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City of La Crosse unveils ambulance plan

By *SAMANTHA MARCUS / La Crosse Tribune*

The La Crosse area would have one city-operated ambulance by 2010 along with the privately run Tri-State under a proposal released Wednesday.

City officials for the first time revealed details of the plan, which calls for training La Crosse firefighters to staff a single municipal ambulance to serve both the city and outlying areas. The proposal, however, also would retain Gundersen Lutheran-owned Tri-State Ambulance as the region's dominant provider. Ambulance service in La Crosse County has for decades been the province of the private sector.

But La Crosse Mayor Mark Johnsrud argued Wednesday that across the state, fire department-run ambulances are the norm, not the exception.

Tri-State owns 13 ambulances, with eight in operation each day, director Matt Zavadsky said. An internal Tri-State study indicated another unit would be needed by 2010.

La Crosse would purchase two ambulances, with only one in operation at a time, then tap new growth rather than chip at Tri-State's existing business, said La Crosse County Board Chairman Steve Doyle.

"There's this fear we're trying to take over service," Johnsrud said. "That's not our goal. We're not here to threaten the current service provided by Tri-State."

The county would dispatch the closest ambulance, regardless of whether it is city or Tri-State owned. "Ideally, no one would even know which ambulance it was," said Doyle.

City officials estimate adding the ambulance will cost more than \$1.2 million in the first five years for training, wages and benefits, vehicles, equipment and other expenses.

But the city should recoup its expenses within five years, Johnsrud said, and generate \$5,000 in profit, based on predictions the ambulance would have 1,000 runs a year, or three per day.

The goal is to provide better service, Johnsrud said, rather than making money.

Tri-State Ambulance Director Matt Zavadsky said the company's total expenses run about \$4.7 million annually, and it costs \$650,000 to operate a single ambulance for a year.

Anticipating a backlash from taxpayers at a public meeting Wednesday evening, Johnsrud guaranteed the plan would have no effect on property taxes.

But most of those who spoke at the meeting, which drew a crowd of nearly 300, doubted the city-run service would survive without a subsidy.

"It seems to me we have a very simple system. No taxpayer dollars involved. And now we want to make it more complicated" said Dave Drewes of Citizens for Responsible Government — La Crosse County.

The audience cheered in support when Steve Gores called on officials to take the proposal to referendum.

"This is a crucial decision. This is a life-and-death decision," he said.

Several Gundersen Lutheran emergency medicine physicians and paramedics attested to Tri-State's long-held argument that saturating the local paramedic pool would lower skills proficiency.

"You are setting these guys up for failure," 27-year paramedic Kevin Kuchar said, adding a typical Tri-State paramedic sees as many patients in a month as city paramedics would see in a year.

Johnsrud attributed the strong opposition to an audience mostly with Tri-State or Gundersen Lutheran ties. But refusing to be minimized, dozens stood up declaring no such affiliation.

Fire Chief Gregg Cleveland repeatedly emphasized the intention is to enhance existing service in La Crosse.

About \$72,000 will be spent to train 12 emergency medical technicians, Cleveland said, planning no new hires.

A paramedic also will be sent along each time first responders are dispatched. First responders typically are first on the scene but can give only limited medical care.

"You can't have a paramedic first response program without an ambulance," Cleveland said.

The city/county joint resolution creates a multi-jurisdictional governing board of mostly elected officials and one representative of each of the medical centers.

"Right now, we have absolutely no say in the operation of Tri-State Ambulance," Cleveland noted.

But Zavadsky called the make-up of the Joint Emergency Medical Service Commission a deal-breaker for Tri-State. Company officials want two more medical professionals on the board.

Johnsrud countered that physicians should be advisors but shouldn't carry a vote on the commission, which would set standards and protocol.

"People of knowledge shouldn't be the decision-makers on the body," he said.

Tri-State leaders also argued the city should compete for the 2010 ambulance, although the plan guarantees Tri-State the next ambulance after that.

"They should prove that they can do it in the same manner or a better manner," Zavadsky said.

The plan in its current form is the result of months of mediation between the city, county, Gundersen Lutheran and Franciscan Skemp.

While mediation didn't build a consensus, it successfully mitigated a major disruption in service, Doyle said.

"This is the closest I could get to something I could say is fair," Doyle said. "I'm doing everything I can to prevent the city from bankrupting Tri-State."

Doyle positioned the county as a mediator early on, concerned if the city bit off too much, it would jeopardize service in other parts of the county.

In a letter to the mayor in March 2006, Doyle wrote, "I believe that a city-owned ambulance service would cherry pick the most lucrative calls in the city leaving Tri-State Ambulance with the outlying areas that won't generate enough runs for them to remain in business."

Both Johnsrud and Doyle seem confident there's enough support within their respectively elected bodies to get the agreement passed.

The earliest the council could vote on the proposal is during its September council cycle. The county, Doyle said, wouldn't vote for another five weeks beyond that.

Plan by the numbers

Costs

Paramedic training \$72,000

Wages/benefits \$587,420

Vehicles/equipment \$530,000

Operating costs \$25,000

FIVE-YEAR TOTAL \$1,214,420

REVENUE

FIVE-YEAR TOTAL \$1,219,440

(based on three calls a day for four years; first year is training and purchasing)

FIVE-YEAR NET \$5,020

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fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:56 PM:

" MyTurn: Concern Citizen is completely right on his last post. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:53 PM:

" jenifr:

perhaps there is some sort of software program that can be implemented that automatically notifies the dispatcher which unit is closest.

I was under the impression that the closest unit (police, fire, ems) responds in the current make up. If that is the case, how is that system run? couldn't it be applied to any system? forgive me if I am being naive. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:44 PM:

" MyTurn:

I recall moments when the crowd laughed/groaned at Mayor Johnsrud (spaghetti) and Chief Cleveland (TSA 5 minutes after fd). When did the crowd express distaste or laugh at doyle. Other than those who were upset at him not holding everyone to 2 minutes.

