



Photo by Clint Cole / Dallas County News

Dallas County EMS, Adel, Iowa

As the population of Des Moines creeps outward, nearby Dallas County has seen its populace grow from about 66,000 at the 2010 census to an estimated 87,200 today.

Dallas County is the fastest growing county in Iowa, according to population estimates from U.S. Census Bureau.

“Dallas County used to be very rural, whereas Polk County, home to the Capitol, is quite urban, but the lines are blurring,” said Dallas County EMS director Mike Thomason.

Communities like Waukee, which numbered only 500 a decade ago, is now home to an estimated 15,000 residents, increasing the demand for EMS services.

Dallas County has just one hospital -- Dallas County Hospital in Adel -- which is a Level 4 trauma center, so many of DCEMS' runs involve transferring patients to any of six hospitals in Des Moines. Critical patients sometime go to the region's only Level 1 trauma center in Iowa City, 130 miles to the east.

DCEMS is staffed around the clock by five full-time employees and one part-time member. Two crews keep vigil at a station in Adel, the county seat, and another stages at Perry, 20 miles to the north. Each crew includes at least one paramedic and EMT. DCEMS' roster also includes three Registered Nurses, two of whom qualify as paramedics while the third prefers an EMT licensure.

Prior to subscribing to Aladtec, schedules were assembled using paper and simple spreadsheets, said Lee Coons, a crew chief with the service. Even after cloud-based scheduling was implemented, staff members didn't access the program much due to limited computer access. Only since the advent of smartphones about five years ago, did DCEMS begin actively using the varied communication features in the platform.



Department Info:

Roster: 15 FT, 29 PT employees; all paramedic-, EMT- or RN nurse qualified.

Calls: About 3,000 in 2017.

Service area: Pop: 87,200, approx. 600 sq. miles.

Apparatus: 4 ALS-equipped ambulances, based at stations in Adel & Perry.

Unique challenges: 72-mile, paved Raccoon River Valley Bicycle Trail that draws thousands of visitors annually; bi-weekly Figure 8 car racing and other events at Dallas Co. Fairgrounds.

Aladtec users since 2007

Neighboring agencies also using Aladtec:

Westcom 911, West Des Moines; Clive Fire Dept., Clive; West Des Moines EMS, West Des Moines; Norwalk Fire Dept., Norwalk; Life Flight, Des Moines; Mercy Medical Center, Nurses & Ambulance Service, Des Moines; Iowa Donor Network, Des Moines; Waukee Fire Dept., Waukee; Pleasant Hill PD & Fire Dept., Pleasant Hill; Ankeny PD, Ankeny; Altoona Fire Dept., Altoona; Indianola Fire Dept., Indianola; Madison County Ambulance Service & Madison County Health System, Winterset; and Brenton Skating Plaza, Des Moines.



Now Thomason and Coons routinely use Aladtec to keep staff apprised of community events which might prompt calls, ride-alongs, upcoming training and other items. Beneath personnel schedules on a recent Monthly Schedule View were listed notes, hours and locations for two weekend fun-runs, a large bicycle event, Figure 8 racing at the county fairground track and shift-shadowing by a local EMS student. DCEMS would be staffing just two of those events, but the men said members appreciate the heads-up.

“We’d not used the scheduling software capabilities that aggressively until mobile phones and the mobile app came out. It was the game-changer for you guys in my opinion, and made it more user-friendly,” Thomason said.

Scheduling 45 people is basically a non-event for Coons. Staff members message him with their availability by the 15th of each month. He said it usually takes him less than an hour to assemble the calendar before publishing separate schedules for the Adel and Perry stations.

“Yeah. I’m pretty happy with it. It makes the scheduling a lot easier and (streamlines) open shifts that come up, they can inter-trade between themselves, then it just notifies us when somebody’s done that. We just approve it,” said Coons.

“I love the time-stamping on the availability,” he added, citing an example of who and when a trade was accepted. “Two people might have accepted, but we can go to the (time stamp) and award it to the individual who was first to apply.”

DCEMS hasn’t used Aladtec’s Forms feature much, although they’re excited about the prospect of members’ ability to attach and upload files. Currently, it’s the responsibility of each staffer to track his or her own credentials. They’re invited to access the utility in the member database and enter their certifications, immunizations and refreshers if they like, but administration is only required to possess copies of members’ driver’s licenses, CPR and professional certifications.

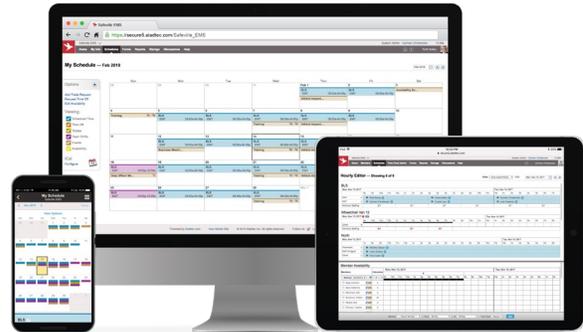
“Trying to get staff to update, we just found it to be a headache. We’ve let them know it’s there for their use if they want to set a reminder or something,” said Thomason.

Coons thinks it would be convenient for members to snap a picture of updated documents, then attach and send for DCEMS to keep on-file.

The CentreLearn cloud-based app they use for continuing education and some e-forms doesn’t allow them to store files like Aladtec does.

Thomason and Coons say they’ve used Aladtec’s Mandatory Message function on occasion to assure members have completed a task.

“We have used it in the past for mandatory education. ‘Hey, we’re changing a med on the truck. We need you to go through this PowerPoint in the library.’ We’ll have them break the glass when they check-in to get it. That is the ‘We know you’ve been there!’”, said Thomason.



Aladtec provides online employee scheduling and workforce management software to 2,000-plus organizations, primarily within the Public Safety Sector. Customers count on Aladtec constantly to help save time, improve efficiency and enhance communications. The company is headquartered in River Falls, WI. For information about our affordable platform or to try a free demo, please visit: www.aladtec.com