



TIMBER MESA FIRE and MEDICAL DISTRICT

www.TimberMesaFire.org

Timber Mesa Fire Chief Responds to False Ad by Arrowhead Mobile Healthcare

To the residents and visitors of the Timber Mesa Fire and Medical District:

As your Fire Chief, I take public safety and the facts about emergency response with the utmost seriousness. Because you need to know the truth – in fact your life may depend on it – I want to respond with clarity to a recent advertisement placed by Jim Broome and his for-profit ambulance company, Arrowhead EMS.

This ad was literally fiction. More importantly, the substandard service provided to our community by Arrowhead EMS continues to endanger public safety and public health in our region. I understand these are strong statements. The facts more than justify them.

Mr. Broome's business practices and poor relationships resulted in the Director of the Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) issuing a scathing analysis of their business. Arrowhead EMS's inability to handle emergency calls led DHS to award Timber Mesa a Certificate of Necessity to provide ambulance services to the communities of Show Low, Linden, White Mountain Lake, and the surrounding areas. Prior to this ruling, Timber Mesa provided ambulance services to the Lakeside community for many years.

From my perspective, this is certainly a positive for anyone who dials 911 while suffering an emergency.

Timber Mesa has a robust training program, built around National standards, which ensures our firefighters and paramedics are meeting or exceeding these standards. Our response times are as quick as many urban departments even though our geographical layout is significantly more rural. Timber Mesa's cost per call is the lowest in Northeastern Arizona and our services are second to none. We have outperformed every financial projection since our inception and have been recognized by the Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) for excellence in financial reporting. Our customers, the citizens of the White Mountains, have repeatedly provided almost unanimous support and positive feedback for the professionalism, prompt response, and courteous care they receive from Timber Mesa crews.

Timber Mesa has added four ambulances throughout the community since the Director authorized our services in the expanded area. Currently, we have a total of five ambulances geographically dispersed to provide the quickest response time to your emergency. Timber Mesa charges 20% less for ambulance services than Arrowhead, who recently applied to increase their already sky-high rates by more than 41%.

Equally important, Timber Mesa accepts as payment in full whatever your health insurance pays so long as you are a taxpaying resident of the District. In his ludicrous ad, Mr. Broome willfully misrepresented these facts when he indicated that Timber Mesa loses money on our ambulance operation and subsidizes the operation with taxpayer dollars. The exact opposite is true. The ambulance operation, funded through healthcare reimbursement, reduces the tax burden on our residents and is at least a "break even" line of business for the Fire District.

Mr. Broome continues to try and mislead the reader of his paid advertisement by indicating that he is the retired general manager of Arrowhead. The truth is that he is the current owner and CEO of the company. He misstates Timber Mesa's ambulance rates; he misrepresents the number of ambulances deployed by Timber Mesa and



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overstates the number of ambulances routinely deployed by Arrowhead. He tries to draw a distinction between a local fire district as taxpayer funded and a private ambulance firm that is equally taxpayer funded. In his advertisement he indicates that his revenues are derived from AHCCCS and Medicare. These are taxpayer-funded programs with a lot of money being directed to a private company with virtually no oversight and no accountability to the public.

Over the past two years there have been no less than 25 complaints filed against Arrowhead (aka Show Low EMS). These complaints range from equipment failures to response issues. They have had missing equipment and missing medications. A complaint from one of their own employees noted dangerous working conditions, missing narcotics, misleading local building inspectors, and a hostile working environment (including a supervisor who routinely kept a loaded gun on his desk and occasionally fired it in the station). They have had former employees who were selling and buying drugs while on-duty, and in one case stole a personal check from one of their patient's homes. As a result, Timber Mesa has had current and prior Arrowhead employees that have requested Timber Mesa to transport them when they suffered a medical emergency.

What does it say about a business when your own employees don't even want your service?

As an interesting side note, during the hearing in which Timber Mesa was ultimately awarded the ability to service the expanded area, one of Timber Mesa's biggest supporters was the local hospital, Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center. Summit Hospital supported Timber Mesa specifically because of the poor service they had received from Arrowhead for several years. Since that time, Timber Mesa has been able to reduce response times to Summit Hospital for inter-facility transportation from several hours, in many cases, to less than 20 minutes on average.

Ironically, Mr. Broome used the phrase "dangerous and reckless" prominently in his ad. If that applies in this case – and it does – it applies specifically to Mr. Broome and Arrowhead EMS.

Mr. Broome seems to care about one thing: The profit that he can make off people in their time of crisis; people who either have no choice or don't know they have a choice. It's beyond strange that he would fund a paid advertisement attacking your local firefighters for honoring a patient's choice in their medical care. Mr. Broome wants to return to a loosely regulated monopoly where people don't have a choice, where he can charge what he wants and has no competition, and therefore no reason to improve services.

As has already been stated by your professional firefighters, Timber Mesa will always stand ready to respond and will always honor the patient's choice in their healthcare decisions. If you have any questions about the Fire District or our ambulance services, please feel free to contact me at (928) 537-5100.

Yours in service,

Bryan P. Savage

Bryan Savage
Fire Chief