



# INYO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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NATE GREENBERG  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

DARCY ELLIS  
ASST. CLERK OF THE BOARD



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
CAO Nate Greenberg, (760) 878-0292  
City Administrator Deston Dishion, (760) 873-5863

## County Secures Temporary EMS Contract for Bishop Area

For the second time this year, County of Inyo and City of Bishop officials have united to ensure the continuation of ambulance service in the greater Bishop area.

With support from the City of Bishop, the County has signed a 30-day agreement for emergency medical services (EMS) with REACH Air Medical Services effective July 24. This agreement comes on the heels of a 90-day EMS agreement with Coast 2 Coast Public Safety (C2C), which was the winning responder to a Request for Proposals (RFP) released by the County in March. The RFP itself was developed in response to longtime EMS provider Symons Ambulance ceasing its operations for the Bishop area and relinquishing its hold on an Exclusive Operating Area agreement with the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency (ICEMA).

The 90-day agreement with C2C expired July 23 – a week after the company announced it could not continue providing EMS services to the greater Bishop area without a subsidy. A C2C representative told the Inyo County Board of Supervisors at its July 18 meeting that the company was not able to bring in the revenue it had initially anticipated, due to the newly non-exclusive nature of the Operating Area around Bishop. Prior to C2C's announcement, the County was prepared to renew the C2C EMS contract through December, 2024 while the search for and analysis of long-term options were in progress. However, C2C's announcement came with the news that it could only continue to operate with some form of financial assurance – effectively \$60,000/mo. – which would cover their operating costs and payroll.

The Board of Supervisors discussed the situation at length during its July 18 – receiving feedback from volunteer ambulance providers, hospital emergency department heads, and others in the process – and made clear its bottom line was maintaining ambulance service for its constituents.

Given the time constraints, County staff underwent the informal bidding process outlined in the County's Purchasing Policy, seeking bids from parties interested in stepping in to provide

EMS for a 30-day period while a full RFP could be developed and released. Both of these activities took place on July 20.

The County received two bids: one from C2C and one from REACH. While C2C submitted the preferred proposal, the firm ultimately withdrew its bid due to circumstances beyond its control. The County subsequently entered into a 30-day agreement with the other respondent, REACH, for a cost of \$25,000 through August 22, 2023.

In the meantime, responses to the RFP for interim EMS service (from August 22, 2023 - December 31, 2024) are due back to the County by August 7. The County will be considering options during the August 8 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Inyo County is committed to ensuring EMS service is functioning for all areas of the County. While the immediate focus is around continuity of service in Bishop area, the Inyo County Board and Administration is continuing to work with its consultant, ESCI, on a countywide study that will inform the future of EMS throughout all areas of the County.

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