



# COUNTY OF LINCOLN, NORTH CAROLINA

115 WEST MAIN STREET, 3RD FLOOR CITIZENS CENTER • LINCOLNTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28092

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LINCOLN COUNTY – April 26, 2013

## News Release

### **Lincoln Life Saving Crew to Discontinue Service Effective Sunday, April 28, 2013**

Lincoln County received notification from the Lincoln Life Saving Crew (LLSC) that they will close for business and will no longer be available for emergency responses after 11:59 PM on Sunday, April 28, 2013. This was a decision that was made by the LLSC Board of Directors. County Manager George Wood stated, "We want to stress that the citizens in the Lincoln Life Saving Crew's District will have no disruption in service, all of their medical 911 emergencies will continue to be answered by Lincoln County EMS (LCEMS) and their local fire district personnel where they are certified for EMT/AED response."

The LLSC has been serving Lincolnton, North 321, and portions of the Howard's Creek Union, and Crouse Fire Districts since 2009 when their district boundaries were modified. The dispatch protocols have called for LCEMS, the local Fire District who are certified for EMT/AED response and LLSC to be dispatched to medical calls. LCEMS responds to 100% of calls. Lincolnton Fire Department has paid staff who responds to all medical calls in the City. North 321, Howard's Creek and Union Fire Departments are Rescue Certified and have responders that are EMT or AED certified. Many of the members of LLSC will now be moving to Crouse Fire Department which will improve the response capability in that district.

The LLSC has provided service to the County since the late 1950s, but the environment for emergency medical response has changed dramatically over the years.

- Our population has increased from 28,800 in 1960 to over 79,000 in 2012.
- Our emergency medical calls have increased 17% over the last five years.
- The number of EMS Units in service has increased, and we have been able to station them strategically throughout the County.
- More Volunteer Fire Departments have personnel who are qualified as medical first responders and most have necessary extrication equipment.

- And importantly, the ability to attract and man units with volunteers has become increasingly difficult. Volunteers do not always work locally and are unable to respond during their work hours, those volunteers that do work locally are not as likely to be able to leave work to respond to calls.

Lincoln County contracted with the LLSC to provide: 1) backup ambulance support; 2) technical rescue; 3) traffic control; 4) Search & Rescue; 5) Evacuation; 6) debris removal; 7) Assist Lincoln County Emergency Medical Services (LCEMS), other Rescue Squads and other emergency service organizations as needed. In 2012-13 the County provided \$51,000 to support the Squad. The Contract with LLSC provides that any assets of the LLSC that remain after all debts of the organization are paid, will be distributed to other local nonprofit entities or government entities providing the same or similar services within the LLSC district.

The LLSC response history has not been consistent over the past several years. They were challenged to respond to 100% of calls in the non-Lincolnton portion of their district. They were able to sustain that level for 2012, but there has been a dramatic decline in 2013. In the 5 day period this week they responded to 3 of 28 calls. Please see:  
<http://www.lincolncounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/5961>.

Lincoln County staff has met regularly with the LLSC to try and support them. They have had several leadership changes over the past two years and most recently their Board of Directors has been completely changed. The County recognizes the countless volunteer hours that LLSC members have dedicated to this community over the years.

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