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## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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## County, City Closer to Bridging EMS Gap

**INDEPENDENCE** – County of Inyo and City of Bishop officials are optimistic that recent efforts to secure temporary Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for the greater Bishop area will allow for continued coverage after the current EMS provider ceases operations later this month.

It was announced Tuesday that, under the pressure of that looming deadline, the County and City have successfully found a qualified firm to bridge the EMS coverage gap on a temporary basis until a longer-term solution is identified.

The clock has been ticking down to the loss of Northern Inyo County ambulance service since January, when Symons Emergency Services announced it would be ceasing Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance services in the greater Bishop Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) effective April 22.

According to Health & Human Services Director Marilyn Mann, the County is now in the process of contracting with Coast2Coast Public Safety, a private firm headquartered in Lake Havasu, AZ. Coast2Coast was one of two prospective contractors that responded to the County's Request for Proposals (RFP) for temporary ambulance service. The RFP was issued on March 9 with a closing date of March 20, after which proposals were reviewed by both City of Bishop and County of Inyo personnel.

Coast2Coast specializes in public safety services ranging from Security, EMS, Fire Rescue, and Emergency Management to K-9 Narcotics and Explosives Detection, Electronics Detection, and Search and Rescue. The firm has thus far demonstrated an eagerness to branch into Inyo County, even if on a temporary basis. Mann said upon notification to Coast2Coast of the contract award, the firm had already secured an agreement with a local ER physician to serve as its medical director; begun the process to obtain Drug Enforcement Administration approval to administer life-saving drugs; applied for Medi-Cal and Medicare billing numbers; registered their ambulances in California; contacted Bishop Police Department and its dispatch and obtained the correct service channels and frequencies; and negotiated with Symons for the use of its building on West Line Street as a local headquarters. Coast2Coast has committed to one ALS ambulance and a second providing a minimum of Basic Life Support.

Ensuring continuous access to life-saving EMS has been priority number one for the City of Bishop and County of Inyo since Symons' January announcement. The contract with Coast2Coast is the culmination of a lot of hard work, collaboration, research, and determination on the part of both agencies, and quite a feat given the short timeframe in which to react.

“We’re committed to ensure there’s not a gap in ambulance service and believe we’ll be able to achieve that,” Inyo County Administrator Nate Greenberg told the Board of Supervisors.

The past four months have also included the County and City collaborating on long-term solutions to the EMS situation with the aid of the Bishop Rural Fire Protection District. To that end, both agencies have engaged the services of Emergency Services Consulting International to assess the state of EMS in the City of Bishop and beyond. Greenberg said the analysis will be a multi-month process expected to produce information critical to re-establishing a long-term provider in the EOA.

Greenberg and the Board of Supervisors expressed their gratitude to Mann and Assistant HHS Director Anna Scott, who were instrumental in drafting the RFP in a short timeframe. Supervisors Scott Marcellin and Trina Orrill, representing Districts 3 and 1 respectively, said the work being done by the County and City is helping to assuage their constituents’ fears about the loss of ambulance service.

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