



By Jeanné Schantz
Dickinson County EMS

Photos by
Jon Friesen

There's a little town just off Highway 50 in Harvey County with a sign that states: Welcome to Halstead, the "Biggest little town in Kansas." Halstead was named after Murat Halstead, who was a respected Civil War correspondent and newspaper editor. Halstead became incorporated as a city in 1877. We are not here for a history lesson of the town, but we are here to spotlight the history, community, and the hard-working men and woman of Halstead Fire/EMS.

Halstead Fire/EMS is an ALS ground 911 service that is city owned with the fire department. The City of Halstead bought the ambulance service from Kaufman Funeral Home in 1969 for just \$1.00. What's the last thing you were able to buy for a dollar?

Halstead Fire/EMS under the direction of KEMSA Board Member and EMS Director Andy Lowe serves 130 square miles of Harvey County to

include the City of Halstead, City of Sedgwick, rural Harvey County, and surrounding cities. Halstead Fire/EMS averages approximately 650 calls per year for a population of about 5,000 people.

Halstead Fire/EMS operates out of one station with a staff configuration of one EMR, 16 EMTs, four AEMTs, and nine paramedics with supporting volunteers and part-time staff. They currently have an ALS position available. They have a first responder rescue unit and two transporting EMS units. They have a full-time crew on duty then have administration staff and part-timers to cover additional calls when the on-duty crew is out on other calls.

Halstead Fire/EMS ALS staff members hold ACLS, PALS, PHTLS, CPR instructor, and operate under ALS protocols to include RSI, surgical airway,



EMS Director Andy Lowe

Service Spotlight

chest decompression, 12 lead with transmit capability, etCo2, ventilators with CPAP and BiPap capabilities and IV pumps that were provided by NMC Health.

The motto for Halstead Fire/EMS is “Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.” You can see that Halstead Fire/EMS takes this motto to heart. Director Lowe states, “In the last 15 years our service has progressed with improved protocols, more involvement with our medical director and relations with local emergency department physicians. We have been able to upgrade and add new equipment. We are seeing an increase in ROSC on our cardiac arrest calls with the implementation of the LUCAS CPR device, using check sheets during the code, ITD, doppler pulse checks, and etCO2 to monitor progression. We are working as a team effort and being able to focus on patient care not just task.”

Director Lowe reports that Halstead Fire/EMS recognizes that “having technology and tools helps with progression. We still continue to practice and keep our goals doing manual hands-on skills training.” Their training includes having two Sim-MAN mannequins one for skills training and the second is for the scenario room for mock EMS calls and for call review. They also have annual training to include



behavioral emergencies and use of restraints both chemical and physical, BBP training, and medication review for all levels. They have semi-annual training in pediatric trauma and medical calls along with quarterly cardiac arrest review.

Halstead Fire/EMS is involved in the community by conducting CPR courses throughout the year. They do standbys for sporting events and other school activities. In January, the population of Halstead can double over the weekend with the Boy Scouts Annual Trappers Rendezvous. If you’re looking for something to do in August, Halstead has an annual City Old Settlers Festival that is a three-day event. While you’re there, you can visit the Halstead Heritage Museum and Depot and learn about the movie “Picnic” that was primarily filmed in Halstead.

Director Lowe adds, “We are proud to have great support of our Fire/EMS department from our city administration, mayor, and city council. Without their support, we would not be able to provide the level of care and capabilities of our department.” Halstead Fire/EMS is actively involved with Region III EMS, and supports KEMSA with a squad membership. Another asset to the Halstead Fire/EMS team is Sedgwick Fire Department that responds to calls to assist EMS crews in their call area. 🌟

MEET SOME OF THEIR PERSONNEL

Anastasia Enriquez, Paramedic

How long have you been in EMS?

Five years

How did you get involved in EMS?

In all honesty, I sort of just fell into EMS. I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do when I grew up and enrolled in a EMT class. Shortly after starting the class, I realized I had found my passion. I started taking my prerequisites for paramedic and began a paramedic program not long after.

What has kept you in EMS? I have always enjoyed



helping others. I have never been one to sit behind a desk doing the same thing day in and day out. I enjoy going to work and never knowing what I may get involved in each day. I also truly enjoy my co-

workers and getting to know patients who I may have never met before and obtaining different outlooks on life. It can truly be eye opening.

MEET SOME OF THEIR PERSONNEL

What type of rewards do you get from the job?

Personally, it is very rewarding to be able to help others on a daily basis. I enjoy working with children and having the opportunity to make connections in my community through different opportunities and hopefully make a positive impact on their lives. I have always had a love for education so being able to help teach new people in the field is very rewarding.

Challenges? Working for a rural service and living in the same town, I feel like one of the biggest challenges is the potential of running a call on close friends. It brings a different set of obstacles to overcome. Of course, the other well-known challenge is the mental health side due to some of the calls we are all involved in.

What does the future look like to you? The future in EMS looks very unknown in my eyes due to many different aspects that come into play. There will always be a need for EMS throughout the country, but the question is, will EMS be able to sustain through legislative changes as well as inflation? Working for a mixed service, you wonder regularly how long we will be able to sustain our volunteer staffing and what we can do to improve it.

Joshua Neu, EMT-B

How long have you been in EMS? I have been in EMS for about a year and a half.

How did you get involved in

EMS? I got involved in EMS after reaching out to Halstead Fire/EMS. I had my EMT certification, but needed experience.

What has kept you in EMS? One thing that has kept me in EMS is the fact that I am gaining valuable skills and knowledge. I enjoy helping others and getting to assist others.

What type of rewards do you get from the job? Probably the biggest reward is getting to serve the community and help others in their time of need.



What does the future look like to you? My plans for the future include getting a LPC license and going to Seminary.

What is something someone might not know about you? Something that someone might not know about me is that I have a twin brother.

Robert N. Piland, Paramedic

How long have you been in EMS?

I have been in EMS for 15 years.

How did you get involved in EMS?

I became involved in EMS when I expressed to a family member who already started in EMS training that I was dissatisfied with factory work, the way my life was headed, feeling replaceable and without purpose in my mid 20s. He advised me that maybe EMS was something I would enjoy and being part of something bigger than myself may be just what I needed.

What has kept you in EMS? What keeps me in EMS is job stability. I truly enjoy being part of a system that is always improving and changing.

What type of rewards do you get from the job?

The main reward I get from my job is to have a career that helps me to provide for my family and whilst I work a 24 hour shift I then get to spend 48 hours with my family. I'm not just working a 9 to 5 getting home exhausted, just to see them for a few hours then crawling into bed and experiencing the same thing the next day.

What does the future look like to you? I really don't have an idea or expectation of what the future holds in my career, I do what I do to make sure my kids grow up in a happy home and are provided for. When opportunities arise to further my career, I will take them as long as it coincides with that of my family.

What is something someone might not know about you? Whilst I project a confident,

sometimes cocky attitude, I'm very critical of myself and downplay my accomplishments. 🌟