And I mean when was there collective disapproval not something you disliked. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:38 PM:

" "I guess I didn't realize it was about Steve Doyle"? Well there it is, you were not at the meeting last night. I guess me and a good portion of the room missed it when we laughed at his nonsensical statements. Maybe it was when he tried to 'lead' us to believe that he was neutral? I specifically remember because that was when Matt from Tri-States eyes rolled in his head in disbelief. Doyle looks kinda funny attempting to adorn three hats at the same time (County Chair, Mediator, voting Member). "

Jenifr wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:34 PM:

" I completely understand the workings of GPS systems, but who will have the ultimate control over all of the gps units. Will county 911 have to figure out where each TSA unit and where each city ambulance is before they dispatch the call? Or will they give the call to the GLMC dispatch center and make them figure out who is closer? Also, the EMD process is controlled by GLMC. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:31 PM:

" Say what you want Moderate. Although I know I was not one of the three that were looked at with disdain last night. I am sorry I am not in your favor, or you do not "like me" LOL. If you open and fund a Frat house I will be careful not to waste my time applying. Gol-darn-it, and I just purchased a new sweater to tie around my neck. "

The Moderate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:07 PM:

" I thought this was about the city proposal to get into the ambulance business MyTurn. I guess I didn't realize it was about Steve Doyle. For the record, I don't like him anymore than you do. "

insightful1 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:59 PM:

" Regarding response times, I believe Chief Cleveland was mistaken.

According to Tri-State's published response times (http://www.tristateambulance.org/performance/key_performance.htm), our average City response times are 5:20.0 seconds. Per the La Crosse Fire Departments web site (<http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/index.asp?nid=990>) their average response time is 4:21 (by the way, to get the average time for Lax FD, you have to ADD their "Activation Time" (the time it takes to get from the lounge chair to the fire truck) and their "Response Time" (the DRIVE time from the station to the scene).

So, we are 59 seconds behind Lax FD on average.

It's also interesting that since Tri-State started publishing our reports to our web site, La Crosse FD is as well. They even modeled their reports and web style after ours! Will they report financials soon? "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:52 PM:

" fortsa123:

As far as I am aware the city does not run the EMD, Tri-state does. Also a gps tracker does not give the city or the county any control over Tri-state, it simply provides the closest unit. The goal of the plan was for dispatch to not know which rig they are sending. "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:42 PM:

" Concern citizen: You knob job, why would the city have gps for Tri State Ambulance. Do you really think the people at Tri State are going to allow them to have this??? Come on!! Then it would be the county and city making the decisions for Tri State don't think so. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:35 PM:

" fortsa123:

I would imagine that if Tri-State all have gps that if the city were to go buy 2 new rigs they could put a similar system in the vehicle so dispatch could track them as well as tri-state.

Granted, I don't pretend to know how GPS works but I would imagine that since GPS all use satellites it's just a matter of tapping into the system. But if they can't that is another question to ask. If it would cost more money to track a city ambulance that would be another mark against the plan "

mjr wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:29 PM:

" I hope Padeskys first fund raiser will be a spaghetti dinner. (I hope your paying attention Kooch)
P.S. This is the nail in the coffin for Skid mark, so long and dont trip on your new carpet on the way out in April!!!!!!!!!! "

girly2 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:28 PM:

" TSA is actually a subsidiary of GL if anyone is interested. Has anyone looked at why those response times were longer for TSA? Maybe most of the rigs were busy on calls and the closest rig was not as close as normal. TSA does try to station their available rigs in central spots when they are busy to help the response time. Are all of the City's firestations going to have ambulance rigs? Say a particular firestation's ambulance rig is out on a call and there is a 2nd call in the area, isn't that going to increase the response time? "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:19 PM:

" Informed Citizen: You are particaly wrong. Cleveland stated that his trucks have GPS that the FD can track. Tri State does have there own GPS we use to track. Is the County or City going to purchase the link between Tri State GPS and the FD's, don't think so. "

Im Still Jackson wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:18 PM:

" I still think that the sole purpose of this is to drive Tri State out of business then take over a managed care ambulance service for profit run by the city = THE TAXPAYERS! "

Im Still Jackson wrote on Aug 7, 2008 2:15 PM:

" Remember the old saying "if you give a person enough rope they will hang themself"? Well those idits at city hall are looking pretty tangled up right now like a fishing lure in a river willow. "

JennyN wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:58 PM:

" "People of knowledge shouldnt be the decision-makers on the body, he said. Boy, that's showing real intelligence, isn't it?? Personally, my life is the last thing I'd want at the hand of La Crosse government. Just one more thing they want to control. Only a matter of time (years)before they DO put Tri-State out of business and then UP goes taxes, DOWN goes quality of care, and guess what? You won't be able to do ANYTHING about it because its run by the city! "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:46 PM:

" to Jenifr:

I believe the plan is that the dispatch will have gps locations of the rigs

to fortsa123:

The literature provided at the meeting last night indicated that the response time for Tri-State averaged 4 minutes and 32 seconds. "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:40 PM:

" Matt.. Last night it was stated that tri state shows up 5-7 minutes after the Fire Department. Would you please post the truth so every know.Thanks "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:38 PM:

" what is going to happen when a transfer from Franny's comes in and the fire ambulance is the closest unit. Are they going to be making the trip to Madison, Rochester at 2am. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:32 PM:

" Ran out of money? Do you have any idea how many junctures Doyle will have to pass County voting because he 'mediated'. Ran out of money, priorities people, just like going through the trouble of filling District Two seat, priorities. They do, and don't have a 'ringer' ready, yet! This vote and the impending City Budget vote, 'leave it empty' someone murmured. Priorities. "

Jenifr wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:28 PM:

" And here's a question that I haven't seen answered yet. The proposal says the 911 center will send the closest ambulance. How will they know where the TSA ambulances are and how will the TSA dispatch know where the city ambulance is. If you're going to have to radio back and forth to find the closest truck, won't that waste any time you might have gained???? "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:27 PM:

" I think I am an Attorney. I think not. I do know when someone is coming at me with a bar of soap, and when I am bent over. Hey Moderate- You want some more to add to the omitted Sandcastles/Family First mandated Court Order list. How about our former DA, and 'On Too Many Boards'. Need more. Before Marc and his pals at the Trib delete this, It is all Germain, and you and I pay for it? "

