

CALSTAR ROTOR WASH

FALL 2011



Ernest Righetti II: A Man of High Integrity and True Grit

Well-known Santa Maria area cattle rancher Ernest Righetti II isn't going to allow two major vascular surgeries to slow him down. Within the past year, he has been transported twice by CALSTAR to UCLA for surgery to restore circulation to one of his legs. The most recent took place about six months ago.

Righetti, 75, simply can't stay away from a life profession that he loves so much. He is a fourth-generation Righetti to run the ranch and the lure of the land draws him deeply. He said he has absolutely no plans to retire.

Righetti was born in Santa Maria and moved to the family ranch shortly after birth. "It's the only place I've ever lived, and I love it," he said. His great-grandfather came to the U.S. from Switzerland in 1855. He got a job milking cows, saved his money and purchased the property



Rancher Ernest Righetti was flown twice by CALSTAR.

where the Righetti ranch has been ever since, about 10 miles southwest of Santa Maria.

"Especially when you live in a rural area, an operation like CALSTAR is extremely important," he said. "Once I was flown from Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara. The second time I was flown from Marian Medical Center in Santa Maria. Without a doubt, the two rapid transports to UCLA made a huge difference in my outcome."

Righetti said he felt completely comfortable on both flights. "The nurses are highly competent, and they kept a very close watch

on me during both trips. They explained everything to me on the flights, and to be honest I felt as safe with them as if I had been in the medical center. They're good people."

CALSTAR's base in Santa Maria, known as CALSTAR 7, covers a vast area including San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, western Kern County and southern Monterey County. According to Lisa Abeloe, central coast director for CALSTAR, about 65 percent of CALSTAR 7's flights are inter-facility transports. The remaining 35 percent are transports of critically ill or injured patients.

Abeloe has her own deep roots in the community. She originally came to the Central Coast to attend Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo, and after completing school she never left. She remembers that she was taken by the beautiful countryside and

Regional Medical Center of San Jose Breaks Ground on Major Expansion

Regional Medical Center of San Jose, one of CALSTAR's longstanding member hospitals, is expanding its facilities and services to meet the growing medical needs of the surrounding communities.

The facility, which treats more than 65,000 patients each year, embarked on a major emergency department expansion and renovation project in September. The three-phase, 18-month project will add 4,500 square feet to the emergency department and increase its bed count to a total of 42. The additional space and enhanced design will improve patient flow and provide a safer environment for medical personnel, patients and staff.

The emergency department project is part of a \$300 million dollar hospital expansion program currently underway. A new hospital wing with 33 state-of-the-art private beds opened in June 2010. The wing's second story, now under construction, is scheduled to be completed in early 2012 with an additional 35 private beds. Regional's new Breast Care Center with digital mammography is set to open soon.

In March, the hospital broke ground on a four-story hospital tower which will provide 81 new private state-of-the-art beds. With a targeted completion date of 2014, it will largely serve as a replacement hospital.

The medical center also features an elevated helipad, which opened in 2008 and is equipped to handle the largest medical evacuation aircraft including the military's Blackhawk helicopter.

"The Regional Medical Center expansion is a privately funded project," said Mike Johnson, CEO. "This is a major investment in our community and our commitment to clinical, operational and service excellence."

Regional is a Level II trauma center, accredited chest pain center and county-designated heart attack receiving center with door-to-balloon times averaging 64 minutes. With new advances in technology, including coiling and Wingspan cerebral stents, Regional Medical Center achieved a Joint Commission advanced certification as a primary stroke center and is among the top 5% of U.S. hospitals to receive the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's "Get with the Guidelines" program Gold Plus Award for excellence in stroke care.

While the emergency department expansion project will impact on-campus parking and traffic patterns, it will not delay transport or drop-off of patients. The emergency department will continue to run at full capacity for the duration of the project to provide the same level of high quality health care to the community.



A rendering of Regional Medical Center's hospital expansion

CALSTAR Unveils New GPS Approach and Weather Reporting System at Mee Memorial Hospital

CALSTAR and Mee Memorial Hospital in King City held a dedication ceremony in October for the new helicopter instrument approach and Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) at the facility. The joint project will make CALSTAR's lifesaving service available to more critically ill and injured patients in southern Monterey County.



Mee Memorial Hospital CEO Lex Smith (second from left) and project donor Howard Classen are flanked by CALSTAR Flight Nurses Seth Rae and Aki Williams.

"We are delighted that we have been able to complete this project," said Lex Smith, Mee Memorial CEO. "The GPS and weather station will enable the CALSTAR helicopters and others to land more often in inclement weather."

Mayor Rob Cullen added that "the hospital remains an integral and important part of King City. Anything that is positive for the hospital is positive for the city."

