lawn of Mr. and Mrs. John Wardell. Barbecued baked beans, potato salad, hot dogs, ice cream, homemade cake and strawberry shortcake was served.

30 Years Ago - June 25, 1970 POST OFFICE RECEIVED FIRST JEEP

As part of the governments move to mechanize the nations post offices, Dallas Post Office received a new Jeep dispatcher. Eddie McDade who had been walk-

ing 12 miles a day with an ever-increasing load of mail, was selected to drive the new vehicle.

An \$8,656.60 contract for the purchase of band and majorette uniforms and accessories was awarded by the Dallas School Board at its June Meeting. The motion to purchase uniforms had been denied at a previous meeting, but was included in the school district's budget for 1970-1971.

20 Years Ago - June 19, 1980 COLLEGE FOR KIDS BEGINS

College For Kids-Kids On Campus, Inc., was offering an enrichment program at Penn State-Wilkes-Barre that allowed children to spend the day on campus during the summer. Students had a choice of taking civil engineering or ethnic singing, followed by Discover The Outdoors, where the children cooked their own lunch over a campfire.

You could get: Kraft Italian dressing, 16 oz. bottle, 99¢; Smucker's Peach Preserve, 12 oz. jar, 79¢; Lipton Ice Tea Mix, 64 oz. jar, \$4.59; Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, 10 pk., 89¢; Ellio's Pizza, 9 slices, \$2.29; Welch's grape jelly, 3 lb. jar, 99¢; Charmin toilet tissue, 6 pack, \$1.69; Log Cabin Buttered syrup, 24 oz. bottle, \$1.29.

Do you agree? Disagree?

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Q: Where do you find the most Back Mountain news, week after week?
A: Only in The Dallas Post, the Back Mountain's newspaper since 1889.