

# A&M emergency team operated by students

## Volunteers emphasize thorough training

By Carolyn Garcia  
Reporter

The Texas A&M Emergency Care Team began with six students interested in first aid and has grown into one of the nation's only student-operated university emergency care teams.

The volunteer team has 30 full members and 74 probational members. All new members are on probation for one semester. Then an admissions committee decides whether to grant them full member status, team member John Turner said.

Ken Hutchenrider, deputy chief of the University's Emergency Medical Services, said the team answers all emergency calls on campus with the assistance of the 911 phone number and the campus operator.

When the operator receives a distress call, the call is patched through to both the police and the care team, Hutchenrider said.

Nathan Schwade, chief of the emergency medical technicians, said the majority of the calls are sick calls, traffic accidents, sports-related injuries and psychiatric calls.

"We get a lot of psychiatric calls," Schwade said. "They get painted in the corner about something and just want help. Most are pill overdoses."

Hutchenrider said, "For many it's their first time away from home and they get sick or scared. We have to play mother, father and best friend and I don't mean that derogatorily. They just need someone."

"The doctors don't go out on calls with us. They don't go out on the ambulance at all, although we can contact them by radio anytime we feel we need to."

Schwade said the team places great emphasis on thorough and continual training.

Students in the training process are volunteers selected from a large group of applicants, and through this training they can achieve different levels of state certification status, culminating with the highest rank, medic one. A medic one typically serves as an on-board ambulance attendant, he said.

The training includes mock disasters held at the Brayton Fireman Training Field, continuous classroom participation and state certification, he said.

This process can take up to three semesters depending on the student's prior experience, Schwade said.

"Some people who come in are frustrated by this," he said. "They

want to just jump in the ambulance and go."

This training is put to use daily because the team is responsible for covering all University events from football games to MSC Town Hall, he said.

Hutchenrider said the biggest reason most students join is to satisfy their need to help others.

Hutchenrider added that one of the most valuable teaching tools available is the team's evaluation process.

Schwade said, "Most services don't immediately evaluate a performance, or when they do it's a long time before you hear the results of that evaluation. The supervisors evaluate after every run and this process makes us a little better on the streets every time."

Hutchenrider said realizing you're helping people is the best part. The worst part, he said, is dealing with pain and death.

Schwade said the team has found the best way to handle it is to talk it through with others who have had to deal with it before.

Hutchenrider said students must maintain a 2.0 grade-point ratio and carry a 12-hour course load. Each volunteer must put in one hour a day and one night shift per week.

# A&M prof heats, cools classroom to test energy-saving heat pump

By Ed Bodde  
Reporter

A Texas A&M professor says the earth-coupled, water-source heat pump he has been using for more than a year to heat and cool a campus classroom can significantly reduce energy consumption.

William H. Aldred, associate professor of agricultural engineering, says water-source heat pumps could reduce energy consumption by up to 40 percent for cooling and 60 percent for heating.

Because they are more efficient than both common electrical heat and liquid propane furnace heat, he says, the pumps could eventually replace conventional air conditioners.

The idea for a heat pump isn't new, he says, but the way his operates is. In Aldred's pump, water is circulated to save money.

The pump heats by removing heat from water and cools by putting heat back into water, he says. The water source can be a well, pond or a pipe filled with water. Plastic pipes called heat exchangers are connected to these water sources.

The efficiency of the system is enhanced if the water source remains at a constant temperature, he says. Underground water is used because the Earth's temperature remains generally constant at depths of 30 feet or greater.

The rise in electric rates spurred people to start

looking for other forms of energy than resistance-generated heat, he says. The water-source heat-pump system was originally proposed in the 1950s, but the research got a big push in the middle 1970s.

"Oklahoma State University and Louisiana State University have done research on this," Aldred says. "We think we need more here (at A&M). This is the critical part of the system."

Because the installation of a water-source heat pump can be more expensive than common heating and cooling systems, Aldred says, a consumer or business should look at the economic considerations before purchasing the system.

An individual or a business should decide how long the system will be used and whether or not the initial installation costs would be recovered, he says.

"Normally a three- to five-year payback can be expected," he says.

He adds, however, that this depends on present electrical rates, the consumer's lifestyle and the type of insulation used.

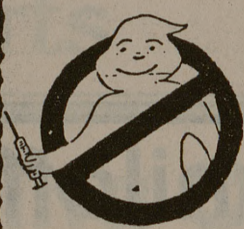
Aldred says he became interested in different forms of heating and cooling systems because he never had a conventional air conditioner that lasted more than six years.

He says water-source heat pumps last longer than conventional air conditioners.

"There are records of these things (water-source heat pumps) lasting 20 years," Aldred says.

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