Jim Arthur, director of flight operations for CALSTAR, explained that the weather station and GPS system will greatly enhance flight crews' ability to land safely at Mee. "This technology used to only be available at airports," he said. "Previously the only FAA-approved weather stations were in Salinas and Paso Robles. Now we have one in King City that will also be available to other agencies."

"We've been working on this for several years," said Michael Baulch, CALSTAR's South Bay regional director. "It was not an inexpensive endeavor and special thanks go to the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Community Foundation for Monterey County, our largest private donor, Howard Classen, and everyone

else who supported the project." Baulch extended a special thank-you to Shane Eckerman, Mee's director of plant operations, who he said was "invaluable in his support."

Mee Memorial is a frequent rendezvous point for responding to both emergency scene and inter-facility transport requests for patients in southern Monterey County. Patients who are admitted to Mee Memorial who are in need of specialized care must often be airlifted to trauma facilities in San Jose or Fresno, distances too far to reach by ground within the all-important "golden hour." In addition to enabling more inter-facility transfers from the hospital, the GPS approach at Mee Memorial will provide a launching point for CALSTAR crews to respond to emergency scene calls in the surrounding region, as well as receive patients transported to the hospital's helipad by ground ambulance.

The lynchpin that makes this enhanced service possible is a Belfort DigiWxII AWOS, which was installed on the hospital's roof. The AWOS provides extremely accurate weather reporting of current conditions. Computer-generated voice broadcasts give pilots minute-to-minute updates which are critical to planning flight routes and ensuring safe takeoffs and landings. Combined with the GPS approach, this enhanced weather reporting capability will allow CALSTAR flight crews to complete more transports and significantly improve patient outcomes.

"The addition of the Belfort AWOS continues CALSTAR's commitment to the highest standard of safe flight operations and service to the community," said Arthur. "We now have real-time weather reporting at the Mee Memorial hospital heliport, greatly enhancing our helicopter operations under Instrument Flight Rules."

Howard Classen and Mike Nichols, CALSTAR's director of development & outreach, stand next to the new AWOS on the roof of Mee Memorial.



Recent Hires

CALSTAR is pleased to welcome the following new team members who were hired since our last publication:

Arlene Beitz • Accounts Payable Specialist

Julie Carrington • Flight Nurse

Sebastian Carter • Pilot

Nathaniel Davidson • Communications Specialist

Eric Fowler • Aircraft Technician

Cristin Frazer • Communications Specialist

Allison Freese • Flight Nurse

Jeff Higginbotham • Base Aircraft Technician

David Hornung • Flight Nurse

Aaron Johnson • Flight Nurse

Mary Marks • Flight Nurse

Matthew McClure • Purchasing Clerk

Kari Robar • Flight Nurse

Mark Rostash • Flight Nurse

Lance Sondrol • Quality Assurance Inspector

Paul Towell • Pilot

Ashley Warnock • Communications Specialist

Daniel Wood • Aircraft Technician

Birdies for Charity Program Offers 15% Match on Donations to CALSTAR

Since 2008, Birdies for Charity (BFC) has provided an exciting opportunity for charities to raise money through the 2012 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am tournament. Hosted by the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, BFC is a fundraising program geared towards raising thousands of additional dollars for Northern California charities.

Charities have collectively raised more than \$725,000 during the program's four year history. With a goal of reaching the \$1,000,000 mark in 2012, the Monterey Peninsula Foundation has increased the match on BFC donations to 15%.

BFC is similar to a walk-a-thon, based on the total number of birdies made by PGA TOUR professionals during the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Charities solicit donors to pledge an amount per birdie or a flat donation. The Monterey Peninsula Foundation administers the program at no cost to participating charities, and distributes 100% of collected donations with the additional 15% match.

To donate to CALSTAR through Birdies for Charity, please visit:

<https://birdies.attpgolf.com/charities/calstar>

*Please consider donating
to CALSTAR's 2012
BFC campaign!*



CALSTAR Participates in Emmy-winning 'Every 15-Minutes' Program

Approximately 12 to 15 times per year, CALSTAR participates in “Every 15 Minutes” programs at local high schools. Utilizing medical centers and a variety of EMS providers, the program demonstrates with vivid detail the consequences of drinking and driving.

CALSTAR 1 (Concord) participated in one such program at Castro Valley High School last year, and the two-day video project subsequently won a coveted Emmy Award in the Informational/Instructional Program/Special category. The video was directed and produced by RocketSpots.tv (formerly Musselman Pictures).

Utilizing students as actors, the video shows a group of students drinking alcohol and then getting in a car and driving. A “live” multi-vehicle accident is then depicted with immediate response from local police agencies, ground ambulances, the California Highway Patrol and firefighters. This part of the program typically takes place on the school’s football field or in a large parking lot in front of the student body.

As the group watches, several students are extracted from the cars. A couple of the passengers are already “dead” and two are critically injured as firefighters use the “jaws of life” to get them out. The students are moulaged to make their injuries look authentic.

