

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **County Commissioners, Monroe Fire Protection District: New reserve ambulance service set to begin**

*Public ribbon cutting ceremony for extended BLS transport service to take place Wednesday.*

**Monroe County, IN**—Beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 17, Monroe County Board of Commissioners and Monroe Fire Protection District officials will gather for a public ribbon cutting ceremony outdoors on the north side of the Monroe County Courthouse located at 100 W. Kirkwood Ave. “We are starting a new reserve ambulance service to provide basic life support (BLS) transport,” explains Jason Allen, battalion chief and public information officer for Monroe Fire Protection District. “It will be staffed with two EMTs 24/7, and then we will be running as a backup to the 911 system for Monroe County.”

In all, the Monroe County Board of Commissioners allocated funding for a total of four new ambulances, the first two of which come online this week. “One is going in service, and we will have one in a backup status,” Allen notes.

“This is a wonderful use of American Rescue Plan Act Funds to provide the vehicles and equipment to serve all Monroe County residents more quickly,” says Julie Thomas, president of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners.

“In our research, we found that ambulances were being called in to Monroe County from neighboring counties on 'standby' or to respond to a call,” she continues. “We are grateful that the Monroe Fire Protection District was willing to step up to provide the necessary personnel to staff these ambulances.”

Deputy Chief of EMS and Special Operations Chief Matthew Bright and Battalion Chief Toby Liff spearheaded the project for the Monroe Fire Protection District and will be present for the Wednesday ribbon cutting. Monroe County Commissioners Julie Thomas, Penny Githens, and Lee Jones also will be in attendance and will offer brief comments during the event.

“It's been a lengthy and involved process to get this set up with the state, to get certification and approval from them, and then also to make sure any onboard equipment transmits wirelessly to hospitals,” Allen says.

Monroe Hospital has donated EKG monitors for use in the ambulances. “Those monitors will be able to transmit wirelessly, so, we can send the hospitals details while we're still en route and then they can start getting ready for the treatment of the patient before they come in,” he adds.

Formerly a basic life support *non-transport* organization, with the addition of the new reserve ambulance service, the Monroe Fire Protection District now will have the ability to transport patients. “All of our firefighters are EMTs and are medically qualified,” Allen says. “We hadn't had the ability to transport before. We've always waited on IU Health to provide an ambulance. That will still be the majority of how it's handled, but, now, if IU Health is out of service due to all of its ambulances being tied up with other 911 calls, we will be dispatched as a reserve emergency unit to go handle that medical call.”

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