



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 25, 2021**

## **EMS EXPANDS PARAMEDIC SERVICE TO ENSURE 911 COVERAGE**

**Rutherfordton, NC** – In the last seventeen days, both rescue squads in Rutherford County have closed their operations. Hickory Nut Gorge EMS and Rescue informed the County that they were ceasing their operations on October 8, 2021 and Rutherford County Rescue informed the County on October 6, 2021 that they were closing for fourteen days. On October 21, 2021, Rutherford County Rescue informed the County they were ceasing their operations at the end of football season as they are covering numerous football games in the county. Rutherford County Rescue has not been operational since October 6, 2021.

In order to adapt to these changes, Rutherford County EMS is recommending to the County Commissioners that EMS add two additional 24/7 ambulances to replace the one that Rutherford County Rescue provided; as well as, the one that Hickory Nut Gorge EMS & Rescue provided. The two additional ambulances will be at the paramedic level, which is a higher level of service than what was provided previously by the rescue squads. This will allow for even better coverage and medical response to the county. Rutherford County EMS currently operates five 24/7 ambulances and one non-emergency ambulance Monday-Friday. This change will provide Rutherford County EMS with a total of seven 24/7 paramedic level ambulances.

Rutherford County EMS also reached out to the NC Office of EMS on October 11, 2021, after both rescue squads informed them of being out of service, and requested ambulance strike teams from FEMA. Two ALS ambulance teams will arrive in Rutherford County on Tuesday, October 26, 2021 and will be activated for approximately 10 days. This will be a tremendous resource to allow Rutherford County EMS time to hire and onboard new employees while still providing the same medical coverage our citizens expect and need. County Commissioner Chairman Bryan King stated that, "Citizens should see no interruption in EMS services through this transition. We are very thankful for the FEMA resource that our state EMS office has been able to help secure on our behalf. Ensuring 911 medical coverage to all our citizen is the top priority for the County."

Rutherford County EMS is currently hiring EMTs, AEMTs and paramedics for both full time and part time positions in order to staff these two new ambulances. Interested candidates may apply at <https://rutherford.rja.revize.com/forms/7>. County Manager, Steve Garrison stated that, "EMS Director Kerry Giles and her team are to be applauded for their dedication and perseverance to proactively close the gap in our service delivery plan by ensuring that the County EMS has the additional resources needed to be fully operational by mid-November."

EMS is able to implement these changes through projected additional billable revenue and reallocating funds that were originally appropriated to the rescue squads for the current fiscal year. County Commissioners, County leadership, and Rutherford County EMS have moved very swiftly to adapt to these changes in order to ensure 911 medical coverage for all our citizens. We could also not accomplish this without the support of all our fire departments, Emergency Management, and the 911 Communications Center who have all stepped up to assist EMS during this transition.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Kerry Giles, EMS Director, 828.288.4505, [kerry.giles@rutherfordcountync.gov](mailto:kerry.giles@rutherfordcountync.gov)