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County EMS criticized

BY FREE PRESS STAFF

Puce resident Jason Charlton is seeking an explanation and confession of error from Lakeshore's emergency services in the wake of his father's death in July.

During an Essex County Council meeting Nov. 15, Charlton told local mayors that since the restructuring of Emergency Medical Service protocols in May 2004, "ineffective and dangerous practices exist in the county."

Charlton's sixty-two-year-old father Michael died from cardiac arrest July 5.

About a minute after he collapsed, a call was made to 911, Charlton said. Then a second, third, fourth – before ambulance and fire services arrived approximately 12 minutes later.

Charlton asked council for an explanation why it took fire services that long to respond when Lakeshore Fire Station No. 1 is less than a kilometre (0.85) from his father's home.

"To my knowledge, no effort has been made by any community representative here this evening," Charlton said looking around the council chambers, "nor has there been any effort made by the county ambulance service to inform the people in this county about the deficiencies that exist in providing the tax payers a reliable and consistent level of emergency service."

"There has been no effort to make the people aware of the serious communication deficiencies between your municipalities and the dispatch operators at 911. In the same way, little mention has been made of the absurd response times that have been recorded since May 2004 for medical emergencies that have occurred throughout this county," he added.

Charlton was joined by family members of the late Colin Cameron, who died of a heart attack in his Essex home two years ago while waiting 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive.

"There is no justifiable reason whatsoever that will work to explain why this mess should continue to exist," Charlton continued to tell council members. "Reasons of finance, personal opinion or professional relationships among you individuals will not be accepted by either the Cameron family or my own, to deny the changes that we hope will be implemented. In fact, because we are considering the health and well-being of the county as a whole, an explanation and admission of error needs to be provided by each municipality, the ambulance service and fire chiefs of this county before any logical or reliable changes can be made."

SEE COUNTY COUNCIL, PAGE 2



Runners take off from the starting line on Talbot Street in Essex during the 12th Annual Ken Knapp Ford Jingle Bell Run, Walk and Wheel Nov. 19. All proceeds from the event went to Community Living Essex County.

Jingle Bell runners show their support

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Drizzling rain and a chilly wind wasn't enough to keep participants from crossing the finish line during the 12th Annual Ken Knapp Ford Jingle Bell Run, Walk and Wheel Nov. 19.

Families and avid runners, young and old, lined up in front of the car dealership on Talbot Street, some dressed in shorts and Santa hats.

"I love running," said Terry Connel of Essex, who was joined in the race by his sons Adam, 14, and Bryan, 11. "The best part about this event is that my two kids can run with me."

Connel added that he felt

it was important to contribute to a local charity. "Because it's right here in Essex," he said of Community Living Essex County. "It's always good to help out."

The sentiment was echoed by many runners participating in the event.

Windsor resident Mike Allen ran alongside his sister, Dana Harris of Harrow.

"I do it to stay in shape and to help out a good cause," said Allen, who's been participating in various charitable runs during the latter part of the year. "It's a health thing, to lose a few pounds," he said.

"It's also a family thing, our mom's here too," Harris added.

Already moving around to stay warm, participants began the race at 10 a.m. Faster runners were encouraged to start in front of the line and were given the option to go through the race twice, for a total of 10 kilometres.

Most, however, were content to jog or casually stroll the five rainy kilometres through Essex.

"We run whether there is rain, shine or snow," said Rose Caille, a member of Walkers and Runners Across the County of Essex.

More than 100 members of WRACE participated in the event, either running or volunteering.

During the year, members participate in 14 events to

help various charities. The Jingle Bell Run is the group's "grand finale," Caille said.

"We look forward to it," she said.

For Caille, the event's holiday theme adds to the spirit of the event.

"That's what makes it work," she said.

Community Living Essex County Manager of Community Relations Tony DeSantis said this year's event is more important than ever.

Earlier this year, the United Way announced it would be dropping the organization from its list of charities due to financial troubles.

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 2



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