

EMERALD COAST

15 City Beat

16 Q&A

18 FYI

20 What I Know Now

22 KidSpeak

24 What's New

26 Historicly

28 Living In Style

WHEN A WOMAN vacationing on the Emerald Coast last summer suffered a sudden cardiac arrest, a sheriff's deputy was first on the scene. Fortunately, his patrol car had just been outfitted with an automated external defibrillator (AED) device donated by the American Heart Association. The AED prompted the officer to deliver two shocks – and the woman's life was saved.

She was lucky. More than 20,000 people in Florida die from sudden cardiac arrest each year, many of them simply because defibrillation wasn't performed early enough.

The good news for Okaloosa County residents is that the county has received the American Heart Association's "2005 Heart Ready County Award" for leading the way to save lives through AED programs. The most recent program is an \$80,000 partnership grant between the Okaloosa Public Safety Department, the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Health to place 40 new defibrillators into sheriff patrol units.

The Florida Legislature and Gov. Jeb Bush have authorized counties to collect a surcharge on fines for various traffic offenses to pay for improvement of emergency medical services (EMS) in Florida. The state's \$60,000 contribution to the defibrillator grant is being funded through this program.

"Having first-responder access to this type of technology will greatly benefit our entire community by helping us to save many lives," said Okaloosa County Sheriff Charlie Morris.

The only solution to an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is early defibrillation by a first responder, ideally within three to five minutes. Since law enforcement personnel often arrive at the scene of a medical emergency before EMS units, it is vital that patrol cars are equipped with the means to preserve lives until EMS personnel arrive. A victim who is not defibrillated within eight to 10 minutes has little chance of survival.

The American Heart Association offers a variety of AED and CPR training courses for the general public. Visit americanheart.org for more information. – Lawrence Robinson



A Heartbeat Away

Local Emergency Teams Earn Accolades

THE 2005 BEST OF THE EMERALD COAST AWARDS

IT'S TIME TO TOAST! THE
ARE IN AND THE INVITATION
OUT. HERE'S TO YOUR W

\$3.95 OCT-NOV 2005



EMERALD COAST 15