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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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Long-Time Ambulance Provider Gives Notice to Cease Operations in Bishop Area

Symons Emergency Services has given notice to the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency (ICEMA) that in the near future it will cease providing Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance services in the Exclusive Operating Area (EOA), which encompasses the greater Bishop area.

Symons has served the Bishop area since 1989. Its current contract with ICEMA requires an ALS level of response in the Bishop area EOA, which ensures that a paramedic is on board the responding ambulance. Over the past year, the Bishop Fire Department has backed up Symons with additional ambulance service, mostly provided by volunteer Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) delivering Basic Life Support (BLS) services.

“While Symons' decision to cease service is unfortunate, the City and County are working together to develop a plan that will ensure continued critical ambulance service for the residents and visitors in the greater Bishop area,” said City Administrator Deston Dishion. Both agencies are committed to keeping the public informed as they work through the process.

In its formal notice to ICEMA, Symons Emergency Services cited unsustainable financial losses as the reason for the company ceasing ALS operations in Bishop. Symons said it can no longer bear the burden of subsidizing the ambulance service as a result of rising costs continuously outpacing Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Symons, ICEMA, and the agencies are exploring the possibility of Symons providing BLS services as a short-term solution that may allow for a smoother transition to a new provider. All involved Emergency Service partners are committed to ensuring ambulance service is available while a long-term solution is sought. Public meetings will be scheduled in the near future for residents to give input.

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