

Ambulance firm improves Novi response time

By Casey Hana
staff writer

Novi officials and residents are keeping a close eye on response times by Community Emergency Medical Services, although they say the ambulance company has made a noticeable effort to improve service to the area.

Based in Novi, CEMS is owned by Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills. Both the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills contract with CEMS for services.

"At the present time, CEMS is making an honest effort to work toward a correction of the problems," said Novi resident Harry Avagian, vice president of the Lakes Area Residents Association and police and emergency services liaison

for the group that represents residents north of 12 Mile Road.

"It is our intention to continue to monitor the activities of CEMS. That is our goal."

CEMS PRESIDENT Greg Beauchemin said his company implemented a plan of action in the city of Novi in December. He feels service has improved dramatically. He said the issue hit newspapers before CEMS and the city of Novi had a chance to work out the problem.

"We have rectified it. We're very pleased with the results," Beauchemin said. "I think our response times are excellent."

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'I think our response times are excellent. We're going to rise to the occasion, we just need to be given a chance. We have quite a commitment out here.'

— Greg Beauchemin
CEMS president

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Beauchemin said north-side residents had also been concerned with police and fire response time, and

that the ambulance response time was part of this concern. "The fire department rectified its problem," he said. "I just want to be given the

same opportunity the fire department was given."

THE NOVI Fire Department began monitoring CEMS response time in the fall. Beauchemin said he received a letter dated Jan. 24 from Fire Chief Arthur Lenaghan detailing just what the city believed to be acceptable response times.

Beauchemin said Oakland County regulations call for a 12-minute response time for the Novi area, but that he would strive for the 10-minute response time dictated by Novi. "They (the city) pretty much call the shots," he said.

Lenaghan said there had been an improvement in CEMS services in Novi over the past few months, "but we stay on it constantly." He said the

Jan. 24 letter "put them (CEMS) on notice that if the service starts declining, we'll take another look at it."

"We expect them to respond in 10 minutes or less 90 percent of the time. We are staying with that. If they can't provide that, we will get a company who can. We're just looking for the best service we can get for the people in this community."

DECEMBER CEMS response rates improved, according to Beauchemin. Of 100 emergencies responded to in the city, the service averaged a response time of 6.93 minutes. Ten calls were over 10 minutes — 10 percent of the total calls.

He said CEMS calls had increased dramatically throughout the Detroit area in the last two months, up about 40 calls per day.

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Twice a week is better

Congressional page duty is an eye opener

Continued from Page 1

"I would have done it for nothing, just for the experience."

On weekends, pages traveled to Georgetown, visited the Smithsonian and spent time at Chesapeake Bay.

The first day on the job, Economy served as a general page — a gofer of sorts, a delivery boy of messages, a runner.

"After the second day, I was moved into the cloakroom." The cloakroom is a room equipped with telephone booths for the congress-

man. In the cloakroom, they can congregate and relax.

"WHEN YOU are a general page, you have to run all over, and your feet hurt. When you are a cloakroom page, your brain hurts because you are constantly on the go."

Cloakroom managers cautioned pages to be careful of the press, who they said would try to get messages and appointments with congressmen. Economy said. Ditto for tourists.

On most days, pages work from 8

a.m. to 6 p.m. Fillbusters make for late hours.

"The issue was the constitutionality of flag-burning. The congressmen were trying to amend the Constitution to say that flag-burning was illegal."

"When we heard that they were going all night, our mouths dropped to the floor because we were tired. And they were telling us we would have to stay all night, too."

But someone took pity and let the pages return home at 1 a.m.

EVEN THOUGH Economy did not get to meet President George Bush, he did see him during a visit of the prime minister of Australia.

The Economy family has lived in Farmington Hills for 10 years. Besides father, Stephen, the family includes mother, Tina, and sons, John, 12, a Power Middle School student, and Stephen, 6, a Longacre Elementary student.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him," Tula said about Thomas' summer in Washington.

Thomas is also a member of the French Club and the varsity football team at Farmington High and the Teen J band for Jacobson's.

After college, Economy wants to go into law and own a business someday.

And yes, he does plan to enter politics.

Pages are paid \$900 a month. Their dinners are paid for, but expenses such as breakfasts, subway tickets and room and board come out of their earnings. Economy kept \$300, he said. 'I would have done it for nothing, just for the experience.'

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