Jenifr wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:26 PM:

" First off as a resident of La Crosse County I believe that Mr. Doyle overstepped his bounds. His concerns should be what is best for the county not the city. He should have firmly stated that anything that is done to jeopardize service to the county should be avoided. Last I checked the city of lacrosse is in the county. They should start acting like it!!! "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:24 PM:

" Medic183 nice job last night I was really impressed. All Tri State employees keep up the good work. "

The Moderate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:15 PM:

" LOL - now he thinks he is a lawyer! Nestor, you are a roofer. Imagining that you are something else doesn't make you what you aren't. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:59 PM:

" Slanderous, serious? Bring it on. I would love, and always desired a legal forum to bring this particular wife up on the stand. As this entire net of Attorneys and good ole boys seemed to carry out favorite/exemptions, at least oversights, that apparently were not meant for the working man or woman in this case. Unless you think everyone lined up to receive their final divorce decree, and their are two Attorneys out in the hall laughing with their oath hand around the door jamb? 'Splain' that one to me, I guessed I missed the humor. "

medic193 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:58 PM:

" For those interested I will continue to post facts and figures (as well as a bit of personal opinion) on my website related to this issue. The address is www.nocityambulance.com "

down2512 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:57 PM:

" Wow!! Melon Head...Myturn must have really hit a nerve with you! All I can say is everything you said right back at you...in all caps! "

Melon Head wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:50 PM:

" MyTurn:

Pretty serious and slanderous statement you just made there. I hope you have documented proof to back that up. Or is this just hearsay and something your imaginary friend told you? Nothing can be done on any local level without you and your conspiracy theories. I think they are out to get you alright, and take you to the loony bin. "

The Real World wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:32 PM:

" When government officials think this is a good idea, we know that they have been in government to long. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:25 PM:

" Conflict of interest new to Doyle? Practicing Family Divorce Law in your wife's Family Court Commissioner Court Room? Allowing the Municipal Judge to sidestep clearly printed 'mandated' Court orders for the entire Family to attend Sandcastles and Family First programs, when you represent his wife. After the fact that the wife went down and signed up herself for the programs to help her situation and her children with counseling during this terribly hard time. How about standing in the final legal divorce forum mute as your client's spouse/Judge was allowed to swear in with his feet in the hall and his hand placed around the door threshold as they snickered, and all other couples that day swore in before the bench correctly. Then FCC Legrand lost an election due to shenanigans/disparities like this. I think more lost elections might be around the corner? "

down2512 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:24 PM:

" I know that moderate, but, in this case their positions are so like I'm only wishing they could all be gone with one election. How do we get rid of Doyle anyway? "

down2512 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:22 PM:

" I see the effect of a small dog bite here. The bite won't kill you but you could bleed to death. I think that's what would happen to tri-state if this goes through. With that I heartly believe the quality and quantity of service would deteriorate resulting in life long medical situations and death for those in need of high scale emergency care involving ambulance responders. I have no faith in a government run medical team. "

Melon Head wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:19 PM:

" Thank You InformedCitizen, could not have said it better myself. MyTurn and Fortsa123 should be thankful that the city did not just go ahead without any input or mediation. Remember, Doyle was not the first mediator. The first one left when they ran out of money in the fund setup for just that. I am sure that if Doyle did not step in, you would have far more stuff to be complaining about than you do now. Some people just are not happy unless they are miserable. Put the blame where it belongs. The Mayor and Fire Chief who started the mess. "

The Moderate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:16 PM:

" Hey down

The people in this city DIDN'T vote for Doyle or Cleveland. And they only voted for Johnsrud because he was the "lesser of 2 evils". You need to be better informed! "

The Moderate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:14 PM:

" I have heard and read rumblings that as soon as this Proposal is referred by the Council for the September Meeting, a petition drive for a referendum will be started. My question is why? A referendum will of course cost us taxpayers money. Why wouldn't the opponents want to wait and see what the City Council's reaction to the Mayor's proposal will be if they are indeed fiscally responsible? Or is this just about Nestor getting his name in the paper? My guess is that it wont get past 1st base. "

john doe wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:10 PM:

" Hi all my name is john doe.....AKA "T- Bone" :) "

down2512 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:07 PM:

" Man! That must have been one dog and pony show! I say we get a copy of the tape and put it on you tube and send it to Dave and Jay let's see what the public at large has to say about this. I bet we'll see J-rud, Doyle and Cleveland signing autographs for their fans all over the place! The only bad part of this would be admitting I actually live in a city where we vote for this trash! "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:02 PM:

" fortsa123

he has the same interest as mediator as he does as teh county chairman. where do his interests conflict. He is best served in his capacity as representative, chairman and mediator by an amicable resolution to the dispute between the City and Tri-state. "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:59 AM:

" To Mr. Melon head... Doyle is the county chairman and the 2nd district rep. On top of that he was the mediator. ummm Maybe conflict of interest. I think so. "

down2512 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:57 AM:

" two words come to my mind when i think about this: GRIEF and GREED! I can't wait to see Johnsrud go! Arrogant self-serving greedy condescending, really should any of those be the words that immediately come to mind when you think of our city leader? YIKES! Where are the complaints about the current ambulance service? I don't think they exist and this is just government getting their paws in another very private personal relationship the citizens do not want them in. board members the public has not been happy with much of what you've done recently either and it may be a good idea to leave things just the way they are-fine. "

Melon Head wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:50 AM:

" Mr. Myturn:

Steve Doyle as the County Board Chairman has every reason to be involved in the process. He not only represents District 2 on the northside but also the WHOLE county which will be affected by this. P.S. I am totally against the City of LaCrosse starting an ambulance system. "

balanced budget wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:46 AM:

" This plan is, to quote our pathetic\dishonest mayor, Hogwash. When is the next election for mayor? J-rude has got to go. "

Sadiedog62 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:43 AM:

" I attended last nights meeting and went in with an open mind hoping to get some answers to why we need this City owned Ambulance service. I left only more confused, at the reasoning. Kudos to Matt from Tri-State and the Tri-State team for all your hard work.

