Superior not pulling out, but there's still a strain on EMS

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Published on: Friday, May 18, 2007

NORWICH – Rumors that Binghamton-based Superior Ambulance Services planned to pull its last vehicle from Chenango County are false, according to Chenango County Emergency Management Deputy Director Matt Beckwith. But the company has no plans to add another much-requested unit, either.

“They are pleased with their numbers at this time,” Beckwith, who is also fire coordinator, said during a meeting of the Safety & Rules Committee on Wednesday.

In business locally since 1996, Superior cut back earlier this year from operating three ambulances to one, reportedly due to higher fuel and payroll costs. Ever since, about a dozen municipal leaders have complained of the added cost to their emergency medical and fire personnel. Chenango County Community Mental Hygiene Services Director MaryAnn Spryn said last week that she had heard the rumor that Superior may leave the area completely, and if true, that it would be “a major problem” for her department. Mental Hygiene Services relies on ambulances at least once a week - and sometimes as much as three or four times a week - to deliver mentally ill patients to hospitals.

Beckwith said the vulnerable areas in the county - such as Otselic in the northwest, Columbus in northeast and Bainbridge in the southeast - are being covered by ambulance companies operating in other counties and that the situation “is stabilized” at the present time.