

Tax district proposed for ambulance

Funding is critical to the group's future, says president John Heckler.

By LINDA QUINLAN

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It's a different world than 20 years ago, when the corps was founded.

"If you have a family, it takes both husband and wife working to make ends meet," says John Heckler, explaining that all volunteer emergency services are "running short on people."

In the case of Irondequoit Volunteer Ambulance (IVA), of which Heckler is currently president, that means they're also running short of funds.

When Irondequoit Volunteer Ambulance Service was founded and began operations in

August 1982, they were an all-volunteer agency with a budget of about \$50,000, raised exclusively by an annual fund drive, Heckler said.

Twenty-three years later, the service's volunteer base has dropped to 25 to 30 active volunteers, and to make up the difference, about five full-time and 15 part-time workers have been hired.

That budget has mushroomed to \$600,000 annually.

To make financial ends meet, Irondequoit Volunteer Ambulance is no longer able to provide free service. They have to bill the insurance companies of people who call on them, Heckler said, and bill patients directly for any balance.

Charges are usually \$325 for basic life support and \$500 to \$550 for advanced life support,

said office manager Ann Kirchoff. She gets one to two inquiries a week about bills.

LaShay Harris, daytime shift supervisor for IVA, said the biggest complaint she hears is that people don't know they will be charged for the service; that is, until they've needed it. She spent nearly a half-hour recently, explaining the situation to an irate resident.

"We, as well as other emergency medical service agencies, find ourselves in crisis," Heckler told the Irondequoit Town Board last month.

They operated during the 2004-05 year, which ended Sept. 1, in the red, to the tune of \$60,000, Heckler said.

"We do have reserves (to absorb the deficit), but we can't take too many years like this ... It wouldn't be many before we have no reserve."

Heckler said the town ambulance tax district will be charged for the service; that is, until they've needed it. She spent nearly a half-hour recently, explaining the situation to an irate resident.

IVA has six providers (including districts) and Heckler said.

As of now, they had had from to said.

That's the best we can," he said, "not be h

News in Brief

Openings remain in fall programs

IRONDEQUOIT - The Irondequoit Parks and Recreation Department still has spaces available in the following fall programs: Low Back Pain Seminar; Haunting Sounds of Bagpipes; Sculptures and Structures; animal tracks and signs; prelude to the arts; adult and junior tennis instruction; indoor rock climbing; youth swim instructional classes; synchro swim level I, family recreational swim; Primetime Fitness; Cardio-Fusio; and adult dance program. Call 336-6070 for the times and dates.

Talking Club a hit with seniors

IRONDEQUOIT - Local seniors may be among those flocking to Talking Club USA

meetings. The new club, sponsored by Legacy Communities, held its first meetings last month, and already senior groups from around the county are clamoring for more chapters.

Bill List is spokesman for the Legacy at Cranberry Landing at 300 Cranberry Landing Dr., off Norton Street near Densmore Road in Irondequoit. He said Monday that he hasn't yet started a club or held a meeting in Irondequoit, "but I'd like to do one here soon."

The idea for Talking Club USA was developed in Rochester to promote communication and outreach among seniors. The clubs are the brainchild of Paul Foti, vice president of Mark IV Construction, which builds the Legacy communities.

"We had over 120 people at our first chat," Foti said. "It is an idea whose time has come."

Seniors, ages 65 and older may join the club at any meeting or any Legacy community. List said the next meeting he knows of is at 7:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 9, at the Mall at Greece-Ridge Center, but he wasn't sure of the location. For more information, call the Legacy at Cranberry Landing at 244-3630.

New Citizens Police Academy starting

IRONDEQUOIT - The Irondequoit Police Department is hosting a Citizens Police Academy from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays, from Oct. 18 to Jan. 3, 2006.

The 11-week program is designed to provide partici-

pants with information of the responsibilities of the crime enforcer. There is no charge for the action, call Police Deputy service 287.

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