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News

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AirEvac Lifeteam commemorates fifth year in Tri-State Area

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For the Daily Gate City

FORT MADISON – The Fort Madison Air Evac Lifeteam based in Fort Madison, has strong community support, a dedicated crew and a steadfast mission to always do what is best for their patients.

The crew has served Southeast Iowa, West Central Illinois and Northeast Missouri since first taking flight in December 2005.

In commemoration of a half-decade of service provided to the residents of Iowa, Illinois and Missouri, Program Director Joe Boyles offered recognition for the “wonderful support” shown to Air Evac since its arrival in Lee County. That support system has included local hospitals, fire departments, EMS, and law enforcement personnel, all of whom helped lay a foundation for the national air ambulance company’s presence in Southeast Iowa.

Boyles, who came to Air Evac Lifeteam in June following retirement from the United States Navy, served as a search and rescue hospital corpsman, a U.S. Naval Rescue Air Crewman, and health care administrator for the Navy.

“Working for Air Evac is an excellent opportunity for me to give something back to my community and the Tri-State Area,” said Boyles.

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Air Evac Lifeteam is the largest independently owned and operated air ambulance service in the United States and is known for providing outstanding life saving services to rural communities in 15 states.

“Air Evac has been serving the area communities since 2005, and we cherish and value the relationships we have developed over the years with the staff of the local hospital, EMS, law enforcement and 911 dispatch services,” said Boyles. “It is through partnering with these services that we have the ability to improve the outcomes of patients with critical injuries and illnesses.”

Base Clinical Lead Eric Bean said, “it is always reassuring to land on the scene with any EMS agency and recognize familiar

faces and instantly have a connection with them. It turns a chaotic situation into a manageable event. We have the same relationships with the hospital staff members and physicians. Even though we work closely with the emergency departments, we have the same approach with the rest of the hospital staff when we interact with them. We get to know them on a personal basis.”

Air Evac’s community involvement is a source of pride for Boyles and his crew. The company participates in college career fairs, EMS/Safety Days, and local EMS and fire department fundraisers. Air Evac also is a sponsor for Relay for Life and past sponsor of community blood drives.

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Air Evac Lifeteam focuses on providing superior patient care following a traumatic accident or major medical emergency. Bean said that in addition to its life-saving capabilities, Air Evac provides outreach and training to the general public and the medical community. Crew members at the Fort Madison base offer more than 30 different classes geared toward medical professionals.

The presence of a dedicated, hard-working crew and their extensive community involvement has endeared Air Evac to the communities they serve, Boyles said. The base employs three full-time crew members who are originally from the area, including flight paramedic Aaron Feagain, Donald Whitaker and Heather Connor.

"The crew members enjoy the people in this rural community and truly believe they make a difference in the area they serve," said Boyles.

Pilot Craig Rush said he is proud to be a part of the Air Evac team. "Growing up in a rural community I soon realized that the appropriate level of health care is not always close enough for timely treatment," said Rush. "Having a helicopter available can be the difference between life and death. Providing the best possible helicopter EMS service to the community is one of the goals of this base."

For more information about Air Evac Lifeteam, call 800-793-0010 or visit www.lifeteam.net.

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