

St. Luke Employees give first aid

The seven Ronan police cruisers and two Lake County search and rescue units now have first aid kits courtesy the St. Luke Foundation Employee Giving Program.

Ronan assistant police chief, Art Walgren says, “Since in many cases we’re the first responders on the scene, it’s nice to have these first aid tools, handy, in the cars until an ambulance arrives.”

Walgren sites specifically a case of a three vehicle crash on Highway 93 in front of Hanson and Granley two years ago when there was a more than 20 minute delay before the arrival of a back-up ambulance from Polson. “The other three units were already out on runs when the accident happened,” he explains.



Ronan assistant police chief Art Walgren and Bruce McMillan a member of Lake County Search and Rescue and a St. Luke employee look over items in the first aid kit.

The kits were put together by St. Luke Director of Nursing, Leah Emerson. The red, light-weight, canvas bag has dressing supplies, chemical ice packs, blood pressure cuff and stethoscope. Also included are utility scissors, a pen light, pocket mask for CPR, and personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and gowns. Other items in the kit are arm slings, some hand sanitizer and a foil rescue blanket.

Search and Rescue team member Frankie Brown notes that a big advantage to the compact kits is “not having to scramble around the rig looking to find what you need. You’ll know that what you need is right there.”

Funding for purchase of the kits comes through the St. Luke Foundation Employee Giving Program. Gayle Wilhelm, foundation executive director, explains, “St. Luke employees donate an hour or more in wages per month that go into the fund.” Then a committee made up of administration, foundation board members and St. Luke employees determine how those funds are allocated.

Wilhelm points out that “it’s similar to anyone who gives to the foundation who wants to specify just how their donation will be used to meet what they feel is the biggest need.”

Last year the employee giving program generated \$32,000 that has been used to fund such projects as free screening mammograms, supplies for Camp Make-A-Dream, in addition to support for the digital mammography unit that is scheduled to go on line later this year at St. Luke.

Bruce McMillan, a St. Luke employee and four year member of search and rescue says that “what’s neat about this whole deal is that it reflects the philosophy of both organizations which is basically neighbors helping neighbors.”