



HEALTH HINTS

FROM THE FLIGHT CREW

The Air Life team handles emergencies every day, but our crew also has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to safety, minor injuries and ailments. In this issue, our helicopter pilot, Ken Cox, shares his knowledge on Driver Fatigue.



Ken Cox, Helicopter Pilot

In 20 years as an EMS helicopter pilot I have attended over 1,000 motor vehicle accidents. In the early years, alcohol seemed to play a major role in about half of the accidents. However, in recent years falling asleep at the wheel has emerged as a significant cause.

This shouldn't surprise too many of us. One out of three of us admits to having fallen asleep at the wheel. However, please note that during a typical two and a half-second nap our vehicle travels nearly the length of a football field. That same nap causes 100,000 automobile accidents each year, kills 1,500 people, additionally injures another 71,000 people, and costs America 12.5 billion dollars.

Falling asleep at the wheel doesn't

randomly happen to us. Some pattern in our lifestyle, recent history or health leads us to a situation where we tend to fall asleep at the wheel.

Some of us burn the candle at both ends, with too much work and too much play. Many of us suffer from sleep apnea, a condition that interferes with our breathing during sleep hours. For some of us, alcohol impairs our ability to stay awake while driving and makes us six times as likely to fall asleep at the wheel. Other fatigue factors include driving during the normal hours of sleep, and driving alone on a long, straight road.

We humans do some interesting things in our attempts to stay awake at the wheel. We sing to ourselves, slap and pinch ourselves, stomp our feet, play

the radio loudly and open the windows. However, when it gets to that point, perhaps the time has come to listen to the experts.

The experts tell us we should do the following:

1. plan our trip to include rest stops every two hours, and pick the rest stops in advance;
2. expect to get sleepy after lunch, and take a nap before driving again;
3. sleep at night and drive during the day;
4. share the driving;
5. drink caffeine; and,
6. when we start doing things to stay awake, we should stop the car in a safe place and take a 20-minute nap.

I sometimes stop for a 20-minute nap. Twenty minutes added to my trip sees me home uneventfully and it buys me the rest of my life. To me, that seems like a good deal.



An architectural rendering of the Eurocopter EC-145 and the planned hangar needed to house the aircraft.

Air Life seeks funds for new helicopter, hangar

For nearly 20 years, Air Life has come to the aid of friends in need. Now it's Air Life's turn to ask for help.

As the program's Bell 222UT has aged, parts have become more costly and difficult to obtain, making it harder to enforce the program's rigid safety standards. "We've spent the last two years researching the best aircraft to replace the Bell, and all our research points to the Eurocopter EC-145," explained program director Vern Bartley. "New helicopters are costly, and we've known for some time that we'd need to reach out to our friends for help funding the new aircraft."

As part of St. Charles Medical Center's "Expanding the Vision" Capital Campaign, Air Life has embarked on a major fund raising effort to gather the \$6.5 million needed to purchase the helicopter and pay for the necessary training, equipment and remodeling for the existing hangar. Charitable donations will play a

substantial role in allowing Air Life to continue serving communities in the helicopter's service area in the 150-mile radius around Bend.

"In 20 years of service, we've only gone to the public twice for support — once in 1987 to implement the membership program, and once in 1995 to build the new helicopter flight-ops center," Vern added. "We need the community's help to allow us to continue serving them with the high standard of care Air Life is known for."




Flight nurse Jim Mouser, maintenance coordinator William Wilkinson, and respiratory therapist Michele Moore recently visited a flight program in Nashville, Tenn to help develop the medical interior for Air Life's new Eurocopter EC-145


Acknowledging all donations is a priority of this campaign, and all donors will be listed on a wall plaque in the Air Life hangar. In addition, donors making gifts of \$1,000 and up will receive special recognition plaques in our donor garden. All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Can you help? To make a contribution to our campaign, please call 1-800-353-0497 or visit our Web site at www.airlife.org

New Faces AT AIR LIFE Please welcome the newest additions to our Air Life family



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Respiratory Therapist



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