

# Apex Rescue Squad

## Apex EMS

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### Pre-History

See main Wake County rescue squad history document.

### 1971 to 1979

1971 - **Apex Volunteer Rescue Squad** created. Incorporated on September 8, 1971.

- The town had a population of 2,000. [AEMS web]
- Founded by thirteen members of the Apex Jaycees. [AEMS web]
- They incorporated as a non-profit organization, and provided their services free of charge. [Apex cb]
- They elected Board of Directors at their first regular meeting:
  - Harold L. Gaster, President
  - Roy Caudle, Vice President
  - Willie V. Yates, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President
  - Nicky Winstead, Secretary and Treasurer
  - Donald E. Gilliam, Sergeant
  - J. M. Ragan Jr., Sargeant. [Apex cb]
- Along with these charter members:
  - Roger Adams
  - Nolan Cooke
  - James Herndon
  - Joe Mills
  - Don Leazer
  - Danny Linton
  - Franklin Page. [Apex cb]
- First call was a one-year-old having a seizure.
- During the first year, the squad answered 167 calls.

Early vehicle notes:

- First vehicle is a 1956 Pontiac Superior “straight drive” ambulance.
  - Donated by Bob McIver of Apex Funeral Home.
  - Also remembered as donated by Apex Funeral Directors.
- Second vehicle is a 1972 Chevy van ambulance. [Apex cb]
  - Donated by Bill Geringer of Geringer Chevrolet Company.

- Received May 1972. Cited in as “purchased” in 1973 centennial booklet.
- Alternate model year as 1973.
- Purchased for \$6,150 from Tulsa Emergency and Safety Equipment.
- Total cost is \$6,550 with warning devices purchased by the squad and installed by Tulsa.
- Fully-heated and air-conditioned, and has capacity for four patients.
- Note is held at CC&B for \$3,600.
- Model year source is undated news story about 1978 rescue week.
- Third vehicle is a new 1973 Chevrolet/Superior ambulance.
  - Received on March 27, 1973.
  - Built by Superior Coach Company of Dallas on a Chevrolet chassis.
  - Driven to Greensboro, where it was accepted.
  - Squad’s other vehicle is a 1972 van, to be used only to answer accidents and other incidents where rescue equipment is needed.
  - Model year source [Apex cb].
- Crash truck added by 1979 or 1980.
  - Chevrolet C-30 utility truck, two-door, with “Squad 51”-style body. Features included a ladder rack, stokes basket, long backboard, lighting, and front-mounted winch. Painted white with orange stripe.

Equipment notes:

- Hurst tool acquired by May 1977. Cost \$6,000.
- Source: Undated news story about 1979 rescue week.

Facility notes:

- Town Hall – 1971 to 1974
  - Squad operates out of the town hall until the present building opened in early 1974.
  - Recalls Willie Yates in an undated news article, during the first months of operation, the squad was located behind the old town hall. “To begin with, we didn’t even have a shelter to put our vehicle under. We’d keep it over at the Amoco service station day or night. In the winter, it would be covered with ice, and we’d have to scrape off all the window. That really slowed us down, as you can imagine. We wore out several scrapers during those first winters.”
- 315 W. Williams Street – 1974 to present
  - Land is donated to the squad on June 25, 1973. Source: County tax records.
  - Occupied in early 1974. Source: Undated news story about 1979 rescue week.
  - William J. “Jennings” Booth Jr. donates the land on Williams Street, and a community-wide fundraising effort raised the necessary money.
  - The building is situated at an ideal location on a major thoroughfare, which helps the squad have fast response times.
  - Source: Undated news story about 1978 rescue week.

1972 – Apex Rescue Squad Ladies Auxiliary organized. [OH]

1973 – Squad has 26 members, with 21 who have received more than 30 hours of “emergency first aid training and are certified as ambulance attendants by the N.C. State Board of Health.” [Apex cb]

1974 – Squad moves into new building, in early 1974. See facility notes above.

1974-77 – Crash truck and Hurst tools added. See equipment notes above.

1977 – First annual Rescue Week held, May 1-7, 1977. The event is created as a combination fundraiser and education effort. Activities include:

- Sunday – Open house at squad building, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Equipment display. Blood pressures taken.
- Monday – Films shown at squad building, 7:30 p.m. “Sirens in the Night” and a film on the Heimlich Maneuver.
- Tuesday – CPR demonstration at squad building, 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday – Squad building open for inspection and taking blood pressures.
- Thursday – Basic first aid instructions at squad building, 7:30 p.m.
- Friday – Film at squad building, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday – Hurst tool demonstrations, parking lot of squad building, 2:00 p.m.

1977 – First full-time employees, hired in Fall 1978. Kirby McQueen and Willie Yates.