I do have to say that I do like the statement that Johnsrud made about spaghetti. I am going to try that one at home. How do I know after 25 years I have the right spouse, I better venture out and see if I can enhance my situation? Thanks Johnsrud for the advise. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:22 AM:

" I don't have any information about operating costs of an ambulance but the 25,000 operating cost number seems low. that number supposedly includes the diesel fuel and if the entire 25k was used

on fuel they would have to spend less than \$100 per week on diesel fuel to stay within budget. 100 bucks is about 20 gallons, that doesn't seem like enough to drive that rig around all day "

Km wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:13 AM:

" Why would the mayor still push this plan with so much of the community against it, and with so little support? Arrogance and/or ignorance or alot of both? Shouldn't he be picking fights with landowners and pushing businesses out of the city? There is absolutely no way that the Operating costs will be \$25,000 for five years. Why would Wages/benefits cost \$587,420? Aren't these "paramedics" already fire fighters? "

Willie wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:12 AM:

" If they don't raise the taxes to cover the additional cost, some other service will be cut from the budget to make room. What service will that be Mayor Johnsrud? "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:09 AM:

" Mr. Melon head. I suggest your 'Doyle' call City Inspector/Planner Kirch up and receive a seminar from him. As Larry has polished smooth a talent of continually sidestepping a figurative political 'bloody nose' while at the same time his fingerprint seems to be on almost all bits of business within our City. "

Willie wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:08 AM:

" If the intent is not to create competition or to make money (which it won't), let's see it for what it is: a ploy by Cleveland to create more positions on the fire department for career progression and enhance the pay scale. I will have to agree with Nestor on this one that it will also create mandated tax increases to cover the pay and benefits packages that won't be offset by the "profits" of the service. The paramedic first response sounds like a good reason, but with one truck, how would that principle apply on subsequent first responder calls if the ONE ambulance is out of the barn on a call? Those three calls per day won't always be spaced out. In the EMS business, when it rains it pours. The rest of the time seems like a drought. "

girly2 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:08 AM:

" I do not live in La Crosse County, but I am were close to the border. I wonder if the this whole proposal goes through if my ambulance service is going to become compromised. Say TSA is busy, I do not think that the city of La Crosse is going to come to my aid. Also, what do I do is TSA does go out of business? It seems that the city of La Crosse is just thinking of itself and not the greater good and area. "

girly2 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:04 AM:

" TSA has been owned by GL for only a few years. TSA has been in the area for 30+ years and was privately owned before it was owned by GL. If the city would have proposed this if TSA was privately owned, I think they would be doing the same thing. Would you still say that TSA has a monopoly in the area? "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 11:01 AM:

" I don't feel as though I am making excuses, and I certainly did not speak last night. Of the parties involved who would you rather mediate? perhaps you could step up and set aside your personal opinion? Chairman doyle is in a tough spot and i was simply speaking in his defense to the poster who claimed he was a conspirator with Johnsrud. He is certainly mediating with an agenda in mind but is hardly a conspirator. Without funding to hire an outside mediator the "hat" fell to chairman Doyle to establish an agreement acceptable to all parties. Without Chairman Doyle's work there would be a city ambulance well on it's way with no commision set up to oversee that ambulance. To MyTurn: what would you have him do, ignore teh city and let the chips fall? "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:59 AM:

" As I watched the Mayor and his followers last night (Ex: Kader, Lenard, Italiano, etc), and his usual counted on votes. Don't believe me, go pull the records. These people seemed to get the 'doe in the headlight' look. As an over-pour of high beam was flicked on by the vast majority of those present. It seemed to me that their eyes even started to flit around apparently already envisioning what ditch, on what side of the road, they would jump in to hide after this 'yes' vote would be requested of them yet again at Council. "

Melon Head wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:52 AM:

" MyTurn: Everyone is aware about your personal issues with Steve doyle. Worry more about the issue and not Doyle bashing. Nowhere did it say or have I heard where Doyle is voting for it. He said there is enough support in each elected body for it to pass. Your personal attacks on all officials that you do not personally agree with are what will keep you from ever being elected or appointed to any governing body. Who would want to try to work with you? "

Willie wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:51 AM:

" Gundersen is not running a monopoly with Tri-State. If it were they wouldn't haul patients to St. Francis. You still have a choice where you want to go. City fire will in no way be able to create competition. One truck won't do it due to the volume of calls. Several trucks would run Tri-state out of business and then city taxes would go up. It would also cause the rest of the county to get less quality service unless someone like Gold Cross came in to provide service for the county. City FD could never place an ambulance at Holmen (which Tri-state does) unless they became a metro-type FD. "

Darwin wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:48 AM:

" Still waiting to hear the opinion of Chief Dominick from Onalaska... ? Samantha? "

bearcat25 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:47 AM:

" I must say that prior to last night I had never heard our mayor speak. Mr. Doyle requested that everyone stay respectful and that there are no personal attacks. It was sad to see the only slanderous statements were made by the mayor calling Tri-State "Spaghetti" and stating that the

room was "obviously made up of Tri-State and Gundersen". I have stayed away from comments about the mayor but your Mr. Mayor, should be downright ashamed of your audacity. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:47 AM:

" Bozo- You are right on the money. There was a CPA Quinn present last night. He placed a size 12 right on top of their numbers. Speaking of numbers, Doyle stated the other day on WIZM, "The City is putting some number together." Who over at City put those numbers together? Who wants to place their name on those numbers? Who? You can only ask so much in 2 minutes. Go to the WIZM Blog and read the e-mail from Chief Cleveland to a few people involved from Lacrosse. The Chief only strengthened your point. The only problem in Lacrosse is that our City books are in shambles at City Finance. Who put these numbers together, and wants to sign them? I thought not! "

Melon Head wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:45 AM:

" Have to agree with InformedCitizen on that one. It is the Mayor and Fire Chief pushing this down the taxpayers throat. Doyle is just trying to get involved at the county level as it seems the City would go ahead with or without the consent of the taxpayers, ultimately putting county residents EMS care in jeopardy. This moronic discision will affect alot more than just the residents of LaCrosse, everyone has a stake in this one. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:38 AM:

