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## CRHC awaits Air Evac Lifeteam's arrival

Mike Peterson

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Photo by Brent Barnett/KMA

(Clarinda) -- Clarinda Regional Health Center officials are excited that air ambulance services are returning to the hospital.

Air Evac Lifeteam announced Tuesday afternoon the company is increasing its emergency air medical coverage in Iowa with a new base in Clarinda. Scheduled for an April opening, the base will be located on the CRHC campus. Based in O'Fallon, Missouri, the company

currently operates 142 air medical bases in 15 states. Hospital CEO Chuck Nordyke tells KMA News CRHC has been working to find another air ambulance company since Air Methods pulled LifeNet 2/3 Helicopter out of Clarinda last May.

"I've worked all over the country, so I had some connections," said Nordyke, "and came upon the idea of working with a much larger group than we have in the past, and got a hold of folks at Air Evac. They were really receptive to talk to us--it fits in their model. They came out and talked to us. We signed a non-disclosure, so we've had to keep it very, very quiet for some time--which is difficult with news like this. But, talking with them, we felt very comfortable with them. We're both on the same projectory for what kind of a business model we'd like to have, moving forward. So, it just kind of fit."

Nordyke says having Air Evac at the hospital fills a void for air medical response.



"We provide great care here," he said. "I think that our ER does a wonderful job. Our EMS is outstanding. They're just phenomenal providers. Unfortunately, we live in a rural area, and in order to get certain levels of care that we just don't provide, time is of an essence. Having that helicopter buys you that time, and leads to a more successful outcome."

Among other things, Nordyke says the air ambulance provides another tool in the hospital's service to the area.

"There's other helicopter providers still in the surrounding area," said Nordyke. "I think this just adds one more tool to have quicker response times, and gives that comfort level. When you pick up the phone and call for this type of service, you don't want to have to wait 30-40

minutes and/or may not be able to get it. So, we have a new tool that's a little bit closer to southwest Iowa, and has a quicker response time for us."

Air Evac officials say the Clarinda base will serve residents within a 70-mile radius 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each crew consists of a nurse, paramedic and pilot. The base brings 15 full-time jobs to the area, including pilots, medical crews, and an aviation maintenance technician.

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