Ambulance Services Compete for City Contract

MONROE AND RURAL METRO BOTH WANT CITY CONTRACT
Patrice Walsh (Rochester, N.Y.) –

Every four years, the city of Rochester awards an contract to an ambulance company. Rural-Metro has won it since 1988, but now the city is recommending a switch to Monroe Ambulance.

Winning the contract may boil down to one thing--the fastest response time in an emergency.

Rural Metro responds to most ambulance calls in the city, averaging 150 calls a day. But, that could change in December if Monroe gets the new contract.

If they do, they'll have to respond to three times the number of calls they now do.

There were just over 48,000 calls for ambulance service in the city last year. Ninety percent of the time Rural Metro responded to those calls within the required time of 8 minutes 59 seconds.

Monroe is promising to get there within 8 minutes. Rural Metro has since offered to match the 8 minute time.

Cost is not a factor, since both services charge the same rate.

The committee studying the ambulance services gave Monroe the nod because of the quicker response time and because the company is locally owned and has a more updated fleet.

If they get the contract, Monroe will also double its staff.

Director of Monroe Ambulance Mark Tornstrom said, "We're concerned only with Rochester. The city is our life. We’re prepared to provide this service to the city, and do it at a reduced response time."

Now, Rural Metro has also agreed to all the conditions and promised to update its fleet as well.

Rural-Metro’s General Manager Barry Palatas said that the reason they have an edge is, “our people, we have great paramedics and EMTs; they know this city."

City Council awards the contract at year's end.

Monroe provided service for the city from 1982 through 1988. Rural-Metro has won the contract since 1988 for the last 19 years.