

# LR Mutual Aid opens its doors for first open house

BY ERIN PLUMMER

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LACONIA — Local people had the opportunity to take a look inside the workings of Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid during their first ever open house.

The Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid is the central dispatch for fire, rescue, and EMS calls for 35 different communities in the central part of the state. Their dispatch center is housed in Laconia next to the former state prison.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Lakes Region opened the doors to its dispatch center and invited people to take a look at its operations and get an insight as to the work the agency does.

“We came to the point where we felt that we needed to have an open house for the public, just so people can come find out who we are and what we do,” said Chief Coordinator James Hayes.

Every one from municipal officials to mem-

bers of the general public were invited to come and get a look at LRMFA's location in Laconia and get a better understanding of its work.

“The part that we're trying to get people to understand even though we are a separate agency we are a part of each and every one of those fire departments,” Hayes said.

The Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid system has been in place since 1951 and the communication system has been in place since 1971. The dispatch center was once located in the basement of the Belknap County Courthouse. In 2000 the LRMFA moved their system to their current location on Communications Drive.

The open house included a slideshow and posters giving background information on LRMFA, including information on the agency's different duties and responsibilities. Visitors could also look at the agency's Mobile Command Unit located outside.

Dispatcher Chris Reynolds showed the dispatch center to visitors, explaining how a call turns into a response.

“The people that come here have been in have all gone away with a new understanding and a better understanding,” Hayes said.

Lakes Region Dispatch receives calls from numerous sources. Calls come in from 911, which has a dispatch center next door. Reynolds said off duty emergency personnel might also pass by an incident and radio it in. Callboxes around the area feed to a central radiobox, the primary one is located in Plymouth not far from the Plymouth State University campus.

There is also an emergency line through Lakes Region. It is rare that anyone steps into the dispatch center to report an emergency, though emergencies could feasibly be report-



ERIN PLUMMER

Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Dispatcher Chris Reynolds gives a tour of the dispatch facility during LRMFA's first ever open house.



COURTESY PHOTO

Peter Millham

## Celebration marks Millham's retirement after 55 years in practice

Sixty guests, including past and present law partners, family and friends of Attorney Peter Millham were on hand to honor his career Thursday evening at the Winnepesaukee Yacht Club in Gilford. Sept. 1 marked Millham's 55th anniversary of practicing law in Laconia.

Upon admission to the bar in 1959, Millham was employed by retired Superior Court Judge Harold E. Wescott, for whom the firm of Wescott Law is named today. Millham was named a partner and the firm became known as Wescott & Millham. Over the years the firm went through other name changes to reflect the addition of partners. Attorney Rod Dyer joined the firm in 1964, and the firm became Wescott, Millham & Dyer which it remained for many years until the merger with another firm, Fitzgerald & Nichols. It is merely a coincidence that on the year of Millham's retirement the firm chose to change its name one last time, in honor of its historic origins to Wescott Law.

Millham was presented a copy of Life Magazine from 1959 to commemorate the year he was admitted to the practice of law. The issue covered the topic of America's first astronauts, referred to by NASA as the Mercury Seven.

The firm also made a generous donation, in his name, to the Circle Program, a charitable organization for girls from low-income New Hampshire families. Millham has been very involved with the organization, based in Plymouth, NH, serving at one time as the President of their Board of Directors.

Throughout his career Millham has given generously of his time, serving various other organizations such as the American Red Cross, Mount Washington Commission, Gunstock Recreation Area Commission, New Hampshire Music Festival and Indian Head National

Bank. Millham played an integral part in the development and implementation of what is now known as the Lakes Region Charitable Foundation. Perhaps most notable is Millham's role as Moderator for the Town of Gilford, a position he held for forty years.

After fifty years together in practice, it seemed only fitting that Dyer be given the honor of presenting to Millham a Resolution written and signed by all the current attorneys of Wescott Law.