For months during 1977, the day crew had dwindled to five or six members in the immediate Apex area. When the number of day volunteers dropped below four, a decision by the full membership was made at the September 1977 meeting, to hire two people to answer calls between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The staff costs the squad about \$1,500 a month. The addition of the two men has “greatly improved the squad’s response time and quality of service.” Source: Undated news story about 1978 rescue week.

1978 – Second annual Rescue Week held, April 30 to May 6.

- Squad hopes to raise about \$12,000, through contributions in western Wake area.
- Squad also receives money from the town and county. But donations account for about half of their money.
- Twenty-three active members, who work on six-day rotation. Though the squad could benefit from having about thirty members, the present limit is twenty-five.
- Each member is state-certified EMT, with 81 hours of basic training, which amounts to three hours a night, twice a week, for thirteen week. Plus ten hours of training in an emergency room. Re-certification is required every two years, with a 21-hour refresher course.
- Members also take other special courses. Notes an undated news story about the event, Kirby McQueen, Bill Stone, and Jim Wood participate in a search and rescue course in Wake Forest. The squad is also looking into a 20-hour class on radioactivity, to prepare for an nuclear accident, if one involved fuel shipments via rail or highway.

- Squad averages one call per day. Each response costs the squad about \$53. One half of the calls “aren’t life or death.” Most calls are emergencies, but there are “different definitions of what constitutes an emergency.”
- Squad is looking into purchase of heart monitoring machine, and county is studying the possibility of creating a “mobile intensive care technician” program that would require more training than the EMT program.
- Ladies auxiliary helps “minimize the difficulties which can hurt the married volunteers.” That helps spouses “understand the duties better.” The auxiliary members have duties that included holding fundraising events.
- Junior Rescue Squad is comprised of youths from fourteen and eighteen years of age. Randy Culler is the Junior Squad Adviser. Youth members can ride on calls on a limited basis. Junior squad was organized “over the last two years” notes April-May 1979 news story.
- Sources: Undated news stories about 1978 and 1979 rescue week.

1979 – Heart lung resuscitation (HLR) machine purchased, by May 23, 1979.

Aided by money raised by the Ladies Auxiliary. During 1978, they raised money through a turkey shoot, selling Stanley items, selling Christmas items, and having a bake sale at the Christmas parade. These net the group about \$455.00, which is given to the squad as a Christmas present, to help them purchase the machine. Source: Ladies Auxiliary scrapbook.

1979 – Snapshot in April/May:

- Squad has 26 members, divided into six crews.
- Three rescue vehicles.
- Source: Undated news story about 1979 rescue week.

1979 – Squad building expanded with two additional vehicle bays on the south side of the structure. September 1979 photo shows metal girders and roof in place. Completed in early 1980? Source: Ladies Auxiliary scrapbook.

## 1990-1999

1991 – Nine volunteer rescue squads in Wake County abandoned tradition of free ambulance service and begin charging fees for transporting patients. (N&O, 6/10/91)

Snapshot of rescue squads, from September 10, 1991, News & Observer:

Rescue Squad	BLS fee	ALS fee	Lifetime Membership	1990 Calls
Apex Rescue	\$75	\$150	\$35	1,021

1994 – Fleet snapshot in September:

- Truck 1 – 1990 Ford – Type II
- Truck 2 – 1993 Ford – Type I
- Truck 3 – 1992 Ford – Type I
- Truck 481 – 1986 Chevrolet crash truck.
- Source: Ladies Auxiliary Scrapbook.

1994 – Building renovations completed, by November. From scrapbook photos, look like improvements to the living areas. Source: Ladies Auxiliary Scrapbook.

1994 – New 1994 Ford F-350 Super Duty/AEV crash truck delivered. Purchased in September at the annual rescue convention in Greenville, NC. Sold by Chief’s Inc. Delivered in November. Source: Ladies Auxiliary Scrapbook.

1997 – Apex Fire Department assumes role of local rescue provider.

- In February 1997, they receive and place in service a new 1995 HME/RescueMaster heavy rescue, which is delivered with new rescue tools. The truck is a demo unit, and approved for purchase by the department in January. They consider purchasing the squad’s Ford F-350 crash truck, but decide they want something bigger. Source: Oral history, AFD meeting minutes.
- Disposition of Apex RS crash truck and equipment to be determined.

1997 – Notes:

- On October 27, 1997, the organized filed a name change with the state, and was renamed Apex Emergency Medical Services Inc.

