

8-17-18

## **WJMC EMS to Make Donation to Build Living Quarters for EMS Crew in Rural Tennessee Area**

### **Board of Managers:**

Harry L. "Chip" Cahill, III  
Chairman

Frank C. Di Vincenti, M.D.  
Vice-Chairman

James E. Cramond  
Secretary-Treasurer

David F. Andignac  
Barry H. Bordelon  
Nancy R. Cassagne  
Damon M. Dietrich, M.D.  
Gregory C. Feirn  
Timothy P. Kerner  
William A. Lazaro, Jr.  
Byron L. Lee  
William L. Mimeles  
Dwayne J. Munch, Sr.  
Otholino Remedios, M.D.

**What:** West Jefferson Medical Center (WJMC) EMS will donate \$500 to the Wears Valley Volunteer Fire Department in Wears Valley, Tennessee to help build living quarters for EMS Crews that don't currently have 24/7 EMS service in the area.

### **Why:**

Devastation... it's something our area is very familiar with... hurricanes, flooding, natural disasters. It's something the WJMC EMS team is very familiar with. They were on the front lines helping the community during Hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, Isaac... saving lives and providing comfort.

Recently, WJMC EMS learned the Wears Valley Volunteer Fire Department needed help. You see, a year ago, wild fires devastated rural communities in the Smokey Mountains, like Wears Valley, Tennessee. Three people died, one of them lived in Wears Valley.

Wears Valley Volunteer Fire Department Chief, Tony Patty, says response times are an issue for local EMS crews covering Wears Valley. Currently, there isn't 24/7 ambulance service in the area. The closest ambulance services are between 7 to 10 miles away. Those extra miles could mean the difference between life and death.

"We're looking to raise between 40 to 50-thousand dollars to build female and male living quarters at our Wears Valley Volunteer Fire Department headquarters... two bed rooms and two bathrooms. This will help provide faster response times."

"In Louisiana, we've all been through a catastrophic event, whether it was Katrina or Isaac or the recent flooding. Coming together as a community to help each other out just reinforces not only the brother and sisterhood of EMS but of all first responders," said Amanda Gonzalez, WJMC EMS Paramedic. "24/7 EMS should be available everywhere, especially somewhere so rural. You never know if it could be your family member or friend that might need help. As a first responder knowing why we got into this, ultimately to help other people, and not to be able to do that because of funding... it hurts us emotionally."