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people would have to go to Denver or probably Wichita for training.

“When we started we worked with Hays Medical Center,” Steve said. “We created AgraSafe through a grant and put on farm safety programs in 18 counties in northwest Kansas.

“Some were professional programs for firefighters, law enforcement and then we did classes for 4-H farm kids and farm families and the general public.”

Evert said they had people in the classes of all ages from 5 years old to 85.

“This is where we got our start,” Greg said. “That lasted for four or five years, and we have continued since then holding classes in western Kansas, southwestern Nebraska and eastern Colorado.”

“We have been all the way east to Hoisington,” Steve said, “so we have been getting into central Kansas.”

The main focus of the early farm safety programs was to teach safe extrication of injured people from farm equipment. Steve said it was much different dealing with farm equipment than what is usually faced by emergency people dealing with highway accidents or other injuries.

He said part of safety training for the farm families and 4-H kids is because in many cases they will be the first people at a farm accident scene, and in some cases teaching the farm kids can keep the farmers from doing some unsafe things.

“Teaching the children and wives to be safe is



Instructor Steve Evert (center) shows a student in the emergency medical technician class the proper way to put a sling on a patient with an injured arm. He showed the students how to do it and then watched as they practiced on each other.

a way to influence the farmers,” he said.

**Takes passion to be EMT**

“Being an EMT is a passion,” Steve said, “You cannot do it without the passion as a volunteer.”

“I agree,” Greg said. “It is a passion. Definitely don’t do it for the money. Got to love helping people. The greatest reward is helping people because you don’t always get a thank you.”

Steve said he got started because his mother had to be flown to Denver.

“We (hospital ambulance service) did not have the equipment at that time,” he said. “A flight nurse said I were not properly trained to load someone into an airplane. I told her I would get trained so I could pick up the plane if I had to.

“I helped load my dad. It was a challenge as he was not a small man.”

“I don’t know how I got here,” Greg said. “There really wasn’t any huge event. I have been in situations where I did not know what to do so I took a class.

“Karen caught me and said I should go do the farm-medic training. Thanks to her it sort of pushed me over the hump to become an instructor.”

“It is Karen’s fault,” Steve said. “She felt we had the ability and pushed us in the direction.”

“It has been an interesting adventure, and there is always something new,” Greg said. “We see different people and different techniques. We learn something out of every class,”

“We have met some great people with amazing stories in all the classes we have taught,” Steve said. “I wish I had done it 20 years earlier,

but I am glad I did it.”

He said he and Greg need to get continuing education hours every two years, and are fortunate they can go to Hoxie or Hays for that. The Region 1 Emergency Medical Service council provides training for instructors. The region includes 18 counties of northwest Kansas, south to Wallace County, then six counties east, and includes Russell and Osborne Counties.

**Award nice, appreciated**

Asked about the Friend of Agriculture award from the Sherman County Conservation District, Steve said they appreciated the people thinking of them.

“We have done this because we care, not because we are seeking recognition,” he said. “Would you jump out of bed at 2 a.m. to do this, thinking you are going to get an award. I don’t think so.

“If we can make a difference for one person we have done a great thing.”

Greg said the longevity of an EMT is thee to five years with life changes and burnout it is necessary to have a class every year.

Steve said some burnout and some move up to be paramedics or nurses.

He said working with the respiratory therapy class at Northwest Tech, Eagle Med and the hospital has helped. It gives us a good support and knowledge base.

Greg said they have worked with the city and county firefighters to help with equipment and training.

Steve said they work with law enforcement as well because it is a team effort.

## Safety instructors both Sherman County natives

**By Tom Betz**

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The two men who do the emergency medical training in northwest Kansas are both Sherman County natives and farmers who have a passion for their work.

Steve Evert and Greg Nemechek were both born in Sherman County with Steve graduating from Goodland High School in 1972 and Greg graduating in 1979.

Steve lives south of Caruso and Greg lives southeast of Goodland.

Both agree farming has been good the last couple of years.

“When Mother Nature gives us the soft

stuff instead of the hard stuff we can be pretty good farmers,” Steve said.

Greg agreed farming has been better the last two years than the previous 10 years.

**Steve Evert**

Steve went to Hutchinson Junior College and New Mexico State University receiving a degree in physical education, health science and history.

His wife Marcia is a computer technician with the Goodland school district. They have two sons Nick and Alex. Nick is working at Grant Junior High and Alex is in Manhattan

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**Both do other training**

Both men are cardio pulmonary resuscitation instructors and give classes and refresher classes around the area.

Steve has been active giving first aid training for the Boy Scouts and the kids Skills Day programs.

When he was in college he was a water safety instructor and today he gets in the pool at Stever Park to with with the guards on CPR.

“I become a big patient,” he said. “With proper training any three people can do it.”

The men said they have been invited to John Deere Days and went to Wray, Colo., for a safety program. The Kansas Custom Cutters Association has had them come talk and put on a safety program.

“At one program we asked what they would do with a 320 pound man in a tractor seat,” Greg said, “and pointed to the three smallest people in the class. They got it done.”

“You have to think about the best way to handle the problem,” Steve said, “and that may mean thinking outside the box. We take some of the emergency people out of their comfort zone.

“We challenge every group to use equipment they are not used to using. We take their ‘toys’ away and they do not know what to do. We make them use creative thinking to make things work.

“That is the motto of the American farmer ‘do with what you have.’”

In the 10 years the men estimate the programs probably would have been done for more than a 1,000 people, and said the average EMT class is about seven to 10 people.

**Changes over the 10 years**

They agree things have changed in the 10 years with more modern equipment that means more education is needed.

“We have to learn about things,” Steve said. “When I started Viagra was not an issue.

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