Dyer spoke fondly of Millham's dedication to his family, the firm, his clients and the community as a whole, adding “Peter V. Millham has for many years been the leader and moral compass of this law firm, and his presence in our office will be greatly missed.”

Millham thanks all those who attended the celebration.

He states, “My fifty-five years of practice have been enjoyable. I have appreciated my relationships with the other lawyers and business people in the area, as well as my clients in general. I want to thank the Court personnel and the personnel in the offices of the various cities and towns with whom I have dealt, [as well as] the staff in our office at Wescott Law for the relationships we have developed.”

and Indian Head National

ed this way.

The dispatchers will take the location and the nature of the call and communicate with the respective local agencies. All information is processed through Lakes' Region's CAD system.

All the dispatchers are medically trained to handle an emergency and can give the caller instructions over the phone, including instructing CPR.

There are always at least two dispatchers in the call center at any time. Dispatchers will work either 11-hour day shifts or 13-hour night shifts.

“You have to be able to multitask; you have to be able to do a hundred things at the same time,” Reynolds said.

Lakes Region processes an average of 60 calls a day. In the event of a severe thunderstorm, a tornado, a hurricane, or other major event the call volume could double.

The most calls the system has received was 400 calls in a day following a microburst in a northern community

The shift officer will decide if more people are needed to respond to the call volume. Reynolds said the two on duty can usually handle a high volume of calls, but additional dispatchers could be called in if needed.

Lakes Region has an arrangement with Cap-

ital Area Mutual Aid in Concord that if the Laconia facility is not functional for any reason dispatchers can travel to Concord and use their facilities on Loudon Road to answer Lakes Region calls. The same arrangement applies to Capital Area. Should their system be unavailable, dispatchers from Capital Area can come to Laconia and use the system for calls in their area.

Reynolds said there has never been an incident where wither agencies have had to use that provision.

Upgrades on Lakes Region's system will be happening at the end of the year.

Reynolds said this event was all about educating the public.

“A lot of people don't know that we're here,” Reynolds said. “There's plenty of people in town that don't know 911 is here either.”

Tours were also given through the NH 911 call center located next door. Visitors could listen as operators received emergency calls from around the state and learn about the process of receiving and responding to calls.

“The more they know the easier it is for us to do our job,” said Dave

Rivers, Chief of Operations for the New Hampshire Division of Emergency Services. “We're not easy to get to so we really appreciate the opportunity to get information to the community.”

Visitors to the open house included a number of local fire and rescue personnel.

Kim Baker, a firefighter with the Center Harbor Fire Department, came with her family.

Baker said, as her family watches her receive and respond to

SEE MUTUAL AID PAGE A10

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**BEACH**

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possible but very challenging," he said.

John said the scenery has been one of the best parts of the event. The couple also said they enjoy the camaraderie.

"Running as a team sport is much better than running as an individual sport," Lori said. They said the event

was a great way to see New Hampshire.

"It's an amazing state with beautiful scenery," Lori Wolfersberger said.

Lori said running past the mountains and rivers were particular highlights.

"It's a small state; you get to see a lot of it," John Wolfersberger said.

**QUILTERS**

(Continued from Page A2)

Embroidery, Quilters Treasure, Quilting Corner, North Country Quilters, The Fabric Garden, The Quilted Frog, and Wingspan Crafts.

The center is air-conditioned and wheelchair accessible. Admission is \$7 per adult and \$5 per student. Parking is free

and bus tours are welcome.

Inquiries may be made with the Belknap Mill Quilters Guild, P.O. Box 6174, Laconia, NH, 03247-6174, by e-mail at Belknapmillquilters@yahoo.com and with the website: bmqg.org.

**MUTUAL AID**

calls, this was a learning experience for them.

"It was good for my family to be able to see what I do," Baker said.

Baker also said the event was exceedingly informative for her as a responder.

"It helps us understand the process so we can all work together

better and more efficiently," Baker said.