Within minutes of the staged accident, a CALSTAR helicopter is shown arriving at the scene to transport critically injured students to Eden Medical Center. Meanwhile, the driver of the vehicle is given a field sobriety test and “arrested.”

The film continues with the coroner arriving to pick up the deceased students and grief-stricken parents identifying their children at the morgue. It also shows the critically injured students fighting for life at the medical center, and ends with a couple sitting on the ground near their child’s grave as the sun goes down.

“Every 15 minutes” refers to a previous statistic that showed fatal alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents occurring somewhere in the U.S. every 15 minutes.

“CALSTAR is more than pleased to participate in these programs,” said Ross Fay, CALSTAR’s San Francisco Bay regional director. “As a nonprofit service, this is part of our commitment to the community. We believe we are making progress since the statistics have improved to every 42 minutes.”

Fay added, “Congratulations to RocketSpots.tv, the Castro Valley community and Chris Graham in the Injury Prevention Department at Eden Medical Center who coordinated the event.”

The film can be viewed in its entirety at <http://vimeo.com/11222689> or by visiting RocketSpots.tv’s YouTube channel.

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CALSTAR 1 was featured in Castro Valley High School’s award-winning Every 15 Minutes video.



CRITICAL CARE IN MOTION

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www.calstar.org



Member Hospitals:



Affiliate Hospitals:

- Howard Memorial Hospital
- Mendocino Coast District Hospital
- Natividad Medical Center
- Saint Louise Regional Hospital
- Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento
- Ukiah Valley Medical Center

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the friendly people. Coincidentally, Abeloe’s father-in-law and Righetti grew up together, attending the same high school and participating in Future Farmers of America activities.

Abeloe stressed that CALSTAR is important to the area because of the long distance to larger health care facilities. “Our local hospitals are wonderful, but when someone needs rapid transport to a higher level of care, CALSTAR is critical. There is no wait time for a crew and a helicopter to arrive in the area because we are already here.

“It’s not at all unusual for us to transport individuals from ranches and the backcountry” she added. “I’m talking about individuals who are critically ill or injured during brandings and roundups, and also while they are checking on their cattle and fences and driving vehicles off-road.”

Abeloe pointed out that all members of the Rancheros Visitadores club are CALSTAR members. Founded in 1930, their annual riding event commemorates traditional cattle drives that took place from ranch to ranch. About 800 riders participate in the week-long event, which attracts cowboys, politicians, civic leaders and members of various riding clubs. Righetti said the event is a wonderful tradition and he looks forward to it each year.

Reflecting on his years at the ranch, Righetti noted that for many years the property was a dairy farm. “My father introduced beef to the ranch shortly after World War II,” he said. He proudly notes that one of the two high schools in Santa Maria is named after his dad—Ernest Righetti High School.

The way of life in the ranching community is something Righetti particularly enjoys. “We are a close knit community,” he said. “When a neighbor needs help, everyone comes together to provide that help—it’s truly a brotherhood. I still have many friends I went to high school with.”

And then there are the famous Santa Maria barbecues. “All you need is a good piece of meat, a red oak fire, salt and pepper and garlic sauce,” he said. “I promise you it will be one of the finest pieces of meat you’ll ever eat.”



CALSTAR 7 is the only air ambulance service on the Central Coast.

For 42 years, Righetti was in charge of the barbecue at the annual Cattleman’s Day at San Francisco’s Cow Palace. With plenty of help from his friends at Santa Maria Elks Lodge 1538, Righetti’s Cow Palace barbecue fed 9,000 people in 2001. The Lodge also frequently put on smaller barbecues to benefit local youth groups.

When not tending to his cattle, Righetti keeps himself busy with a variety of other activities. He is one of the founders and a current board member of the Bank of Santa Maria. He is also a member of the California Farm Bureau Federation, California Cattlemen’s Association and National Cattlemen’s Association, a member and past president of the Santa Barbara County Cattlemen’s Association, and a member and past board member of the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau.

In terms of the future, Righetti sees nothing but good things. In 2000, he was one of only 70 cattle ranchers to form a partnership arrangement with the renowned Harris Ranch in Coalinga. Working under a program called “Partnership in Quality,” Righetti purchases Angus bulls from Harris and is now producing more than 97 percent of choice meat.

Righetti is an open, candid man, but some things are off limits. When asked how many acres he had and how many cattle he owned, he wouldn’t answer. “Ranchers don’t answer questions like that,” he said with a smile. “The next thing you know is people will want to know how much money you have in the bank.”

One thing he does feel strongly about is that individuals—particularly those in rural areas—should be CALSTAR members. “CALSTAR can virtually save your life,” he said.

Our Mission: To save lives, reduce disability and speed recovery for victims of trauma and illness through rapid transport, quality medical care and education.

