

Iredell County Ambulance and Rescue Squad History

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1950 to 1959

1951 – Statesville Rescue Squad organized. Fire Department members, paid and volunteer, organized the unit. They raised money and their first purchase was a truck, which became property of city upon delivery. [SDR, 11/28/51] The idea for a rescue squad was formed in the summer of that year and received the endorsement of the mayor in early August 1951. [SDR, 8/8/51]

Noted Fire Chief L. M. Gaither at a fire department meeting on September 6, 1951, a rescue squad had been needed, as for the past 12 to 15 years, there had been an average of one or two drownings in the county each year. There were also frequent cases of people overcome by smoke at fires and "in danger of suffocation." [SRL, 9/6/51]

The squad initially envisioned getting a jeep equipped with a front-mounted pump, 200-gallon tank, hand pumps, and a reel of rubber hose. It would "serve as a rescue vehicle through the summer months and as firefighting equipment through the winter months." [SDR, 8/8/51]

The 1951 Chevy panel van was delivered around December 1, 1951, and lettered at Scarborough Chevrolet after arriving factory fresh. [SDR, 11/28/51]

Among the early equipment they acquired were a cutting torch, a resuscitator, a 300-watt "portable electric light plant," and a boat. [SDR, 8/2/52, 10/1/51] It was also equipped with a two-way radio. [SDR, 3/29/52] The squad was operated solely by the paid and volunteer fire department members.

1952 – Mooresville Rescue Squad organized.

1957 – Troutman Rescue Squad organized. Its first unit was a 1948 Packard ambulance donated by Cavin Funeral Home of Mooresville. The first captain was Jimmy Gabriel. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1960 to 1969

1961, Mar 25 – Iredell County Rescue Squad founders announced formation of the organization. The project was started in late 1960 to respond to areas where current

rescue squad units in Statesville, Mooresville, and Troutman did not serve, or to provide those squads with assistance. [SRL, 3/25/61]

1961, May 26 – Iredell County RS announced that they had a rescue truck and it had been painted. [SRL, 5/26/61]

1962 – Troutman RS acquired its first boat, for water rescue operations on Lake Norman and ponds in their area. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1962, Jan 11 – Iredell County Rescue Squad, Inc. chartered. [NCSOS]

1963 – Troutman RS purchased a new Chevy panel van that was converted into an ambulance. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1966, Jun 8 – Ten funeral homes in the county released a joint statement that they were discontinuing ambulance service “as soon as the public needs and demands can be met as required by regulatory, interstate and labor laws.” The homes were Brunch, Johnson, Reavis, Nicholson, Rutledge & Mangum, Florence (all Statesville), Reavis (Harmony), and Cavin and Morrison-Bryant (Mooresville). They cited their collective inability to provide the property and required resources as well as the financial losses of the services. [SRL, 6/8/66]

1967, Mar 1 – Cavin Funeral Home and Bryant Funeral Home stopped providing emergency ambulance service in Mooresville at midnight on February 28. Since that time, service was provided by Statesville funeral homes and, at times, the Mooresville Rescue Squad. [SRL, 3/15/70]

1967, Mar 13 – Port City Ambulance Service, Inc.—named for the town’s nickname of the Port City of Lake Norman—was chartered to provide ambulance service in Mooresville, as a non-profit organization. [SRL, 7/6/70]

1967, Mar 15 – Port City AS started operation at noon. Don Mills agreed to manage the service on a temporary basis. They used a donated ambulance from Cavin Funeral Home that was parked outside the Mooresville police station. Calls were received at the police desk, and an office would be set up in the “former American Red Cross room on the third floor of the municipal building.” Volunteers took turns manning the ambulance. A fee was charged for ambulance trips. The new service was set up for a six-month trial period. [SRL, 3/15/67]

1967, Apr 1 – C & M Ambulance Service of Salisbury started operating in Mooresville, taking over the service for Port City AS. They operated two ambulances, one donated by Cavin Funeral Home and another provided by C&M AS. They signed a six-month contract with

Port City AS. The service provided its own staffed employees. Funding for the service was raised by local donations. [SRL, 3/29/67]

1967, Aug 29 – News reported that Mooresville and Iredell County would jointly share the expense of ambulance service for the southern part of the county, provided by C&M AS. [SRL, 8/29/67]

1970 to 1979

1970, Apr 30 – C&M AS ended operations in Mooresville. They ended their Iredell County service because it was losing money, even though it was subsidized by both the town and the county. The company provided ambulance service for all of Rowan and Cabarrus counties, which would continue. They were located at 114 Elm Street in Mooresville. [SRL, 4/30/70.

