



MedFlight 3 at Wellston, the Nation's First Remote Medical Helicopter Base Celebrates 25 Years of Service

The nation's first remote non-hospital based medical helicopter was placed in rural southern Ohio in January 1986, pioneered by a revolutionary idea to bring time saving air medical resources to critically ill and injured patients in Ohio.

Today, Twenty-Five years later the Wellston's base is still going strong as MedFlight 3. The base continues to make a difference when time is of the essence for rural southern Ohio patients and is estimated to have transported over 15,000 critically ill or injured people since inception. This remote base concept has since been duplicated throughout the nation. According to The Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS) in December of 2010, there were 114 air medical helicopter programs in the United States who have their helicopters out-based in the communities they serve. Wellston's MedFlight 3 was the first!



Why Air Medical History was Made In 1986, Grant Medical Center intended to expand their mission to diminish preventable trauma deaths in their central and southeastern Ohio service area. Aggressive community and EMS provider education in trauma care and injury prevention could only impact a small portion of a more effective trauma system. The community-based helicopter was a revolutionary mechanism to extend this mission in rural Ohio.

In the early 1980s, the continued death and disability of trauma patients remained unacceptable to those who served healthcare providers in the southern Ohio region. At that time, EMS response times were prolonged with a lack of full-time experienced advanced life support providers in this rural setting. There was an obligation to do more. During this era, flight programs across the country were growing through the onsite hospital-based addition of multiple aircraft. Helicopter response from urban hospital locations returning to the same location after each mission, was standard at the time. Then and now, Air Medical Transport provides a rapid solution to trauma centers and tertiary care centers when time is of the essence for the critically ill or injured patient.

Community Adoption and Kindness

Because of the Wellston community and their leaders, MedFlight 3 continues to provide exemplary care as a vehicle to transport people to advanced urban hospital trauma

centers. The Southern Ohio spirit of cooperation was outstanding and continues today. In 1986, Wellston Mayor Winters first offered the program a location near the local VFW, the Local Fire Department offered assistance with communications and living quarters for the flight crew, including the community spirit of a Wellston firefighter who offered his personal camper to place on the property as temporary housing.



A Tradition and Mission of Success in Saving Lives Of the 600 plus transports annually, each mission represents people who might have perished or had adverse outcomes had this revolutionary resource not been created. The original house trailer has been replaced with a new modern one and an aircraft hangar to protect this valuable community resource. The original EMS station continues to be MedFlight 3's next door neighbor and partner. The original helicopter was replaced after recording the most flight hours of any BK 117 in the United States

with an EC 135. The community continues to support "their" Wellston helicopter with the same appreciation displayed 25 years ago. Original flight crew members continue to fly at Wellston and other MedFlight bases.

MedFlight's mission of remote basing to save lives by saving time remains unchanged for the patients served yesterday, today and tomorrow.

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