" To InformedCitizen- Your collective excuses sound as hollow as they did last night. Tribune-"Both Johnsrud and Doyle seem confident theres enough support within their respectively elected bodies to get the agreement passed"? This statement from a person in a mediator capacity? Get real! To Turbocharged-Read my 8:22AM post again. We are waiting for a resolution to be introduced, so that it can be answered in the form of a 'referendum question'. Of course the fear is we are being backed time wise up against a wall once again, or there will be yet another 'emergency' time line infused by none other than our Mayor. Volunteer? Yep. Contact 'Lefse' on the WIZM Forums with a private message. "

random annoying bozo wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:33 AM:

" the numbers don't add up. City says a little over a half million over 5 years for labor and benefits? let's see, to staff one ambulance for 24/7 requires 6 people. let's just use 50k per person in wages and benefits. that works out to 300k a year or 1.5 million over 5 years. looks like they low balled wages and bennies by a million bucks. more of government and their 'funny' numbers? and let's be realistic, what government program or idea EVER cost what it was projected to? with numbers being 'fuzzy' from the start, this is looking like a money pit before it even gets off the ground. doesn't the City have any qualified accountants on staff? "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:16 AM:

" Tri State Union should have a spaghetti dinner fund raiser. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:06 AM:

" With reference to the 5 weeks comment, he said the earliest anyone could vote would be 5 weeks, not they would be able to vote in 5 weeks. He was simply trying to make it abundantly clear that last nights forum was not the only opportunity to make your opinions heard. He wants community involvement not a swift end "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:05 AM:

" Chairman Doyle could have a conflict of interest in this matter, which is why they sought out an outside mediator. Unfortunately the money for that ran out and had the Chairman not stepped in as mediator the discussion would likely have stopped and the city would move forward without the collaboration of the major medical providers of the region. Furthermore, his interests being the interest of the county he is serving them by mediating as it is in the counties best interest to have a quality EMS service. His opinion about the easiest way to accomplish that goal has not impacted his ability to work objectively, making him an ideal mediator for the circumstances of the situation. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 10:01 AM:

" This is the same option the Mayor gave to Collins sign. Negotiate with the NSD developer for the sign you own on an open ended contract or we will condemn it? My, what a base to start to negotiate in your behalf on. In this scenarios, 'make room' for a City run ambulance service or you will compete with a tax subsidized competitor. This is not a mediation or negotiation? As I stated last night if you cannot grasp this similarity, come up to my Northside Shop and I will place your head in my vise to realte to their viewpoint. The only negotiation power that Tri-State truly has is the decibel level of public outcry! "

Insightful1 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:56 AM:

" The other important thing to keep in mind is that the "numbers" the city provided last night only addressed the cost of the AMBULANCE. I did not see any costs in there for the additional paramedics/equipment supplies that would be needed for the unnecessary duplication of paramedic 1st Response? "

Enjoylife wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:52 AM:

" If it isn't broken, do not fix it. (& it isn't broken) "

turbocharged wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:52 AM:

" If Nestor did indeed take out papers to send this to a referendum as Senior Advocate has said, someone please post something on here so we can get over and sign that petition. I for one will get over there and sign it today! "

Insightful1 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:51 AM:

" The "numbers" presented by the City last evening were way innaccurate. I hear that Tri-State will be putting together an analysis of the true costs and an outside CPA has volunteered to review them. That should be interesting! "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:49 AM:

" To Informed Citizen- Out of Doyles mouth came his statement of desire/willingness to mediate. Well when you mediate you do not give an 'opinion' on the matter, during, or after. Then follow it up with we would be able to vote on this matter within "5 weeks"? These are two hats that you cannot place on your head at the same time. "

Insightful1 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:47 AM:

" On behalf of all of us here at Tri-State Ambulance, a huge THANK YOU to the community members supporting the retention of our high-quality EMS system! We are humbled by the The outpouring of community support and honored to serve you! Thanks! "

funmom wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:38 AM:

" People of knowledge shouldnt be the decision-makers on the body, he said. What!!??? How could anyone seriously make this statement? That's right, we want IDIOTS making decisions... oh wait, thats what we have now. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:26 AM:

" I have had many dealings with Steve Doyle in the past, both personally and professionally, and he had been nothing but honest, ethical and honorable. I know he genuinely wants what is best for the county and is trying his best to remain neutral while acting as a moderator. He has said he doesn't believe that the city should get into the ambulance business but recognizes that if he doesn't work with them they can start an ambulance and do a great deal of harm to the County. He is trying to do what is best for the County of LaCrosse and should be respected for doing so "

dfib wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:23 AM:

" It is also worth noting the chief quoted medicare reimbursement rate for the basis or revenue. Ironically medicare only typically accounts for 50-60% of an ambulances revenue. You will find a much more accurate expectation for revenue received over five years based on 4000 calls to be approximately \$730,000. Take that short fall(~\$480,000), add to it the addition wage expense the chief left out(~\$212,000), and now five years later you have a business that is \$692,000 in the hole. Ouch! "

Senior Advocate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:23 AM:

" OOPS still learning to spell. "

Senior Advocate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:21 AM:

" Oh by the way let us not forget the illustrious co-conspiritor in all of this, Comrade Chairman Doyle of the County. Taking over private business is the way of the communitis manifesto. "

dfib wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:17 AM:

" The gentleman who spoke passionately about the improvement to Bliss Rd last night had a valuable point. Rather than spending nearly \$1.5 million dollars (See more corrected figures below) on something that is not broken, wouldn't it be better for the city to fix something that is and there by improve response times and ease of emergency access to those who live on the bluff? "

Senior Advocate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:15 AM:

" Three free units wow. no surprise here even if it is only one. How stupid does Jonserud and the chief think the pulbic are. Nothing but lies from them If anyone thinks otherwise their head is still in the sand. "

Senior Advocate wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:12 AM:

" Heard this morning that Nestor took out papers and needed 2000 signatures to force this to a referendum. No matter how you feel about him, it is action and only action by the citizens en-mass that will kill this terrible idea. this should be the final straw that will get these egotistical people out of public service. Now it remains to be seen how many citizens will put their effort where their mouths are. I hope we are all please after the election and can get on to working on the real problems facing us. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:12 AM:

