

Helicopter lands in school yard

First responders receive landing zone class

By Dan Therrien

A Baptist Healthcare Life Flight helicopter landed on the grounds of the Lowndes County Middle School in Fort Deposit Sunday morning to conduct a landing zone class for members of the Fort Deposit volunteer fire department and Emergystat Ambulance Service.

The life flight helicopter flew in about 9 a.m. after radio communications were complete between Lowndes County 911, Emergystat, the Fort Deposit Volunteer Fire Department and police to ensure a safe landing.



photos by Dan Therrien

(top) With firetruck in the ready position, Baptist's Life Flight helicopter makes a safe landing in front of the Lowndes County Middle School in Fort Deposit. **(Right)** John Alumbaugh, medical crew supervisor from Evergreen, explains to first responders the type of services they provide and the type of assistance they would require from the ambulance and fire department personnel.

"The purpose of the class was to educate the fire department on how to guide the helicopter in for a safe landing and explain the services they can provide to the ambulance service," said Life Flight Paramedic John Alumbaugh.

Alumbaugh explained that in cases of a stroke, heart attack or other emergency situations, time is of the essence so it's important to be able to land quickly away power lines and know as much as possible about the patient before landing to ensure the best of care while enroute to the hospital.

Some valuable information was obtained from the class.

Two properly positioned fire trucks provided a visual to the flight crew and radio communications with firefighter Greg McCardle guided the crew to a safe landing spot.

"We learned of Life Flight's capabilities, areas served and the type of landing ones needed, how to communicate and most important that they are there when needed," said Al Hutchinson, Lowndes County manager for Emergystat.

The Baptist Life Flight unit is based in Evergreen and serves West Florida, South Alabama, and Southeast Mississippi. It took them just 20 minutes to arrive in Fort Deposit.

