Before the introduction of the railroad in 1880, the Santa Fe Trail served as a major transportation and trade route between New Mexico and Missouri. The trail was more than 780 miles long, and wagons carried trade along the route going about 17 miles per day. The route spanned the entire length of Kansas, and at one point went through the Cimarron Crossing in southwest Kansas. This crossing was somewhere between the present towns of Cimarron and Ingalls in Gray County. Gray County, which was originally part of Ford County, was organized in 1887 and is approximately 60 miles north of Oklahoma and 110 miles east of Colorado.

In the early days of EMS in Gray County, the mortician in the area handled the EMS duties before the City of Cimarron took over. Eventually Gray County EMS was founded in 1976. Gray County EMS is a county volunteer service. They ran 345 calls in 2018 and serve a population of just over 6,000. They serve 869 square miles including the towns of Cimarron, Ingalls, Montezuma, Copeland, and Ensign, and townships of Foote, East Hess, and Logan.

Gray County EMS has a total staff of 29 including two paramedics, one RN, nine AEMTs, and 17 EMTs. Multiple staff members are certified in ACLS, PALS, PHTLS, car seat installation, and safety. Jim Kramer is their instructor coordinator, and Jessica Singhisen has almost completed the requirements for her I/C certification. They also have staff certified in CPR and CPR/First Aid Instructors. They are dispatched from two stations located in Cimarron and Montezuma and have four ambulances, two rangers, and one Rope Rescue/Grain Elevator Rescue truck. Gray County EMS has protocols for advanced procedures for IO, needle decompression, ACLS, and the Lucas Device.

Gray County EMS hosts yearly training for CPR, with Code Blue practice incorporated, football injuries, and spinal motion restriction. They provide training covering various topics throughout the year and teach these in monthly meetings. They also provide their personnel with access to Target Solutions. Target Solutions is utilized to provide online continuing education in the event providers aren’t able to attend monthly meetings or would like to have additional
training. This can be accessed at times convenient for their personnel.

Gray County EMS does outreach in the community and aids residents across multiple areas. Blood pressure, blood glucose, and vital sign checks are done frequently and without charge. They provide CPR and CPR/First Aid classes to the community. They also attend job fairs and job education events at the schools. Gray County EMS is active in multiple Touch-A-Truck events, learn & play evenings, and school outreach events throughout the year. The multiple community events allow them to interact with a wide variety of ages. Gray County EMS loves to educate the community as to what EMS does and answer questions they have.

“We are blessed to have people who volunteer and keep this service going, as well as providers maintaining their skills. We have personnel from a wide range of occupations from law enforcement, nurses, para-educators, etc. Many of our volunteers own businesses and have busy schedules, yet they still make time to cover calls and will also respond when off duty to assist,” said Jessica Singhisen, paramedic with Gray County EMS.

Gray County EMS is proud of their providers, the care they provide, and the outreach they do in the community. According to Jessica, they have an all-around great group of people who volunteer; they always provide care, whether on or off duty, to those who are in need; and their providers are always ready to lend a hand and help wherever needed.
MEET SOME OF THEIR PERSONNEL

Jessica Singhisen, Paramedic

How long have you been in EMS? 13 years

How did you get involved in EMS? I started college majoring in athletic training and psychology. One of my friends worked in EMS and convinced me to do a ride-along on the ambulance. I liked having to think on my feet, being a patient advocate, providing care, and not having to be inside all the time.

What has kept you in EMS? In many situations, people aren’t sure what to do in an emergency. I like knowing what care needs to be provided and being able to assist patients. This job allows me to come into contact with people from multiple backgrounds and cultures. I also enjoy learning and reading, and those are two important and involved aspects of the job.

What type of rewards do you get from the job? It’s rewarding being able to assist patients. From lift assists to advanced care, they’re all important services we provide to the community. When we are called, it gives us a chance to be a positive influence for our patients in their time of need.

What does the future look like to you? From an educational standpoint, I think EMS is heading in an exciting direction. I feel EMS, as a whole, is making great strides in improving patient care based on evidence.

Susana Dyck, AEMT

How long have you been in EMS? 5 1/2 years

How did you get involved in EMS? I was a CNA who was very intrigued by the medical field, and I wasn’t sure what part of the medical field I wanted to pursue. I heard there was an EMT course close by and decided to take it, and I fell in love. Shortly after passing my EMT, I took the AEMT course.

What has kept you in EMS? Constantly learning from each call, and knowing your helping make a difference in the community.

What type of rewards do you get from the job? Challenges? The reward is seeing patients or family members around town later on, when they embrace you, and thank you for taking care of them or a family member! As for a challenge, to be ready to face people who you know and care about on the call, since we live in a small community where everyone knows everyone or is somehow related.

What does the future look like to you? I am currently pursuing nursing, and I plan to continue volunteering here in the community.

What is something someone might not know about you? I would be content living in a tent, as long as I was in the mountains.