

Ocean Isle First Responders To Assist Emergency Personnel

BY DOUG RUTTER

Dave Harrell of Ocean Isle Beach hopes he is never forced into a situation where he needs to know how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

But as a volunteer firefighter, a businessman who travels the island frequently and a concerned citizen, he feels he will someday need it to save a life.

Harrell, along with 16 others at Ocean Isle Beach, recently learned CPR and many other emergency medical techniques while taking a first responders course.

"I think it's something that certainly I will have a use for as well as the others who took the class," he said. "We all hope we don't need it, but it's something that's important to know."

Instructors Alex and Jean Mearns, who are members of the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad, said persons enrolled in the course were instructed in all basic first aid techniques including one-man CPR, hemorrhage control and splinting.

"It's really the first rung on the ladder for emergency rescue work," said Mearns.

The main role of first responders at Ocean Isle Beach, he added, will be to stabilize any patients until the rescue squad arrives. He stressed that they will not transport any victims.

Mrs. Mearns explained that one of the biggest benefits of having a crew of first responders is that they can assist other emergency personnel, even if it's just to retrieve a splint or bandage from the ambulance.

During their period of instruction, students at Ocean Isle were introduced to the various supplies and pieces of equipment used to treat accident victims. They were become familiar with where those items are located on most ambulances so they can be found quickly during an emergency situation.

Mearns said that the need for first responders in this area is just as critical as the need for trained emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

The 48-hour state certification course has been offered through Brunswick Community College for the past four years, ever since the program was initiated in North Carolina.

Jimmy Marshall, director of continuing education at BCC, said interest in the program is growing among local fire and rescue squads and that it is offered on demand to any group of a dozen or more people.

"We would like for the private citizens to get more involved," he said. "You never can tell when you might come into a situation where you can save a life."

The course was sponsored by the Ocean Isle Beach Property Owners Association. In addition to paying the \$15 tuition of each student required to pay, the organization donated books and arm patches for all students.

In the near future, the OIBPOA plans to purchase a four-wheel-drive vehicle which can be used by these first responders in all emergency situations.

The vehicle will be housed at the fire station and will be stocked with first aid equipment needed by first responders as well as radio communications equipment.

Terry Barbee, fire chief at Ocean Isle and course graduate, added that the vehicle will also be equipped with a generator, spot lights and a winch and may respond to every fire call.

Ocean Isle Beach Police Chief Bili Ozment, one of the recent graduates, said, "This is all part of the POA trying to get the place cranked up and more responsive to our emergency needs."

He added that the addition of first responders on the island is just one part of the improving quality of life in the area. "There is such a good spirit of voluntarism here," he said. "It all adds up to a better way of life for all of our people."

Mearns said the hope of everyone involved in the course is that some will continue with more advanced training and join a local rescue squad.

While the Town of Ocean Isle Beach may need its own rescue squad at some point, Chief Ozment said the first responders will fill the gap which had previously existed in emergency assistance.

Barbee added, "This will definitely make things better than they were."

In addition to Ozment, other members of the town police department passing the course last week were Jerry Wilson, Jimmy Todd, James Stewart, Hoyle Yow and W.C. Lewis.

Raymond Ericksen and Albert Crawford graduated from the course as members of the Ocean Isle Beach Volunteer Fire Department in addition to Chief Barbee and Harrell.

Other area residents who completed the course were Sandy Wilson, Frankie Hewett, Joseph Ferlauto, Patricia Quaintance, Kirstin Overcash, Donald Overcash and Harry Hunt.



TERRY BARBEE (left) fixes a splint to the forearm of Kirstin Overcash under the watchful eyes of instructors Alex and Jean Mearns. Learning this emergency technique was part of a recent first responders course sponsored by the Ocean Isle Beach Property Owners Association.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Fox Is New Marketing Director

Kimberly Fox of Myrtle Beach has been named marketing director of Briarcliffe Mall.

She succeeds Frederic P. Goulston who will be retiring after being involved in shopping center marketing for over 35 years, the last two in the Myrtle Beach area.

Fox, a graduate of South Florida-Tampa University with a degree in mass communications, was formerly

advertising and public relations director of the Litus Corporation, a position she held since 1983. She is president of the Coastal Advertising Federation.

Walkers Relocating

Butch and Betty Walker, real estate brokers, are relocating to Greensboro after having spent almost four years in the Ocean Isle Beach area. Mrs. Walker has accepted a new job opportunity in real estate in Greensboro.

Joins NHHM Staff

Elizabeth Shaw, R.N. and certified

nurse specialist, of Caswell Beach has been hired as instructor for The Birth Place at New Hanover Memorial Hospital, Wilmington.

She has a master of science degree in parent-child nursing clinical nurse specialist from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and is an ASPO Lamaze certified childbirth educator.

Farming Of Wetlands Outlawed Under Federal 'Swampbuster' Act

Farmers producing agricultural commodities on wetlands converted within the last 27 months are disqualified from certain federal farm program benefits.

Under a Wetland Conservation Provision of the Food Security Act of 1985, farmers who converted wetlands for agricultural use after Dec. 25, 1985, are not eligible for many programs offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

According to a news release from the Brunswick County Soil Conservation Service, programs covered by the regulations include the USDA price and income support programs, disaster payments, crop insurance, Farmers Home Administration loans, Commodity Credit Corporation storage payments and farm storage facility loans.

Currently, about 80 percent of the nation's two million farmers participate in these programs.

Farmers who do not comply with the regulations are not eligible for any benefits of those programs for any crops they produce, not just crops produced on converted wetlands.

While some areas classified as wetlands can be used as productive lands for fish and wildlife, they can also help control flooding by temporarily storing water, trap pollutants and improve recreational opportunities.

Although farmers can increase production dramatically by using drained wetlands, valuable natural

resources are lost each time this is done, the release states.

Exempt from the Wetland Conservation Provision is the production of agricultural commodities on converted wetlands if the conversion was commenced or completed before Dec. 25, 1985, or if the conversion resulted from the actions of a third party. Also exempt are wetlands created artificially such as catfish ponds, farm ponds and rice paddies.

In enforcing the federal regulations, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service determines if the applicant is producing agricultural commodities, the boundaries of fields that include wetlands,

if the conversion of wetlands commenced before the cutoff date and if the wetland conversion was by a third party whose actions were beyond the control of the applicant.

The Soil Conservation Service determines if the area can be classified as wetland, if the conversion was completed before or after the cutoff date, if crop production on wetlands is possible because of natural conditions such as drought and if production will have a minimal effect on wetland values.

For more information on these regulations, contact the county Soil Conservation Service office in Bolivia at 253-4458.

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