

Cayuga County ambulances ask towns for money

Monday, September 24, 2007

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An ambulance squad is no good without skilled medical staff to help the injured and sick.

Two southern Cayuga County ambulance companies are looking to their towns for more money to maintain their service. Without these two squads, people in the southern part of the county would have to wait for a half-hour or longer for ambulance service from Auburn, Cortland or Ithaca.

Southern Cayuga Instant Aid wants to pay its emergency medical technicians and paramedics to ensure they have these medical staff on all shifts.

Four Town First Aid Squad already pays its EMTs and paramedics, but needs money to cover costs such as upkeep on its building in Moravia and its three ambulances. Officials with both Four Town and Southern Cayuga have been visiting the town boards in their coverage areas to establish contracts with the towns for ambulance service. Southern Cayuga covers Scipio, Genoa, Venice and Ledyard (except the Aurora fire district). Four Town covers Niles, Moravia town and village, Sempronius, Summer Hill and Locke.

Kezia Parseghian, director of operations with Southern Cayuga, said the squad wants to add paid EMTs and paramedics on its advanced life support calls. She said there aren't enough volunteers to cover all shifts.

"We need to meet all our operations costs, but we get no municipal support," Parseghian said. "There are not enough volunteers in the rural areas. We have to be able to have people to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day."

According to Southern Cayuga statistics, it had 274 calls in 2006, and 154 of those were advanced life support calls in which paramedics and EMTs are required.