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Peninsula Ambulance Corps, Inc.

Serving the Blue Hill Peninsula and Beyond

Water, Water, Everywhere...

by Geoff Miller, EMT-P

I have lived in the Blue Hill area for 26 years. In that time I have learned that thunderstorms, while not very common in these parts, tend to be quite powerful when they do hit. Still, I don't think anyone could have predicted what happened when the skies opened up on August 3, 2008.

I had the day off and decided to go to Bangor to see a movie. I waited until the worst of the storm had passed, then dashed to my car and drove off happily for the afternoon. When I returned home I heard two messages from a station employee on my answering machine: there was water coming into the basement at the hospital and an evacuation was in process there—and although things were under control, my presence would be appreciated; the second message warned me to avoid Rte 15 because there was a structure fire on Pleasant Street.

Some days simply don't go halfway, I thought. Fire, flood; what would be next? Every EMS (Emergency Medical Service) worker—indeed every public safety worker—wonders what they will do when disaster strikes. We wonder about the exact definition of “disaster” and hope we won't sound a false alarm. But you certainly get a different perspective on things when you look out your door and see a pickup truck across the street almost up to its windows in water.

EMS training and education focus a great deal of attention on knowing *when and how* to call for help. It is a critical skill for the public safety worker to learn—for anyone to learn—when faced with a task beyond the capability of the local resource.

The PAC (Peninsula Ambulance Corps) crew on duty the day of the flood knew they had a far-reaching community to call on for assistance, since services close to Blue Hill were already busy with problems of their own.

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Photo by Eric Strassenburgh; reprinted with permission of Penobscot Bay Press, Blue Hill

“You certainly get a different perspective on things when you look out your door and see a pickup truck across the street almost up to its windows in water.”

Geoff Miller

Water, Water, Everywhere ...

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The call was placed to the MedComm Dispatch Center in Bangor, and soon several trucks from as far away as Dover-Foxcroft were on their way to help.

Some were turned back before they got to Blue Hill, but trucks from *Meridian Mobile Health, Bagaduce Ambulance, County Ambulance, Bucksport Fire, Brewer Fire, G&H Ambulance, Hermon Rescue and Northeast Mobil Health* all assisted in a smooth evacuation of Blue Hill Memorial Hospital.

Peninsula Ambulance was able to do an urgent patient transfer to Bangor, while *Bagaduce Ambulance* covered the structure fire.

Other trucks covered areas served by *Memorial and Bagaduce Ambulance* while those companies were busy. It only took one person in our station to coordinate this effort with the dispatchers in Bangor. Trucks staged at the PAC base and were sent out as the need dictated.

In short, the job got done. The system worked seamlessly and smoothly. If you ever thought you had reason to doubt that a tiny company like *Peninsula Ambulance Corps* could pull necessary resources together when needed, you can shed them now.

Our thanks go out to Dale Mims, Theresa Cousins and Cody Varnum of PAC and to all those from other services who made this effort possible.

When it rains, it pours. Fortunately, we have a plan for that.

- Geoff Miller has been with Peninsula Ambulance Corps for 22 years and is its current manager.

Peninsula Ambulance: A Safe Investment



Given recent experience and today's headlines it is hard to conceive of a safe investment that gives a secure and substantial return. I am happy to say that such opportunities do exist. Call 374-9955 and ask for Geoff.

Geoff Miller is the operations manager for PAC. He can tell you about a range of investment opportunities within his experience.

Bob Vaughan, President

At the highest level is the staff of PAC. They invest themselves on a daily basis. A dispatch to a broken leg, a heart attack, an auto accident...familiar calls that challenge the knowledge and character of the responding staff members. They are educated, dedicated professionals who could doubtless make more money doing other things, but choose this way of life because of the return in satisfaction and pride. They feel good about themselves and what they do. Their payoff is substantial and constant. Well it should be. They have invested a big part of their lives. They deserve to sleep very well.

PAC has a board of directors who are the management of the organization. They maintain an environment in which the staff can provide the highest quality of service to the public. There is a big investment of time in simply understanding what that means. Board meetings are the beginning of that process, and then there are committee meetings relating to finances, personnel, fundraising and simply maintaining a sense of what the future will require. Board members invest a small part of their lives in PAC as individuals, but together they generate an insight that is impressive. After that, much is possible.

At our foundation, however, are individuals like you, who receive letters like this one from time to time during the year. You may hear about the Corps by word of mouth. You understand and appreciate what we do.

And you respond—supporting *Peninsula Ambulance Corps* with donations large and small. Indeed, a large part of our annual budget is supported by your charitable donations, and we thank you for your generous spirit.

