

## OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEER FOR JANUARY, 2022



Harry Burford is our Amazing Volunteer for January, 2022. Not too many people know that Harry is an Amateur Radio Operator for Bothwell Hospital and a former Red Cross Volunteer. He is now a member of the Hospital Auxiliary where he has volunteered over 6,200 hours. Harry grew up in Sedalia and graduated from Smith Cotton High School. He graduated from the University of MO, Rolla with an electrical engineering degree and moved to Texas to work as an *Engineer Consultant*. He retired and moved back to Sedalia to take care of his parents, Harry and Betty Burford.

Harry and Betty Burford were **also** Red Cross Volunteers. Harry's father was the first male Red Cross volunteer. They had to change the name from the *Gray Ladies* to the *Red Cross Volunteers*. Betty, Harry's mother, worked 40 years as a volunteer which included working downtown Sedalia and rolling bandages during WWII. After Harry's father passed away, Harry wanted to start volunteering at the hospital. He saw his father's Red Cross jacket hanging in the closet. He tried it on and it fit. He is still wearing this Red Cross jacket today.

There is a bumper sticker that reads "When everything else fails, Amateur Radio always works." Historically, this has been the case for disasters like Tornados, Wildfires, Earthquakes, Tsunamis, 9/11, and numerous other disasters. Volunteers, often referred to as 'ham operators', stepped up to put their communication hobby to work helping others.

After Katrina, a group of Amateur Radio operators in Kansas City got together and decided to pursue putting ham radio equipment into the local KC Metroplex hospitals. If a similar disaster were to strike Kansas City, there would be an advantage to already having communication equipment staged and ready. It was discovered that to get funding thru grants and such, they needed to expand the scope of their project to include all of *Missouri Region A*. This is how Bothwell Regional Health Center, as well as the Pettis County Health Center, became endowed with ham radio equipment. The equipment was professionally installed. A box of radios was left for installation, presumably using a ham radio club for assistance.

Harry, being an Amateur Radio Operator, callsign KOTV, saw the shiny new antennas on the roof of the hospital and began to hunt to find out what they were all about. The search ended with Randy Smith, plant management, showing him the equipment. All the equipment was assembled and Harry has spent the last 12 years inspecting the hardware, checking the radios, performing repairs, and participating in "on-the-air practice communication exercises" to verify everything continues to be in working order.

In the event of a disaster, like the Joplin Tornado for example, it would be very valuable for the hospital to have an additional volunteer radio operator available. If you are interested in getting your own Amateur Radio license and helping us with the Bothwell station, contact Harry Burford.

We are happy to have Harry as one of our Bothwell Health Center Auxiliary Volunteers. We think he deserves to be this month's Amazing Volunteer. Thank you Harry for all you do.