" It certainly seems that way turbocharged. I think rushing into shooting it down is as hasty as rushing into accepting it. But at the same time the people last night certainly spoke clearly (most of them haha) against the issue. Unless the sentiment changes, there shouldn't be a referendum the city SHOULD just shoot it down. "

Earl wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:11 AM:

" All I would ask is that officials put this up for referendum on the Nov. ballot. If the citizens want to pay for this service then the vote will re3flect that. I am quite certain that it will go the other way. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 9:10 AM:

" Last night one Fireman got up and made a pro venture statement. Versus the many Tri-State employees. Soon he made an egregious incorrect statement, was laughed at, and corrected. He even apologized and moved on very quickly with his statement. Interesting his wife is a School Board Member. Maybe she can intervene and help us have the Ambulance Manufacturer give us 3 'free' units, contingent on a 'future' referendum passing regarding this City foray? Think about it, it will come to you, I hope! "

turbocharged wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:54 AM:

" Informed Citizen wrote "I left that room feeling that there was nearly no support for a city ambulance"

Thats because there is no support. 90% of us are completely against this idea. This absolutely SHOULD go to referendum since they want to spend over a million of OUR money. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:51 AM:

" Hotshot:

If you were there why didn't you speak up. we need people on both sides to speak their mind when the people making decisions can hear it. regardless of anyones stance the mayor and fire chief were beat up last night and nobody in that room indicated the mayor or chief had any support. I left that room feeling that there was nearly no support for a city ambulance "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:49 AM:

" Hotshot-"I say lets give the fire dept a go and see what they have to offer." A "go"? Oh that is rich! A \$1.2 million dollar "go" just to start? My it will look great next to the \$391 million worth of property we presently have encompassed in TIFs, up to 27 years. I guess we have given that a "go" as well. Both are long shot bets, with our taxpayer money. This local ambulance service is doing a great job presently and I have never heard a good reason why we 'need' to enter it. Hows that 'economic stimulus' looking for you at your house? "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:47 AM:

" Paramedics are well trained and at some point they are new so the fact that the city ambulance would be staffed by new paramedics does not concern me as much as the diluted paramedic pool does. That argument makes a lot of sense and has been backed up by statistical data and research. It's not just the new paramedics that would suffer, the quality of care across the region would diminish if the Fire Department added as many paramedics as they have indicated. I want quality care and I don't care who I pay for it as long as it is the best care I can get! "

hotshot2008 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:46 AM:

" As far as new and old paramedics go. I know some very good newer paramedics and some very bad old paramedics. Privates will tend to keep whoever when they hire because they need the people. "

common-cents wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:43 AM:

" The mayor should be embarrassed, he had no clue last night what he was saying. It's called simple math and his math makes no sense. Invest 1 million dollars and maybe make a profit of \$5000 in five years, thats laughable. Board members you better start listening to the people. "

hotshot2008 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:43 AM:

" First off I don't know how you would know if i was there or not and second i was not one of the boys in blue in the front row. I was sitting near the back and am in no way affiliated with the fire dept or work for the city in any way. "

possom133 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:39 AM:

" Hey dirty little secret what do you really now about that "brand new" paramedic? "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:39 AM:

" You pro forces can post what you want. But what you cannot wipe away is the Johnsrud/Doyle presentation that was a virtual train wreck. Not because it was a rowdy crowd. Because it a poor venture, with too much cash investment, and relying on shaky fund sources that have been questioned in regard to their source and bookkeeping procedures. Add to that a room brimming with knowledgeable people with good questions, and data to back those questions up. But do not worry, they will be back! Better prepared, with a continuing 'improved' and re-organized mantra prepared by people and resources you and I pay for with our taxes. Just because the Mayor has the Council votes in his back pocket does not make it right! Nothing will change unless you get out and vote in this coming primary and election. "

Dirty Little Secrets wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:38 AM:

" HotShot, how come you weren't at the meeting last night?? My guess is that either you don't live in the City, or you were one of the "boys in blue" sitting in the front row. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:36 AM:

" I ahve not been convinced that the fire department should never get an ambulance, but I agree with the sentiment expressed by mr. zavadsky in that no one deserves to be guarenteed an ambulance. When it comes to literally life and death issues I don't want to just let someone "have a go at it" prove to me they can operate with equal or better care and in a fiscally sound manner and I will support the new program. As of now neither point has been shown "

Dirty Little Secrets wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:34 AM:

" Re: HotShot2008

You go ahead and gamble on increasing your tax dollars. You go ahead an gamble on having a "brand new" paramedic treat you and your family or your child. For me, the risk is TOO GREAT. "

hotshot2008 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:31 AM:

" True, the money does go back, but they are also allowed to bank some money as well to keep on hand. I say lets give the fire dept a go and see what they have to offer. "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:30 AM:

" True they are not losing money every year, but any surplus money they make goes into improving the organization. but they have lost money in the past and the tax payers didnt have to pay for it, that is a big plus in my eyes "

Dirty Little Secrets wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:28 AM:

" Re: HotShot2008

NO, they are not in the red "every year", but they have operated in the "red" in the past. And as Mr Zavadsky pointed out to us last night, they didn't go to the tax payers, Gundersen Lutheran came up with the money. There are fire based ambulances that do this across Wisconsin that operate in the RED EVERY YEAR.....who comes up with the money? OH, that's right.....THE TAX PAYERS!!!! Any money made by a non-profit goes back into "ENHANCING" (like that word?) there company, whether that be ambulances or improved technology and the like....Know the facts people. This is a HORRIBLE IDEA "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:22 AM:

" Please, let me illustrate the time line these 'politicians' would like. The secret one year mediation and proposed plan was unveiled last night. We still wait for an 'introduction' of some kind to Council or Committee. We could see a vote, "as soon as 5 weeks". To collect signatures and put this to 'referendum' you must put together a machine of volunteers to collect 2950 signatures. That is after you fill out papers, reports, form an organization, and pay an attorney to represent you all. Good luck, 5 weeks, and 'they' know it! Meanwhile we will wait for introduction at City? Follow me here, You cannot even begin the referendum 'process' without answering the proposed specific introduced resolution? Agreement up on the County Web. City Web? Empty, and info void, as usual. "

hotshot2008 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:20 AM:

