Amery (WI) Area EMS

The old whiteboard where Amery Area Ambulance members once discovered their monthly schedules still hangs on the wall above the station computer, but the names were erased 10 years ago when AAEMS signed on with Aladtec.

Schedules were actually jotted on a clipboard, then transferred to the whiteboard. "We passed the monthly calendar around at our meetings," said Director Nicole Gullickson. Members indicated their shift preferences and a leader distilled the info to a written document, which staff were responsible for recording on their personal calendars.

Gullickson laughs when she recalls AAEMS' transition to the digital era. if anyone complained, she wasn't around to hear it.

The first shoe to drop was implementation of an electronic patient reporting platform right when Gullickson departed to deliver her first child. Then service leaders were training for the Aladtec migration when Gullickson began labor with her second child.

"When we switched over, it was a fairly smooth transition. The few challenges (members) had were those without internet access."

Although connectivity in the region has improved a lot since then, a few members still don't have smart phones, but "they're still able to get text messages." Gullickson said.

Amery EMS is a municipally-owned service, shared between the City of Amery, Village of Clayton, and seven surrounding townships. The agency is managed by integrated health care organization Health Partners, which operates the 22-bed critical-access hospital in town. Gullickson said the management contract is a "huge benefit for our ambulance

Neighboring agencies also using Aladtec:

Clear Lake-, Osceola-, New Richmond-, Baldwin- area ambulance services; Northland Municipal Ambulance, Luck; Boyceville Community Ambulance Service; Lakeview Hospital EMS, Stillwater, MN; Washington Co. Sheriff's Dept., Stillwater, MN; North Memorial Air Crew, Forest Lake, MN; Hudson Police Dept., Hudson; St. Croix EMS & Rescue, Hudson; Rice Lake Police Dept., Rice Lake; River Falls Area Ambulance & River Falls Police Dept., River Falls; White Bear Lake Fire Dept., WBL, MN; Spring Valley Area Ambulance, Spring Valley; Oakdale Fire & Oakdale Police depts., Oakdale, MN; Serving Hands LTC, Hudson; and Animal Emergency & Referral Ctr., St. Paul.

Department Info:

Roster: 21 sworn - and civilian employees.

Calls: About 1,300 in 2017.

Service area: 10,500 residents, about 200 sq. miles.

Apparatus: 3 ALS ambulances, housed with sleeping quarters, kitchen and lounge.

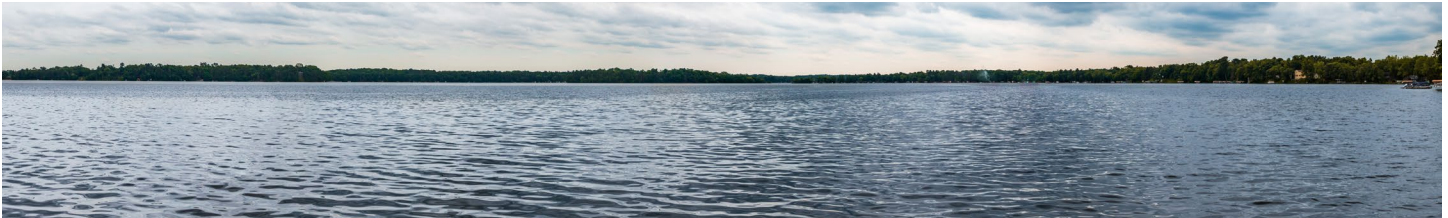**Features:** Community located in rural farm & lake country, 60 miles northeast of Minneapolis-St.Paul.

Special challenges: Significant spike in lakes-area population during summer months, three youth camps, Apple River with various tributaries, extensive elderly housing.

Aladtec users since 2009

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service because we're able to get discounted supplies at their buying group prices. We were able to take advantage of larger group health insurance."

Aladtec has continued to serve Amery EMS as they've shifted from part-time volunteer to a paid 24/7 service.

"I like the fact that over the years, we've changed the dynamics of how we schedule. We've gone from advanced-level service to paramedic service, and we've had to make changes there. We've gone from a two-person staff to a three-person staff to a two-person staff, then back to having a float, then to staffing two trucks. Next up is two trucks with 24/7 staffing.

"Having the flexibility to just go in and make those changes, is nice," said Gullickson.

She has called Aladtec support on occasion for assistance when she's forgotten some nuances of the program. "Everybody's always so good down there -- 'Oh yeah. I know how to do that!' They have great service."

Early in life, a path to EMS for Gullickson seemed unlikely.

"I used to pass out at the sight of blood," she laughed, explaining that she joined Amery EMS' Explorer program at the encouragement of her parents while she was in high school.

Twenty years later, the program is still operates with sponsorship help from the Service's insurance provider.

Kids aged 14 and older receive privacy training, sign a confidentiality agreement, learn CPR, and participate in training when they can. They're allowed to ride along on calls. The program fluctuates from one to 20 participants some years.

Among the success stories is a former Amery woman who joined while a high school co-ed. She was intrigued enough to pursue her EMT certification, then EMT Advanced, attended nursing school and eventually earned a slot as a flight nurse with LifeLink -- a regional air ambulance service.

Beyond providing members with real time schedule information, Gullickson appreciates Aladtec's text- and e-mail capabilities. "I think it has just opened the communications big-time, because you can get messages out very quickly," she said.

Late one night in February, 2018, a seal on large pipe within the City's water system failed, causing the contents of Amery's two water towers

to drain into the nearby Apple River. By dawn, schools and some businesses announced closures. The local hospital went on divert. Some patients were sent home while all others had to be transferred to area hospitals.

Gullickson jumped onto Aledtec and alerted her members. Within an hour, she had three fully-staffed trucks ready to roll. She also uses the platform to remind members of required meetings, and uses the Events feature to advise of upcoming stand-bys for community gatherings.
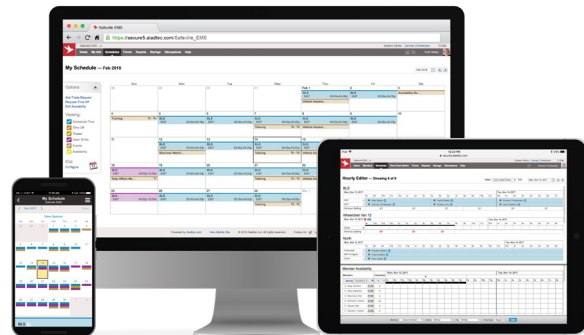
Gullickson likes the ability to check Aladtec's activity log and verify when an action was taken.

"I've had people say, 'I didn't sign up for that!'," implying that someone else had obligated them to a shift. "It has been very nice to be able to go back, see who logged in, see who signed up, and the time that it occurred."

Nicole Gullickson

Nicole Gullickson, EMT-A, joined Amery Area EMS as a volunteer in1998, then went full-time in 2000. She has served as director since 2004. Gullickson will soon complete paramedic training through the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, New Richmond. Her husband Dan, is former chief of the nearby Garfield branch of Dresser-Osceola-Garfield Fire Assoc. He is also a EMT-A with AAEMS.

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

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