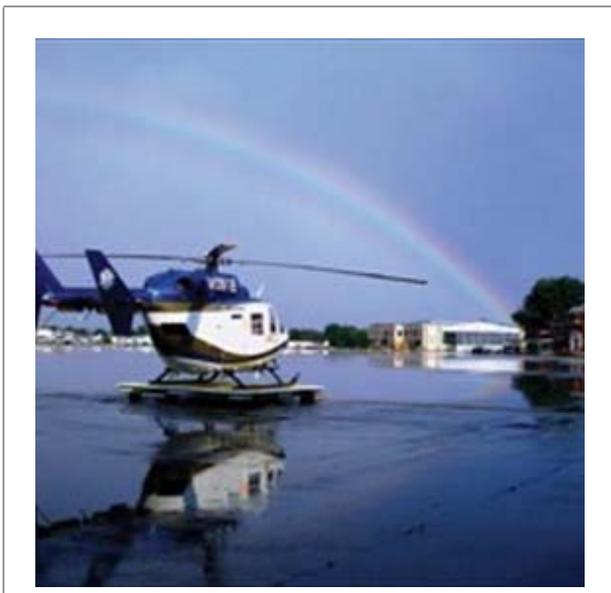


## Two Air Medical Transportation Bases Opening In St. Lawrence and Jefferson Counties



Published: 3/14 12:14 pm

Updated: 3/14 12:18 pm

Air Methods Corporation, a global leader in air medical transportation, announced that it will begin operating medical helicopters in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties this June.

A press conference was held Wednesday morning at the helipad at Samaritan Medical Center where it was announced that two helicopters will extend air ambulance service to more communities in the North Country area allowing for faster medical response.

One of the new air medical bases will be located in Watertown, the other in Potsdam. Both will be staffed with four pilots, eight medical crewmembers (flight nurses and paramedics), and one mechanic, and will be in service 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

"This will be a real benefit to the community as a whole," said Denise Young, Executive Director, Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization. "Air Method's air ambulance operation will add to the level of emergency care and safety for both the military and civilian residents of the North Country."

The Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO) with Jefferson County Emergency Medical Services (JCEMS) took the lead in seeking new air medical services for the area since 2007, when the Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic (MAST) mission assigned to Fort Drum was removed from service leaving the North Country without a local air medical program. That year, the FDRHPO established a committee to identify the impact of the loss of the MAST program to the northern New York region. Partnering with the Fort Drum Garrison Command and Jefferson County EMS the committee identified that air medical service is a critical link in the region's emergency medical services (EMS).

"The Committee recognized the crucial need for air medical services to ensure that the tens of thousands of soldiers who train annually or the installation and the 160,000 military and civilian residents of the Fort Drum region can be rapidly transported to the nearest Level I Trauma Center in the time necessary to save the lives of trauma victims," explained Young.

Before it was removed from service in 2007, the MAST mission assigned to Fort Drum provided air medical support to emergency incidents across Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties averaging at least 60 transports of critically injured persons annually. Since that time, the call volume has continued to increase, with over 120 transports made by air medical in 2010. Since 2007, air medical services have been brought in from outside the region, significantly increasing the time to respond and reach definitive care. Charles Brenon III, Director of Jefferson County Emergency Medical Services, stated "the FDRHPO EMS committee found that there is every expectation that the need for air medical services will continue to grow".

According to Mr. Brenon, "Jefferson County EMS worked with County Dispatch to refine policies to automatically request air medical service based on specific criteria. In the absence of MAST, the office worked to create eight helicopter Landing Zones (LZs) along the Route 81 corridor for Central New York helicopter services to fly north and connect with south-travelling ambulance squads carrying patients requiring higher levels of care. The LZ plan, launched in 2009, was adopted by the tri-county region and enhanced a needed resource. Now, with air medical to be located in Northern New York, response times and patient outcomes should improve".

FDRHPO data indicates that in 2010, over 500 emergency department cases in the hospitals serving the Fort Drum region met the criteria for air medical transport, but were transported to tertiary facilities by ground due to the lack of air support in the region.

Ann Smith, Director for the North Country EMS Program Agency, who has been instrumental in the efforts to secure Air Medical capability in the North Country, stated, "This is great news for the patients that we serve in Upstate New York. We are just thrilled and look forward to working with Air Methods to transport our patients who need critical and specialty care."

"Like many longtime residents of Northern New York, I know from firsthand experience how vital it can be to have access to critical emergency medical care," Senator Patty Ritchie said. "That's why I've been working with Samaritan, with Fort Drum, and with local communities to find a way to return air ambulance service to our region."

"I want to thank and extend my gratitude to the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, Samaritan Medical Center and the entire team in the North Country that has worked persistently to bring this essential service to our area," stated Assemblywoman Addie Russell. "They have been proactive in addressing our healthcare needs and timely, reliable air transport from the North Country to trauma

centers has been one of those glaring needs. This service will positively impact the survival rates and recovery levels for our community members. I welcome Air Methods as a new partner to our emergency services community and offer my continuing assistance."

Air Methods will be utilizing a fee for service model, with no additional monies required from the Counties, hospitals or other agencies.

Copyright 2012 Newport Television LLC All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

### We Recommend

- [Missing persons from Tupper Lake found \(MyABC50.com\)](#)
- [New Yorkers prepare for Tick season \(MyABC50.com\)](#)
- [4 years in Federal Prison for Key Bank robber William Pitoniak \(MyABC50.com\)](#)
- [Belleville man lies on over-the-counter Firearms Transaction Record prompting felony arrest \(MyABC50.com\)](#)
- [Will nation's top basketball recruit choose Syracuse? \(MyABC50.com\)](#)

### More From The Web

- [Four Amish charged with illegal alcohol possession after crashing into police car \(Autoblog\)](#)
- [How To Repurpose Furniture To Decorate Living Rooms \(Ideal Home & Garden\)](#)
- [Father Accused of Drowning Wife May Be Doing the Unspeakable to His Daughter \(The Stir By CafeMom\)](#)
- [Out of Control: The AIDS Epidemic in Black America \(SnagFilms\)](#)
- [Heidi Klum and Seal's Unusual Marriage, Revealed \(Zimbio\)](#)

[?]

### Sponsored Links



#### Mom is 57, Looks 27

Mom discovers "weird" \$5 tip to erase wrinkles..  
TheSmartStyleLiving.com



#### New Policy in New York

2012-Drivers w/ no DUIs eligible for up to 50% off car insurance...  
TheFinanceAuthority.com



#### Walden University Online

Doctoral, Master's and Bachelor's. A Higher Degree. A Higher Purpose.  
WaldenU.edu

[Buy a link here](#)