" That's great they are a non for profit company. I used to work for a non for profit company. That doesn't mean they don't make money. If you think they are running in the red every year you are wrong. "

possom133 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:18 AM:

" We in La Crosse are lucky, in many big cities private ambulance firms will not even go into some areas, how's that for professionalism. Don't any of you arm chair rescuers ever think you know what's going on until you have to go out on a 3 Am call to go get blood on your hands again. So slam the city fools all you want BUT leave all the people that may save your life one day OUT OF IT!! "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:18 AM:

" I would also like to know how the city is planning on running an ambulance at less than half the cost that Tri-State does. I don't feel that Chief Cleveland and Mayor Johnsrud effectively answered questions or alleviated concerns last night. I would like to see more forums so that the city can present us with an effective argument for an ambulance. By all accounts Tri-State is doing an excellent job but I wouldn't be opposed to better, but I don't want to risk the current quality service on a fool's gamble. "

Dirty Little Secrets wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:17 AM:

" Re: HotShot2008

That is laughable!!!! Show me ONE fire based ambulance that turns a profit without creative city accounting. You can't, because there isn't!!!! The funniest part of last night is when a Tri State employee got up and asked the chief if he was chief of Marshfield in 2005, to which his reply was "yes". The TSA employee then quoted numbers off the Marshfield city budget from 2005 which

showed (after you removed the TAX SUBSIDY) a loss of over \$100,000 for that year. Get that, just in ONE YEAR!!! Prove me wrong!! "

InformedCitizen wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:15 AM:

" Point O'view:

Tri-State is a NOT for profit company.

And according to Mayor Johnsrud and Chief Cleveland there is no intention to create competition.

hotshot2008:

Tri-State is not in the ambulance business for profit. You speak of a desire to lower cost to the consumer, how much money do you pay in taxes for an ambulance now? "

Dirty Little Secrets wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:09 AM:

" The Cities numbers are totally bogus!! According to Tri State it costs them over \$600,000 to run 1 ambulance each year, yet per the Cities numbers they can do it with less expense. Do you really think that this is true. The average FF makes significantly more money than a Tri State employee and as Nestor pointed out last night (thanks!!), the retirement and benefits paid to the firefighters far exceed that of Tri State employees. HMMMM. Just doesn't make sense!! The mayor and his puppet chief couldn't answer squat last night. Call your council member and tell them to VOTE THIS DOWN!! It is the people who should be deciding this, not the mayor's council puppets!!!! "

Point O'view wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:04 AM:

" Let's look at the other side of this. Tri state is a for profit company. What is wrong with competition? Doesn't this keep the cost to consumers down? Having competition is key to free market capitalism. I also wonder how many tri state medics are looking into the fire fighter training classes now? Gundersen Lutheran is trying to maintain their monopoly in the pre hospital care setting. Chief Cleveland and Mayor Johnsrud should be thanked by trying to help improve service and keep costs in line for the residents. "

hotshot2008 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 8:04 AM:

" I think it's great, fire based EMS is the way to go. The fire service is known to not have the turnover that a private ambulance does. Fewer turnover means that your medics will become more experienced. Also when the ambulance and first responders come from the same department it provides a better continuation of care. If there wasn't money for the city to make why would the private ambulance care so much about giving it up? They wouldn't, so obviously there is money to be made. Fire based EMS is the way of the future and has been proven time and time again throughout fire depts. across the county. "

pinky wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:59 AM:

" Spending over 1 million dollars to make \$5000 DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. What else is in this for the city that we don't know about yet? "

Old_Fogey wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:57 AM:

" The city is going to lose money on this, mark my words. Just watch - in five years a new mayor is going to be trying to unload this back to the private sector. "

The Real World wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:51 AM:

" When government officials think this is a good idea, we know that they have been in government to long. "

dfib wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:49 AM:

" cindy m-

West Salem First Responders are a collection of certified first responders, EMT-basics, and a smattering of EMT-paramedics. However the paramedics are not allowed to practice at the paramedic level per WI statues. In order for a paramedic to function at the paramedic level they must be affiliated with an ambulance service. Hope this helps. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:46 AM:

" "Both Johnsrud and Doyle seem confident theres enough support within their respectively elected bodies to get the agreement passed." There it is people, read it, feel it in your bones, and believe it! This will not be a vote about merit, or tax burden. "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:36 AM:

" The shame? One year in 'mediation?', out of the secret box, and then collect your minion vote within another slam bang "5 week" time period? As soon as a proposal is introduced at City I will move to collect signatures for a referendum, and place the power back in the hands of those of us it belongs, the people! "

Myturn wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:35 AM:

" It was downright embarrassing to watch this presentation last night. We can leave District Two Council seat empty, unrepresented, and vote-less until April 2009. We can take out of the closet this almost covert plan only last night and we could see a vote on it, "as soon as 5 weeks"??? We are being set up again taxpayers. The staggering truth once more is the Mayor has a majority of votes in his pocket that encompasses his folly. Last night illustrated plainly to all present that the Mayors plan had little merit, as the very large crowd broke up in uproarious loud laughter several times at statements made by the Mayor, Chief, and Doyle. "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:31 AM:

" Matt now it is time to stage a truck at 5th and Market instead of 5th and cass. Because Tri State would then also be closest to a call. "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:22 AM:

" So this proposal is between the county and the city of Lacrosse. "We are going to dispatch the closest ambulance." What if Tri State is busy and the closest truck to Farmington is the City of Lacrosses ambulance, are they going to respond??? Last I checked Farmington is in Lacrosse County. Cleveland and Johnsrud great job last night at dodging all the questions. "

Darwin wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:19 AM:

" I'm related to a firefighter/first responder in the area. There are very few people in the profession who think this is a good idea!

Johnsrud shows his lack of grasp on local sentiment when he states that people are afraid of their taxes going up. This has more to do with the safety of our families.

