



SUCCESS STORY

Dallas County EMS, Adel, Iowa

As the population of Des Moines creeps outward, nearby Dallas County has seen its population 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. 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.

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. As smartphone usage increased in the years after DCEMS' Aladtec subscription, only then did the agency actively begin using the many communications features of the platform.



It makes the scheduling a lot easier and (streamlines) open shifts that come up, they can trade between themselves, then it just notifies us when somebody's done that. We just approve it.

— Mike Thomason, Director Dallas County EMS



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

SPECIAL 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

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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 gamechanger and made it more user-friendly," Thomason said.

Today, scheduling 45 people is no big deal 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.

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



"[The mobile app] was a game changer and it made it more user friendly."



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