Ron Skinner, a driver with the Gilford Fire Department, came with GFD Explorer Bridget Eldridge to give her more insight into the call process.

Skinner said he thought having the event as a great idea and

he hoped many people would show up. Skinner said many people do not realize how important this process is.

"The more information we get on the way to the scene is extremely helpful," Skinner said.

Eldridge said this was a helpful learning experience for her work as

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an Explorer and future work in the fire service.

"Now I know how the calls fine in and how everything works, so when I go back, the tones are going to make a lot more sense," Eldridge said.

**SELECTMEN**

(Continued from Page A1)

Stephen Carrier spoke regarding the number of previous firework related incidents in town. He recalled one incident happening on Governor's Island where a man lost part of his index finger and thumb. In terms of fire damage, he didn't recall a severity of incidents in town.

Former selectman Kevin Hayes was not in attendance at the public hearing, but submitted his thoughts via letter.

"How can anyone justify disturbing the peace at any hour?" asked Hayes.

He questioned the cleanup involved after fireworks and who is responsible for it.

He proposed the selectmen let the current ordinance play its

course for three years.

He stated he was appalled that this issue came up so quickly after the board changed members, and that none of the selectmen were elected with this mandate.

Selectman Grenier addressed this issue, replying that he didn't run for selectman solely for

this purpose and whether they waited or not, the issue would eventually come up again.

The proposed fireworks ordinance was approved amending fireworks to be used between the hours of 12noon and 10 pm, except for extended period on New Year's Eve and

July 3-5, when fireworks would be allowed until 12:15 am. In addition, the amended ordinance would clarify that it is not illegal to possess or transport permissible fireworks, but rather imposes fine for violations if fireworks are used during timeframes when they are prohibited.

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**PRIMARY**

(Continued from Page A1)

and John Hodsdon received 171.

All Democratic Candidates for State Representative ran unopposed. Incumbent Lisa DiMartino received 175 votes, Nancy Frost received 153, Dorothy Piquado received 138 votes, and Sandra Mucci received 136.

George Hurt and Glen Aldrich were Gilford's picks for Delegates to the State Convention; Hurt

receiving 440 votes and Aldrich receiving 250.

Skip Murphy received 233 votes, Mary Flaherty received 154, Neil Flaherty received 144, and Christine Knightly received 119.

The remaining Republican races were uncontested. Craig Wiggin received 704 for Belknap County Sheriff, Melissa Countway Guldbrandson received 679 votes for County Attorney,

Michael Muzzy received 680 for County Treasurer, Karen Brickner received 662 votes for Register of Probate, and Judy McGrath received 675 votes for Register of Deeds.

There were no Democratic candidates for Sheriff, County Attorney, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, and Register of Probate.

**PRINCESSES**

(Continued from Page A1)

The cruise will take off at 4:15 p.m. on Sunday and arrive back around 7 p.m. Tickets are \$60 and can be purchased up until the event.

The cruise will feature a night of fun with music and a silent auction. The GYC Community Service Award will also be presented to

someone who has made a difference in the community.

Hodsdon said the Summer's End Celebration is the GYC's biggest fundraiser. Proceeds help with current and future programming at the center.

Tickets are \$60 and can be purchased until

the day of the event. Registrations can be made through the Gilford Youth Center Web site at www.gilfordyouthcenter.com.

For further information on either of these events, call the Gilford Youth Center at 524-6978.

**PATRICK'S**

(Continued from Page A1)

ment, special guests, fun games and more.

"Pub Mania, inspired by Laconia Athletic & Swim Club's 'Cycle Mania,' is the most fun and successful fundraiser we've ever hosted,"

said Beetle. "The level of enthusiasm and excitement that everyone brings on behalf of this community is truly inspiring."

For additional information on how to par-

ticipate, including a YouTube video about Pub Mania, visit www.patrickspub.com/pubmania.php or email info@patrickspub.com.

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