1970, May - Port City AS started operating again, with two ambulances and volunteers. They were dispatched by the fire department. [SRL, 4/30/70]

1970, Jun 1 - Mooresville Ambulance Service started operating, a service of Mooresville Fire Department. It was funded by both the town and the county, and also answered calls in the southern part of the county. Fees were charged for transport services. Two new ambulances were purchased, Ford “van-type” units with cabinets and fixtures built and installed by firemen and other town tradespeople. Their current ambulance, the 1965 station wagon, was retired to reserve status.

Three new firemen were hired, with each shift now staffed with four men. All the paid firemen were trained in first aid, and all could serve as ambulance operators. Two new fire captains were named. Salaries were set for the firemen who would serve as supervisors of each shift. Pay raises were also approved for all paid firemen, along with a compensation scale for off-duty firemen who were called to “stand-by during an ambulance run.”

The ambulances were cross-staffed by the firefighters. And in the event of a “second ambulance call”, or in the event of a fire call, off-duty members were called to the station. [SP, 6/2/70, 6/3/70, 7/6/70]

1971 – Troutman RS purchased a new Chevy van that was converted into a state-approved ambulance. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1971, Jan 21 – Snapshot of Mooresville AS. From June 1 to Dec 31, the service answered 317 calls. H. P. (Pete) Pender, fire inspector, was in charge of the ambulance service. The service was not making any money, however. Their collection rate was about 75 percent of their ambulance service call bills. [SRL, 1/21/71]

1974, Jan 1 (or abouts) – County commissioners were notified by the funeral homes that still operated ambulance service that they planned to discontinue service in six months. This followed a request to the county in December from two funeral directors who represented most of the ambulance operators in the county. They asked for financial help but were denied. [SRL, 6/11/74]

1974, May 24 – Funeral home ambulance operators that intended to discontinue service on July 1, 1974, notified the county. [SRL, 6/11/74]

1975, Apr 22 – News reported that county commissioners voted Monday night to buy two ambulances and start a county-owned, county-operated ambulance service. [SRL, 4/22/75]

1975, May 16 – News reported that Jack L. Fleming was named as director of the new county ambulance service. He had over 12 years of experience at funeral homes and “exposure to numerous ambulance programs.” [SRL, 5/16/75]

1975, Aug 18 - Iredell County EMS started operating with bases in Statesville, with temporary quarters at 2003 W. Front Street, and Harmony, on NC 901 near US 21. They had four new 1975 American Coach Tradesman-300 ambulances, three of which would be stationed in Statesville. Each was staffed with a driver and an EMT. Each was radio-equipped with the dispatcher at the Statesville headquarters. The service hired 27 new employees, in addition to the director. Three “squads” (or shifts) were created at the Statesville base, with a dispatcher, crew chief/EMT, two additional EMTs, and two drivers. The Harmony base had six-person squads, with no dispatcher. They worked 24/48 hour shifts. Uniforms were light blue shirts with dark blue pants and a white coat. Plus, a dark blue tie. [SRL, 8/15/75, 8/16/75]

1975, Dec 15 – News reported that construction started on new Iredell County RS headquarters on NC 115 north of Statesville. The \$85,000 building would be 5,000 square feet in size, with bay space for six vehicles, living quarters for six on-duty members, two offices, a classroom, a communication center, a meeting room, and a kitchen. Work was expected to be completed in early March. [SRL, 12/5/75]

