



CRITERIA

- Programs nominated must be innovative and do one or more of the following:
 - Offer a new service to county residents, fill gaps in the availability of existing services, or tap new revenue sources.
 - Improve the administration or enhance the cost effectiveness of an existing county government program.
 - Upgrade the working conditions or level of training for county employees.
 - Enhance the level of citizen participation in, or the understanding of, government programs.
 - Provide information that facilitates effective public policy making.
 - Promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in addressing shared problems.
 - Provide a model from which other counties or affiliates may learn.
- Nominated individuals must demonstrate exemplary service to citizens, staff, or stakeholders.

JUDGING

The Excellence in Action Award committee will rate each application based on the following seven attributes: creativity, innovation, cost savings, replication, leadership, increased efficiency, cooperation with others, and perseverance.

GUIDELINES

- Nominated programs must have become operational after January 1, 2018.
- Individual nominations should reflect the individual actions of the last 24 months.
- Nominations should be made using the application form below.
- A narrative of the county program or individual's action must be included (three-page limit).

AWARD PRESENTATION

Awards will be presented during the 2019 ISAC Annual Conference General Session on August 21 in Des Moines. Winners will also be recognized on the ISAC website and in a news release sent to statewide media. When appropriate, an ISAC staff member will also attend the board of supervisors meeting to present the award.

QUESTIONS

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NOMINATION FORM

- Attach a narrative of the county improvement/project/program/individual (three-page limit).
- Return all nominations by July 1, 2019 (postmarked date) to:
 Iowa State Association of Counties
 Attn: Jacy Ripperger
 5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
 West Des Moines, IA 50266
- OR email your application form (containing all the information on the form below) to jripperger@iowacounties.org.

Please fill out each field completely:

Please indicate nomination type: Individual Program

Name of individual/program: Unified EMS System County or affiliate: Wright County

Name of nominator: Karl Helgevold Title: Board of Supervisor

Nominator's phone: 515-851-1344 Nominator's email: auditor@co.wright.ia.us

Excellence in Action Award!
Wright County the wRight Place
Transitioning to a Unified County-Wide EMS System

Background and History:

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for Wright County were provided by four different organizations – each based in a separate community – Belmond, Clarion, Dows, and Eagle Grove. These EMS providers serviced all of Wright County, as well as small portions of Franklin and Hancock County. Each organization functioned independently of the other, resulting in a duplication of personnel and at times inefficient use of resources. In 2016 Wright County Board of Supervisors called together representatives from the Cities, EMS agency leaders, hospital administrators and other interested personnel to form an EMS Advisory Council to begin the process of discussing how to improve the local EMS System, including making EMS an essential service. Iowa Code says police and fire protection are essential services, EMS (ambulance coverage) is not.

While EMS is not currently recognized by the State Legislature as an essential service, local governments across the state, including Wright County, have accepted the varying degrees of responsibility for providing prehospital care and transportation of the sick and injured in their own jurisdictions.

EMS in Wright County was nearing crisis mode as ambulance services are realizing difficulty in scheduling, training and retaining volunteer responders. They are experiencing lower reimbursements from individuals and insurance companies along with increased operational costs. In July of 2016 the City of Dows discontinued providing ambulance service, resulting in an increase of response area to the remaining services in Wright County.

As part of the Advisory Council's work, response areas in the County were reviewed and 28E Agreements were made with ambulance services in two neighboring counties to provide coverage for the far Southeast and Northwest corners of the county.

What's Next:

The Advisory Council prepared options for consideration. Primary to all "Options for Consideration" was the understanding and commitment of all decision makers in Wright County to realize Emergency Medical Service is an "Essential Service" to the citizens, businesses and visitors to Wright County.

The Board of Supervisors in cooperation with each city in Wright County adopted a resolution declaring EMS as an Essential Service and appointed the Wright County EMS System Advisory Council to provide guidance, research and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. A timeline was developed for moving forward with an EMS System that allows for quality prehospital care for persons living, working and traveling in Wright County.

The Advisory Council worked with the EMS Service Agencies to develop a plan to maintain and enhance the Emergency Medical Services available in Wright County and advised that it was in the

best interest of the County to provide additional funding for a period of five (5) years as provided in Iowa Code Chapter 422D. A budget of \$586,652.00 was drafted for the enhanced EMS System. This budget required the Board of Supervisors to modify their agreements with the transporting ambulance services to provide additional funding for: Response Area Coverage, Rural Call Reimbursement, Training, Equipment, and Staffing. The plan allows each of the ambulance services to remain independent, with agreements requiring quarterly reporting to the EMS Coordinator and participation in quarterly and annual trainings to be eligible for the funding assistance. The EMS Coordinator and EMS Service Directors will work together to develop county-wide EMS System standards that align with the Iowa EMS System Standards.

The Board of Supervisors called a special election for voter approved Ad Valorem property tax pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 422D to be held on August 7, 2018. The Ad Valorem property tax special election passed with a total of 827 people voting with 577 yes votes and 250 no votes and will be in effect for five (5) years starting in fiscal year 2019-2020.

In Conclusion:

Where the service area before was serviced by three different EMS Providers, each group existed independently, resulting in overlap of service area and inefficient utilization of resources. As such, it is beneficial to move to the county-wide delivery system – consolidating the different EMS providers into one organization. Such a transition will provide many benefits for the current EMS organizations and the communities they serve, as outlined below:

Best Practices: In consolidating services, there will be great opportunities to identify and hardwire best care practices – not only capitalizing on the good, but also working as a team to change and improve the broken processes.

Unified Educations: As a unified organization, we will be able to ensure that all EMS Staff receive the same onsite training and education to ensure the mastery of skills, best practices and necessary procedures.

Resource Utilization: With three individual EMS organization meant there are a lot of redundancies in resources. Transitioning to a unified program will create a system that maximizes cost savings on equipment and materials and insures the efficient use of personnel.

Service Delivery: Will be more efficient in addressing the complex needs of the service area with better organized personnel and equipment.

Service Expansion: There are many opportunities to improve and expand our service offerings within the county and communities we serve – for example, increasing the presence of paramedics and how they help with service delivery and care coordination.

Cost Reduction: The three current EMS organizations had a reimbursement rate average of less than 60% of their operating costs. Grant funding will help us with the innovative restructuring of the programs while cost reductions and streamlining of resources will create long-term sustainability.

Working in cooperation with local leaders and the support of our citizens in Wright County has enabled us to develop a county-wide EMS System that can easily be replicated in other counties.

EMS IS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE!!