1999 - Snapshot of Wake County EMS System, from TriData’s *Comprehensive Assessment of the Wake County Emergency Medical Services System Final Report*, which was submitted to Wake County EMS on June 16, 1999:

Agency	Ambulances	Square Miles	1995 Pop.	Personnel	1998 Calls	1998 Revenues
Apex EMS	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First duty, paramedic</li> <li>• Second duty, paramedic</li> <li>• Third duty, EMT intermediate and basic</li> </ul>	107.4	23,177	3 F/T, 20 P/T, 23 vol	1,688	\$402,900

## 2000-2018

- 2001 – Ladies Auxiliary incorporated.
  - By this time, the organization has been renamed Apex Community Auxiliary.
  - The incorporation papers are filed with the state on September 5, 2001.

- Their purpose is listed as “organized to support the members, funding, and operation of the Apex Emergencies Medical Service.”
- The initial Board of Directors is comprised of Phyllis Johnston, Kathy Plunkett, and Wilma Honeycutt.
- 2010, March – **Apex EMS** merges with the town, and becomes a part of the Fire Department.
  - The merger into the town had been proposed several times, but wasn’t approved as an action until early 2009. The merger was originally planned to take place in October 2009, but was proposed a couple times until March 2010.
  - Squad members become town employees on March 22, 2010.
  - Town Fire Chief becomes town Fire/EMS Chief.
  - Full-time employees of the squad become full-time employees of the town.
  - Equipment and assets are titled to the town.
  - Fire and EMS operate as two separate divisions.
  - Fire department patch design is expanded to include “EMS.”
  - Only one ambulance is lettered for “Apex Fire & EMS.”
  - All ambulances have the revised Apex Fire & EMS emblem on their doors.
  - (Source: Legeros Blog)
- 2011, March - Proposal is made to turn EMS over to Wake County.
  - This proposal is rejected.
  - Apex EMS instead separates from the fire department after about a year, after merging with the town.
  - Apex EMS begins operating as a separate town department.
- 2011, July - Corporate disillusion for **Apex EMS Inc.** is filed on July 8, 2011.
- 2015 – New graphics scheme adopted for the fleet, with red and blue over white replacing orange over white. Debuts on a 2015 Chevrolet 4500/AEV ambulance, which is delivered circa June 2015. (Source: Legeros Blog)
- 2017, June – Apex Community Auxiliary ceases operations. They dispose their remaining funds to other non-profit charities: Apex Historical Society, Blue Light College of Apex, American Legion Post 124, Grow Our Kids, and Apex EMS, with \$35,000 for a new “power load” system on their next ambulance.
- 2018, June 30 – Apex EMS ends operations. Wake County EMS begins providing service to their response district on July 1.

Snapshot of Apex EMS at the end of FY17:

- Operating budget of \$1,811,240
- Funded with eighteen full-time positions:
  - EMS Chief (1)

- Paramedic Shift Supervisors (4)<sup>1</sup>
- EMTs (Basic, Intermediate, Paramedic) (11)
- Paramedic FTO (1)
- Staffing and Logistics Specialist (1)
- Four ambulances
  - Three provided by county
  - One owned by town, 2011 Chevrolet 4500, reserve. Replacement requested in FY17 budget, not approved,
- One supervisor's vehicle, county-owned.
- One station, town-owned.

Details of the transition:

- County hires most of the members.
- County continues operating three of their four ambulances, and the supervisor's vehicle, all of which are county-owned.
- Town continues operating their station, which is used as an EMS base, and is also repurposed as administrative officers for the fire department.
- Town department is dissolved.

## Sources

- [Apex cb] Apex Centennial, 1873-1973. Commemorative booklet, 1973.
- [AEMS site] Apex EMS web site
- Apex Rescue Squad Ladies Auxiliary scrapbooks

## Help Wanted!

This document is part of a project to research and record the history of rescue squads and EMS providers in Wake County.

You can help in any number of ways, including:

- Read this document and visit the project web site, [www.legeros.com/history/ems](http://www.legeros.com/history/ems)
  - What's good about what we're doing?
  - What could be improved?
  - What haven't we thought of?
- Proofread this document as casually or extensively as desired:
  - Misspelled names?
  - Wrong makes or models of vehicles?

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<sup>1</sup> Though named Paramedic Shift Supervisor, they did not function as responding district chiefs in the Wake County EMS System.

- General timeframes that seem off?
  - Etc.
- Supplement this document with things that you remember, or stories you've heard.
  - Jot your thoughts in an e-mail.
  - Send a long, detailed e-mail.
  - Write things down on paper and send via postal mail.
  - Talk to the project organizers in person, at your convenience.
  - Etc.
- Share any scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, old photos, or old documents that you have, or can find.
  - Want some blasts from the past, to help you remember?
  - Visit <https://www.facebook.com/WakeEMSHistory>
- Suggest particular people that we can contact, for more information.

Contact Mike Legeros or Jeff Hammerstein at any time. Thank you in advance!