Their numbers are interesting. Please show me a recent project that has been completed per the budget when the city is involved.

Remember that the time (considerable) that firefighters spend training is time away from the firehouse. So either they're training on shift (less people ready for calls) or they're getting OT to go to training. "

cindy m wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:14 AM:

" You cant have a paramedic first response program without an ambulance, Cleveland said.

Why? Doesn't West Salem have that? I know they have the vehicle that looks like an ambulance but they don't transport people. I think Cleveland needs to explain this statement better.

This is the closest I could get to something I could say is fair, Doyle said. Im doing everything I can to prevent the city from bankrupting Tri-State.

How about staying out of the ambulance business? "

dfib wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:12 AM:

" Funny numbers:

Their five year list of expenses, especially wages cannot have been figured correctly. It would have to be one of the following options:

1. Five year wage difference starting fall of 2008 through 2013, showing the increased overtime to allow FD employees to attend paramedic school. Thus leaving out the wage increases for the firefighters working as paramedics in the years 2014 and 2015.
2. Five year wage difference starting 2010 through 2015 showing the wage difference for firefighters working as paramedics and leaving out the additional cost of overtime incurred in 2008-2010 as the firefighters attend paramedic school.

Either way 2 years of wages are unaccounted for, roughly \$212,000 in extra expenses. "

DailyReader wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:11 AM:

" Is it Recall time yet? Bozos need to go. "

random annoying bozo wrote on Aug 7, 2008 7:04 AM:

" and where else but government would someone propose 'spending' 1.2 million to make 5 thousand after 5 years? factor in inflation (wage and economic), and that 'profit' turns into a loss very very quickly. "

random annoying bozo wrote on Aug 7, 2008 6:57 AM:

" for something that 'isn't about the money', they sure emphasized 'the money' and the turning of a 'profit?' i've also heard rumors this is Johnsrud returning a campaign promise to firefighters. i tended to doubt this, but it seems more and more like this may be the case, the firefighters union did 'endorse' Johnsrud in his Mayoral bid 3+ years ago. is this just him pandering for votes again? i hope not, but what other reason could there be for such a non needed idea? "

La Crosse Taxpayer wrote on Aug 7, 2008 6:42 AM:

" Johnsruds new campaign slogan
Im the perfect person to be the mayor in lacrosse because People of knowledge shouldnt be the decision-makers on the body so Im over qualified and everyone at city hall is also qualified for their positions not to have a clue on what were doing!! "

dfib wrote on Aug 7, 2008 6:20 AM:

" Their chief on the otherhand is obviously more of a politician than a leader. To quote one of his most blatant lies of the night: "Tri-State arrives on scene 5-6 minutes after us 90% of the time." According to Tri-State's 2007 community report they average a 4.5 minute response time in the city with arrival before or simultaneous to the fire department 38.1% of the time.

Honesty is apparently even less important than patient care is to chief and mayor... "

dfib wrote on Aug 7, 2008 6:13 AM:

" DO NOT BLAME THE RANK AND FILE FIRE FIGHTER!

The most embarrassing thing about that meeting is the fact they were made to watch as their chief lied through his teeth and almost everyone who rose to speak praised Tri-State. The fire fighter who come to your door when you call 911 are everyday heros in every sense of the word. Together with Tri-State and the police department they form a solid, well functioning EMS system. "

fortsa123 wrote on Aug 7, 2008 6:12 AM:

" After the mayors comment comparing Tri State to Spaghetti in honor of them I went home and had a big plate. Tri State keep doing what you are doing. "

afan wrote on Aug 7, 2008 5:33 AM:

" I do agree the mayor's(notice I am not capitalizing that one to give him any credit) statements make him look like the person he really is. However in some of the responses reference to the firefighters is a little unfair. Yes it is the chief making these statements. This is the same city who chose this chief and the dept. didn't have a say in that one either. In talking to one firefighter many of them didn't know the plan till it was ready to be released, it was only a few involved in the talks and they were held to silence from what I was told. "

contrarian wrote on Aug 7, 2008 5:19 AM:

" Finally we have the key to Johnsrud's managerial policy in the statement, "People of knowledge shouldn't be the decision makers on the body." Doesn't that characterize his tenure as mayor? And isn't that a stunningly idiotic statement? Why should expertise have anything to do with decisions? If nothing else sinks this foolish plan to start a city ambulance service, this alone should do it!!! "

The Real World wrote on Aug 7, 2008 3:20 AM:

" When government officials think this is a good idea, we know that they have been in government to long. "

2Hoots wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:23 AM:

" Chief Cleveland: Why would you have a say in how a private enterprise conducts there business? And if you did have a say, what exactly would it be? Eloquence is not your strong suit. Keep it to yourself. "

2Hoots wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:05 AM:

" From what was seen at tonight's informational meeting, one thing (of several) was apparent. The city of La Crosse and the fire department were ill-prepared and ill-equipped to deliver a convincing message. I am even more confident and comfortable now than ever before of TSA's professionalism and dedication to the people they serve. Not just in the city, but in their entire coverage area. How can the city 'enhance' coverage compared to what was seen tonight and every day the employees of TSA are on the street? Doyle, Johnsrud, and Cleveland - You are an embarrassment to those of us in your communities. "

Goofus wrote on Aug 7, 2008 1:02 AM:

" Wow, we have finally gotten the quote of how all of the City's business has been run for the past four years from Mayor Johnsrud. People of knowledge shouldnt (sic)be the decision-makers on the body." Is he talking about city hall, the council, or the planning committee. Probably all three..... "

2Hoots wrote on Aug 7, 2008 12:59 AM:

" After 5 years of service, all you can expect to clear is \$5000? ARE YOU KIDDING ME!!! Save your time and expense and stay out of the ambulance service. You say it's not about the money now, but part of your main argument is "We are going on these calls already, Why shouldn't we get paid too?" Have a fundraiser like all of your neighboring departments do and raise the \$1000 a year - it would

be much easier. Better for the patients/taxpayers/firefighters. (Is a workman's comp claim figured in there when the 1st FF back gives out???) Staying out of the ambulance business is good business. "