1976, Jan 20 – News reported that Reavis Funeral Home in Statesville donated a 1966 Cadillac ambulance to Iredell County RS, for use at a second station planned for early spring in the north Iredell area. . [SRL, 1/20/76]

1976, May 13 – News reported that the new Iredell County RS was ready for operation and would be unveiled at a grand opening on Sunday. Groundbreaking was held on December 4, 1975, recounted the Statesville Record & Landmark on May 13, 1976. The building cost

\$100,000 and the two-acre site was purchased for \$12,000. The squad was previously located at [goes here]. They had 40 volunteer members led by Chief John Fleming, Assistant Chief Wendell Phillips, and Captain Tom Fox. Their rolling stock included two ambulances, a crash truck, and a boat. [SRL, 5/13/76]

1976, Aug 12 – Snapshot of Iredell County EMS. The Statesville base was located at 132 W. Front Street and was a rented three-room house leased from the Statesville ABC board, plus a mobile home for sleeping quarters, and a three-bay concrete block building. The Harmony base was a rented mobile home and a prefab garage to shelter the ambulance. Next week, a third base was opening in Troutman at the old fire department building. A fifth EMS unit would be placed in service. Also, the first modular ambulance had been delivered, complete with “coronary care.” The number of employees was 27 plus the director. [SRL, 8/12/76]

1976, Sep 21 – News reported that Iredell County RS and Mooresville RS received their first set of “jaws of life” this week. Each squad was also going to get a new crash truck, which had been ordered and purchased with a grant from the county. [SRL, 9/21/76]

1977 – Troutman RS had several members start taking EMT classes. This allowed the squad to operate a state-certified ambulance. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1977, Mar 21 – News reported that Iredell County RS and Mooresville RS received two identical heavy rescue trucks, purchased through a grant from the county. [SRL, 3/21/77]

1978, Mar 24 – News reported that Iredell County RS had placed in service the county’s only four-wheel drive ambulance, built by the Hearse and Ambulance Sales Company in Richmond, VA, with a Swab ambulance body installed on a 1974 Chevy chassis. [SRL, 3/24/78]

1978, Jun 14 – News reported that construction was being completed on the Iredell County RS substation building at NC 904 and I-77. The grand opening was scheduled for June 25. It would house a “rescue ambulance” and a “heavy rescue truck” and be staffed with 12 to 14 volunteers. [SRL, 6/14/78]

1980 to 1989

1980, Sep - Mooresville Ambulance Service members started training to be certified as EMT-Intermediate, so they could provide the same level of care as Iredell County EMS. [SRL, 8/19/80]

1980, Nov 6 – News reported that Iredell County RS purchased a 4WD small Toyota pick-up for use with blood runs from Charlotte to other area hospitals. Reported the Statesville

Record & Landmark on November 6, 1980, the squad bought the truck because "Iredell units must now drive into downtown Charlotte and pick up blood from the blood bank." On September 30, the Charlotte Life Saving Crew discontinued their blood relay service. They had been helping with "emergency blood transfers" to other counties by picking up "blood packages" at the Charlotte Red Cross Central Blood Bank and meeting incoming rescue squad units at the county line. Their membership voted to discontinue the service at their September meeting, because they did not feel it was right for "local supporters to have to pay ... for non-local activities." The Iredell County Rescue Squad purchased the pick-up to reduce relay costs. It got better mileage and required less maintenance, due to its smaller size and weight. It was also a four-wheel-drive vehicle and could be used for other functions, such as off-road search and rescue. [SRL, 11/6/80]

1981 – Iredell County EMS advanced to EMT-Intermediate this year. [SRL, 4/27/83]

1981, Sep - Mooresville Ambulance Service received a new ambulance, a Ford/Modulance built in Grand Prairie, TX. It joined the fire department's fleet of four ambulance service vehicles. [SRL, 9/23/81]

1983, Apr 27 – News reported that paramedic training was being completed by EMTs in the county. [SRL, 4/27/83]

