Defibrillators were once only found in hospitals and ambulances. Now the electronic devices which restart hearts by shocking them are becoming more common in other areas.

Gerry Musseau, fire Chief of Port aux Basques, said within the next two months the department should have a defibrillator for use on volunteer firefighters and for training purposes.

"They would not be used on the public," said Chief Musseau. "You still have to call an ambulance if someone is in cardiac arrest" This machine is to be used for training purposes and if a firefighter has a heart attack while on the job. "If they are at a house fire and someone there goes into cardiac arrest, then the defibrillator would be used," said Chief Musseau. The Bruce II Sports Centre is a bit ahead of the game. They have had the defibrillators in their arena since the fall of 2010.

Holly Farrell, administrative assistant at the arena, said they are fortunate to have two machines. One is in the arena area and the other is located near the pool.

"Everyone on staff has been trained to use the machines and they are set up with alarms on them so as soon as the case is touched, the alarm goes off," said Mrs. Farrell. "This alerts staff that someone is in distress."

Mrs. Farrell is comforted by the fact that they have the machines there. So far they have not had to use them.

Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest rate of cardiac disease in the country. That's why George Tilley, chief executive officer of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has been working diligently to get defibrillators into local communities.

"These machines have the potential to save lives, they are user friendly and you can't be hurt by them - only saved," said Mr. Tilley. He gave the example of a senior hockey player from Stephenville who collapsed after coming off the ice. He was in cardiac arrest and he was not responding to CPR. The defibrillator they had on hand at the arena was used and he was revived in minutes.

With contributions from the provincial government, Vale Inco, Resource Development Council, and NL Hydro, the foundation was able to begin phase one of its plan, which focuses on arenas. Their overall goal was placing 125 AEDs, along with the appropriate training, in public places throughout the province.

Since the start of the program the Heart and Stroke Foundation have raised $300,000 and have placed 133 defibrillators in arenas, pools, and Arts and Culture Centres throughout the province, surpassing their goal of 125.

"The machines are simple to use and very affordable," said Mr. Tilley.