



WITH THEIR HANDS PLACED FOR SUPPORT, Ambulance Director John Barrett and students Vicki Howland (center) and Rachel Nelson prepared to roll Christine Stanley, who was pretending to be injured, onto a back board during emergency medical training.

Volunteers learn ABCs of emergency medicine

Class graduates will man ambulances

In a hands-on class, volunteers from Oberlin, Norton County, Selden and Jennings have learned how to be an emergency medical technician.

Students bandaged arms, checked vital statistics, put on neck collars and strapped participants into a piece of equipment which allowed them to lift a victim out of a chair with their neck stable, and put them on a back board on the floor.

County Ambulance Director John Barrett said he has two classes going now, one in Jennings with eight people and one in Oberlin with 10.

The Oberlin class will be taking their test within the next month and will be ready to start working on the ambulance if they all pass, he said.

Students here have about an hour left of lecture and then it is all hands-on skills work, he said. On March 1, students brushed up on those skills at the ambulance barn behind the Decatur County Hospital.

Mr. Barrett told students the evening was set aside to get the bugs worked out and for them to ask all the questions they needed to.

Two groups of three students each worked on a pseudo accident scene. Students checked the patients' pulse and points on their body from head to toe to see if there were

any sore spots. They had the patients wiggle their fingers and toes to make sure they could move them.

Mr. Barrett said volunteers are important to the county because without them the ambulance service couldn't run. Emergency medical technicians carry pagers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, ready for anything to which they need to respond.

Three of the students will be working for a new volunteer unit out of Selden, he said. Although there are emergency medical technicians there who work as first responders, Selden will be getting an ambulance and the volunteers will be able to go out on calls themselves.

Mr. Barrett said the ambulance in Selden will benefit everyone, since Oberlin responds as far as the northern tier of Sheridan County now.

The Selden ambulance also will be able to get to some parts of southern Decatur County faster.

When the weather is bad, he said, Oberlin crews often have to take the highway, which takes longer.

He said, "they have been provided everything they need to know to be emergency medical technicians."



Strapped to a seated board, Bernie Koerperich gets ready to be lifted by John Barrett and Don Koerperich.



CHECKING VITAL SIGNS, Tammy Shaw (above) watched the blood pressure gauge on Sarah Coiner's arm. Leanna Bryan (right) held the mask in one hand and prepared to squeeze the air bag in the other to give a victim air.



Herald staff photos and story by Kimberly Brandt