1984 – Troutman RS began participating in the First Responder program and started assisting Iredell County EMS with high-acuity calls. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1985, Sep - Town asked the county to take over ambulance service south of the town limits. Mooresville's 15 firefighters (who cross-staffed the ambulances?) were still trained as EMT-Intermediate, and unlike the county medics, which advanced to paramedic in 1983. [Charlotte Observer, 9/18/85]

1986 – Troutman RS received its first factory-built "rescue ambulance," a four-wheel drive Chevy built by Wheeled Coach. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1986, Jul - County took over the town's ambulance service. [SRL, 12/17/87]

1986, Jul 7 - Town of Mooresville approved transferring two ambulances and equipment to the county service. [SRL, 7/8/86]

1987, Feb 12 – Mooresville Rescue Squad, Inc. chartered. [NCSOS]

1988, Jan – Troutman RS purchased a new boat, a 16-foot Dixie. [SRL, 5/17/90]

1990 to 1999

1990, July 8 – News reported that Iredell County RS received two new rescue trucks, both similar/identical and designed to have matching/similar equipment, including equipment for extrication and technical rescue. One was stationed at the north Iredell substation.

[SRL, 7/8/90]

1990, Jul 12 – News reported that Mooresville RS received a new ambulance, a 1990 Chevy ambulance built by Ashley Ambulance Service. It replaced a 1979 ambulance. The new ambulance was state-certified and also carried a Hurst Omni tool for extrication. It responded to its first call in April. It also had four-wheel drive. [SRL, 7/12/90]

1990, July – Snapshot of Mooresville RS. They had five vehicles including a 1990 Chevy ambulance, a 1974 Chevy ambulance, a 1976 GMC crash truck, a 1962 Ford crash truck, and an “auxiliary vehicle.” Plus, two Boston Whaler boats. It had 32 volunteer members, and a base at 204 E. Iredell Avenue. [SRL, 7/12/90]

1991, May 16 – News reported that Troutman RS received a new ambulance to operate from Troutman FD Station 2. [SRL, 5/16/91]

1992, Nov 30 – News reported that construction was underway on a new Iredell County RS substation, across the street from the current facility on Tabor Road at NC 901. [SRL, 11/30/92]

1993, Apr 6 – News reported that Mooresville commissioners Monday night donated land adjoining the Mooresville RS base, so the squad could expand and renovate their facility. [SRL, 4/6/93]

1995, Jun 8 – News reported that “Farmedic” training was held for Iredell County RS, Mooresville RS, and Troutman FD members. [SRL, 6/8/95]

1995, Dec 24 – News reported that Iredell County RS placed a mass-casualty unit in service, using a cargo trailer equipped for up to 40 patients. The project was budgeted for \$15,000. [SRL, 12/24/95]

1997, Jul 1 – North Iredell Rescue Squad started operation. The organization was created by members of Iredell County RS who volunteered at the squad’s substation and who split from their parent organization. As of June 4, 1997, it had 24 members in the organization. [SRL, 6/4/97]

2000 to Present

2005, Aug – Snapshot of Iredell County EMS. The service operated seven ambulances out of four bases. [SRL, 8/4/05]

2008, Jan 19 – News reported that North Iredell RS was now certified as a heavy rescue provider. [SRL, 1/19/08]

2011, Dec – County took over non-emergency transport services after NuCare Carolina discontinued its services that month. The Specialty Service Unit of Iredell County EMS was created, with 11 new employees, four paramedics, four EMTs, an operator, and a QA coordinator. In their first two months, they answered 932 convalescent calls. [SRL, 2/26/12]

2014, early – Mooresville RS ended operations. The squad had two buildings when it stopped operating, due to the county ending its funding. The organization created the Mooresville Rescue Squad Foundation, to continue charity and education work. [1/8/18]

2015, Jun 24 – Iredell County RS renamed Iredell County Rescue Squad and Fire, Inc. [NCSOS]

2016 or later – Troutman RS merged with fire department.

Sources – Abbreviations

MJL – Mike Legeros research

NCSOS – Secretary of State corporation records, North Carolina

SDR – Statesville Daily Record

SP – Statesville Press

SRL – Statesville Record & Landmark