

## **NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ULSTER COUNTY LAUNCHES COUNTYWIDE VOLUNTEER FIRE AND EMS RECRUITMENT DRIVE**

Kingston, NY (July 27, 2009) – Citing the urgent need to reverse the decline in volunteer fire and EMS recruitment rates in the region, Ulster County Executive Mike Hein today announced the launch of a countywide volunteer recruitment drive, to be coordinated by Ulster County Emergency Management.

Sam Appa, Chief of Ulster Hose Company 5, said, "We're pleased that the County Executive has chosen to support a regional approach to volunteer recruitment and is helping focus the spotlight on this critical issue. We're looking forward to working with the County, and all of the communities involved, in getting the job done."

When someone calls 911 in Ulster County, to report a fire or medical emergency, the call is answered by an Emergency Services Dispatcher employed by the County, however, more often than not, the call is responded to by volunteers at one or more of 70 volunteer fire companies and EMS squads.

According to recent statistics, in the ten year period between 1998 and 2008, fire calls in Ulster County were up over 56% and EMS calls were up over 38%. During the same ten year time period, volunteer fire and EMS rates in the County have dropped by over 20%, leaving many organizations struggling to maintain the critical services they provide. The goal of this ongoing recruitment drive will be to steadily reverse this trend.

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“My administration is committed to drawing attention to this incredible important issue,” said the County Executive. “I would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who are part of this program and I urge residents, throughout Ulster County, to support and join their fire departments and rescue squads.”

Ulster County Director of Emergency Management Art Snyder said, “We’re hoping the public will continue the tradition of “neighbor helping neighbor” by joining the men and women of Ulster County’s fire departments and EMS agencies.”

The recruitment drive will include a multi-media public service announcement (PSA) campaign with time/space donated by local radio stations, newspapers, online entities and billboard companies. The County has also set up a dedicated, volunteer recruitment website at: [www.ucvolunteers.org](http://www.ucvolunteers.org) and phone number (845-331-7000), where interested residents can obtain more information or register to volunteer locally.

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