

St. Lucie County Fire District

News Release



Contact: Catherine Chaney
Public Information Officer
St. Lucie County Fire District
772-621-3333
cchaney@slcfd.org

HOLD FOR RELEASE
August 3, 2015

SLCFD Unveils New Aircraft

St. Lucie County, FL – The St. Lucie County Fire District will unveil their new trauma helicopter to the public on Tuesday, August 4. St. Lucie County Air Rescue is a partnership between the Fire District and Air Methods Inc. The new aircraft replaces an aging Agusta Koala 119 that serviced the area for over 12 years.

“Knowing that Air Rescue is here in St. Lucie County, with highly trained individuals who provide advance care in major injuries is a great resource,” said Fire Chief Ron Parrish. “You know when you look up and see that ship, it’s making a difference in someone’s life, either by saving a life or reducing their time and length of recovery. Our partnership with Air Methods is exceptional and has been a life saver for many.”

The unveiling ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. at the St. Lucie County Administration, 5160 NW Milner Drive, Port St. Lucie.

The new aircraft is an Airbus *Eurocopter* 135 P2+ model. This is a twin engine aircraft with a 4 blade bearing-less main rotor system and an enclosed tail rotor. The EC135's high endurance and extended range enables this helicopter to perform a full range of EMS missions, while carrying more payload over longer distances than any twin-engine aircraft in its class. Incorporating a modern cockpit, avionics, and the latest in medical equipment – the EC135 is recognized for its high performance, outstanding maneuverability, and overall enhanced safety systems.

History of Medical Air Service in St. Lucie County

Since the late 1980s, St. Lucie County residents have had an advantage when it comes to emergency medical needs with the use of a trauma helicopter.

The emergency medical helicopter program began as a collaboration between the St. Lucie County Sheriff's office and the St. Lucie County Fire District (SLCFD). The Air Rescue helicopter, owned jointly, was called on to handle trauma cases and other medical emergencies. The Sheriff's office supplied the pilot, the mechanics and the hangar, while the Fire District supplied the air medics, medical equipment and medicine. Due to the economic downturn, the Fire District had to develop alternative methods to provide the service.

In January 2008 a new alliance began. The St. Lucie County Fire District and Omniflight Helicopters, Inc., now Air Methods, Inc., officially began their new partnership to supply helicopter service for medical emergencies in the Treasure Coast region.