

The DALLAS POST

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS AND LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Dayna McCartney, LPN, helps a client with a self-administered blood glucose test at a free medical, legal and pastoral care clinic at the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly Church in Trucksville.

Bill would allow aides to use lights, signals

By REBECCA BRIA
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Response time for local emergency coordinators in the Back Mountain could be lessened if a proposed bill in the state senate passes.

Pennsylvania state senator Lisa Baker recently introduced a bill (Senate Bill 1121) that would give local emergency coordinators emergency responder status by amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. State law requires all municipalities to have a local emergency coordinator.

"Local emergency coordinators play a key role in assisting municipal officials and county emergency management coordinators in responding to natural and manmade disasters," Baker said. "However, because they are not currently designated as emergency responders, they cannot use auditory or visual vehicle warning signals. This is a safety hazard for the coordinators as well as to other drivers whom they encounter en route to the emergency or disaster location."

Harry Vivian has served as local emergency coordinator for Dallas Borough for the last four years. Members of borough council offered Vivian the non-paid position and he accepted. Vivian has been a firefighter for 24 years, is fire chief for Dallas Fire and Ambulance and has had extensive training and experience in emergencies.

Vivian says being a local emergency coordinator involves keeping emergency management information up-to-date. During larger scale emergencies, Vivian coordinates activity for the borough and integrates efforts with Luzerne County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Since the borough is small, Vivian is only called to emergencies as local emergency coordinator three to four times a year. In June 2006, Vivian helped assess flood damage in the borough and reported his findings to Luzerne County EMA. In mid-summer of the same year, he was called at night to a report of a flammable material off Huntsville Road.

For Vivian, emergency responder status would not affect

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Offering hope for free

By REBECCA BRIA
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IF YOU GO:

The Hope Center at Back Mountain Harvest Assembly, 340 Carverton Rd., Trucksville. Mondays 6-8 p.m. 696-1128.

A woman walked into the Hope Center in need of a physical exam. Having no health insurance and unable to afford a doctor, she came to receive the routine medical examination so she could apply for a Pennsylvania driver's license. In a short amount of time, the woman was seen by medical professionals and walked out with her signed forms - all for free.

The Hope Center at Back Mountain Harvest Assembly in Trucksville provides free medical, legal and pastoral care to area residents who do not have health insurance or are otherwise financially limited. Proof of income level is not required. Services are administered Monday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. in the "Blue House" across the parking lot from the main church building.

Ron Hillard, director of The Hope Center, says the faith-based clinic opened in February 2006 and is one of several in the Wyoming Valley that works with the Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO). Other clinics include those at St. Therese's Church in Shavertown, Good Shepherd Church in Wilkes-Barre and a soon-to-be opened clinic in Pittston. CEO provides the funding for the clinics and for Wilkes University to supply prescription medicines.

A doctor, nurse practitioner and nurses pro-

vide non-emergent medical care at The Hope Center. Though no laboratory work is available, throat cultures, pregnancy tests and urine tests are performed. Clinic volunteers help patients monitor blood sugar, blood pressure and chronic illnesses. In addition, the clinic will treat sick patients and provide free flu shots. All patient records are confidential and kept under lock and key.

If volunteers at The Hope Center cannot provide a person with certain medical care such as laboratory and dental work, they will refer them to the Rural Health Corporation of Northeast Pennsylvania. They also write generic prescriptions for medicines they do not have. Patients can get the generic medicines filled for about \$4 at large retail chains.

"What we try to do is a hand up, not a hand out," Hillard said.

Nurse Suzanne Hillard, Ron's wife, recalls three profound medical cases since the clinic opened. A man was diagnosed with an abdominal aneurism, a woman seeking help for high

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Clients, volunteers, legal and medical professionals gather in the waiting room at a free medical, legal and pastoral care center at the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly Church in Trucksville.



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100-year-old bridge will be replaced in spring

By REBECCA BRIA
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An old stone arch bridge on Marchakitus Road in Lehman Township is set to be replaced. The single-lane bridge was severely damaged in the flooding of June 2006.

Though the county-owned bridge is currently passable, it is over 100 years old and is a mere 10 to 12 feet wide. Joe Gibbons, Assistant County Engineer for Luzerne County, says construction on the new bridge will likely begin in the spring of 2008, though no date has been set. Once the project begins, it will last approximately 60-90 days.

"I'm just glad that the county's finally got the funds to do it," said Douglas Ide, Lehman Township supervisor.

Gibbons said Luzerne County will be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for costs incurred during the project.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

This old stone arch bridge on Marchakitus Road in Lehman Township is set to be replaced in the spring of 2008. The single-lane bridge was severely damaged in the flooding of June 2006. Here, Timmy Fender, a Luzerne County Road and Bridge employee, makes temporary repairs to the bridge.

In the meantime, Gibbons says the county chorded the bridge until a replacement can be built. The weight limit on the bridge was lowered to 10 tons after last year's flooding.

Ide says only a few homes are on Marchakitus Road, a lightly traveled dirt road, and only one home is located

between the bridge and Route 29. Most of the residents on the road live on the upper side of the bridge, with many residing in Lake Township and can access Route 118 via Cemetery Road. Ide does not think bridge construction will be a hardship for residents on the road.

RELAY FOR LIFE KICKS OFF TOMORROW



The Relay For Life of The Back Mountain will hold a kick-off event at 6 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 12, at the Back Mountain Memorial Library, 96 Huntsville Rd., Dallas. Relay is a 24-hour event to celebrate survivorship and raise funds for cancer research, education, advocacy and service programs. This year's event kicks off with food, fun and the 2008 theme announcement. The 2008 Relay For Life will be held May 30 and 31 at College Misericordia, Dallas. For more information, call 383-4701, ext. 3331 or e-mail Stephanie.Bombay@cancer.org. Helping to plan the kick-off event are, from left, first row, Heather Pitcavage, online chairman; Heather Mines, activities; and Michelle Casseteri, luminaria. Second row, Stephanie Bombay, American Cancer Society; Lynn Austin, mission development and advocacy; Bernice Richards, logistics and meeting secretary; Maureen Oremus, publicity and survivorship development; and Sue Halbash, luminaria.