

## **First Responders**

First Responders are individuals with a targeted amount of medical training based throughout Wakulla County who can provide immediate assistance in the event of a medical emergency.

### **BACKGROUND**

The history of the First Responder program in Wakulla County began in 1975 when Wakulla EMS taught the first citizen based First Responder program. Prior to this time the course was taught to various agency personnel, such as the Florida Highway Patrol. The idea of the citizen-based program was to augment the limited number of agency First Responders available to respond. The first class had eight graduates.

The program has evolved over time and is now a joint effort between Wakulla County EMS, Wakulla County Fire Rescue and the Wakulla County Volunteer Fire Department. They share a Medical Director and work in close cooperation with each other.

The State of Florida has twice recognized Wakulla County by selecting two individuals as the First Responder of the Year. The first was Rod Strickland in 1998 and the second was Steve Pigott in 2001.

### **EDUCATION AND FUNCTION**

First Responders use a minimum amount of equipment to perform an initial assessment and intervention in life threatening medical emergencies. They receive a 70 hour First Responder course plus an additional training on such things as equipment location, set up of IV bags, etc. These responders are also authorized to carry oxygen and are of invaluable assistance to Wakulla County EMS and to the citizens of Wakulla County.