In these days of uncertainty I personally take great pride in all that is the *Peninsula Ambulance Corps*. It is a piece of our smaller world that works as it should. **And an investor at any level can see his investment working—and growing.**

- Bob Vaughan, president of PAC

“Your investment in PAC helps build a collective sense that when those calls come in they will be well met. It is this sense of ownership by you that stimulates consistent and substantial support from local governments.”

Bob Vaughan

Donnie Gray: An Easy Fit For An EMT

When you meet Donnie Gray, you may find it hard to believe he is already a 16-year veteran of EMT training and service. But his calm and focused presence is inherited from his father, who has given much of his own life to public service as an army medic.

For Donnie, becoming EMT at *Peninsula Ambulance Corps* was an easy fit. “It’s like putting on a pair of shoes,” he says.

But like shoes that fit, Donnie wanted them to wear well, too—and he carefully considered all aspects of his career choice, including limited income, unpredictable work, personal pride, and job satisfaction.

That right choice he made eighteen years ago has evolved into a fulfilling life of dedication to saving other people’s lives. “It was a big responsibility, and I knew I wanted to take it on,” he affirms.



Donnie Gray, EMT

“There’s a personal feeling here that this is a job where, when you put in a little, you get a lot back. You never get desensitized.”

Donnie Gray

His lifestyle now is one where it is

normal to be on call, always facing the unpredictable, being in situations where he is often the first to show up and the last to leave, and one that puts constant demands on his free time. But he notes it’s the dedication of and loyalty to those who have placed their faith in him—not only those who need him, but those who have supported him, like his fellow PAC workers and of course, his dad—that makes it the easy fit for him.

Donnie claims that some of the perks of working at PAC come from the management style of Geoff Miller and the camaraderie of his co-workers. “It’s great to be appreciated and backed up during work situations where you are often very anonymous. There’s a personal feeling here that this is a job where, when you put in a little, you get a lot back. You never get desensitized.”

Donnie attributes his training, the thousands of experiences, the professional protocol, the consistent emphasis on safety, and the second-nature connection with his EMT partner to helping him meet the challenge of the unexpected each and every day. “In a day’s call only five percent may be true emergencies, and only half of those are critical,” he explains. With all calls, but especially **in these critical cases—when time is measured in heartbeats—the professionals at PAC are the ones you want to be with.**

- Fran Lynch, member of the board of directors

FAQ #1: “I saw the ambulance parked outside Tradewinds with its engine running; why?”

FAQ #2: “Are ambulances really allowed to break the speed limit? (Answers on back cover)”



Peninsula Ambulance Corps, Inc.

Serving the Blue Hill Peninsula and Beyond

Mission: *Recognizing the changing needs of the community, the Peninsula Ambulance Corps is dedicated to providing the highest quality ambulance and related healthcare services to the residents of Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Penobscot, Sedgwick, and Surry, Maine, as well as the larger EMS community.*

FOR EMERGENCIES, CALL 9-1-1

Peninsula Ambulance Corps, Inc.

PO Box 834

Blue Hill, ME 04614

(207) 374-9955 voice

(207) 374-5825 fax

pac@midmaine.com

The types of calls PAC responded to in the first ten months of 2008:

Abdominal Pain/Illness	44
Allergic Reaction	4
Altered Mental Status	30
Cardiac Arrest	11
Cardiovascular Conditions	113
Diabetic Emergency	4
Environmental Emergencies	2
Obstetric	6
Other/Miscellaneous	337
Pain	119
Patient Assistance	5
Poisoning/Overdose	10
Psychiatric	25
Respiratory Conditions	53
Seizure	15
Public Service	135
Stroke/TIA/CNS Problems	48
Trauma	92
Total	1053

FAQ Answers

FAQ #1 Answer: *Our trucks carry temperature-sensitive medications that will spoil if they get too hot or too cold—with lethal results.*

- *It is more efficient to run a diesel engine than it is to stop and restart it repeatedly.*
- *Crews must remain together in case a call comes in while they are out of the station.*
- *Many of our employees work several jobs and can not go home to prepare food for their shift. They must purchase their meals when working.*

FAQ #2 Answer: *Yes, ambulances are permitted to break the posted speed limit when:*

- *They are responding to an emergency situation,*
- *They are running their lights,*
- *They are prepared and willing to use their siren and/or air horn if necessary.*

Ambulances are still expected to exercise due caution in these circumstances. Peninsula Ambulance Corps has actually reduced use of lights and sirens in the last three years and often will not use them even in emergency situations. This is because studies have shown a connection between light and siren use and traffic accidents known as “wake effect” accidents.