

# Runner raises money for Ti EMS building

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TICONDEROGA — With every step, Sue Johnson got closer to the finish line at the Adirondack Half Marathon — and the Ticonderoga Emergency Squad got closer to a new home.

Johnson, squad secretary, ran the 13.1-mile road race in Schroon Lake to raise money for the Ti Emergency Squad's building fund.

She finished in 3 hours, 3 minutes and raised \$1,579.

The squad now has \$125,749.82 in its building account, according to Treasurer Marie Moore.

Supporting Johnson's run were Snug Harbor Marina, Best Western Inn & Suites, Be Cool Air Conditioning, Health Geiser, Pat Ida, Ticonderoga Animal Hospital, Geraw's OK Septic, Hot Biscuit Diner, Eddie's Restaurant, Ticonderoga Elks, Two Brothers Meat Market, Rathbun Jewelers, Gunning Agency, Stone House, Circle Court Motel, Busby, Bearly Used Furniture, Adirondack Sanitation, Ti Barber Shop, Sew and Sow, AC Electric, Reale Construction, AP Reale, Angela's Hair Salon and SWB.

The run was difficult, Johnson said, but she had support from fellow Ti Emergency Squad members Mickey Fitzgerald, Dennis Johnson and Dylan Bush, who volunteered at the event.

The Ticonderoga Emergency Squad began a fundraising campaign for a new facility earlier this year when the town board sold the volunteer group land for \$1 — with conditions.

The squad must have the money for a new facility in hand in two years and construction must be complete in another two years or the land, located at the site of the former Ticonderoga Civic Center between The Portage and Lake Champlain Avenue, reverts back to town ownership.



Sue Johnson raised \$1,579 for the Ticonderoga Emergency Squad building fund by running the Adirondack Half Marathon.

To kick-off fundraising efforts, the squad raffled a 2005 Honda Shadow VLX 600 motorcycle.

Squad members have also held coin drops. Other fundraising events are also being planned.

Donations, though, will not cover the cost of the new building. The squad has applied to a federal program for grant money to match local donations.

The actual cost and design of a new ambulance building is yet to be determined, according to Dennis Johnson, squad president. Squad officials have had informal talks with architects and contractors, but there is no exact plan.

Johnson said he hopes to model the Ti building after the Bristol, Vt., emergency services headquarters. That is a 3,000 square foot building with four garage bays, a meeting room, offices and sleeping quarters.

Johnson told the town board in February a new ambulance home is needed. The present building, located behind the Ti Community Building, is inadequate for the squad's needs, he said, and is a safety concern because it's difficult for the ambulance to reach the street during an emergency.

The squad has been in the same location since 1963.

Ti Supervisor Bob Dedrick explained the land, which once was the site of Ticonderoga High School, was given to the town by the school district with two restrictions. If the land is sold, the money from the sale must go to the school and the grassy area in front of the building site must remain a public park.

The proposed ambulance building must sit within the footprint of the now demolished school building, he stressed.

The Ticonderoga Emergency Squad receives no taxpayer funding from Ticonderoga, Johnson pointed out. It does get \$5,500 a year from Putnam, he said. The former village of Ticonderoga used to fund the squad.

The squad funds its services through donations, fundraising events and by billing insurance companies of the people it transports.

In 2008 the squad had a budget of \$124,000.

When the unit formed following World War II, patients were picked up in an old hearse donated by a local funeral home.

Today, the Ti Emergency Squad has state-of-the-art ambulances, equipment and training. In fact, the Ti squad is the only North Country unit with a "thumper," an auto-pulse cardiopulmonary resuscitation device.

It's roster has more than 50 members, including 28 emergency medical technicians.

In 2008 the squad responded to 595 calls — nearly two a day.