

## Letters: Wilderness Heart Attack Emergency Handled by Winlink

A while ago my ham radio friend and I went camping along the Jemez River, New Mexico, in one of the many Jemez Campgrounds. It was a perfect place for ham radio operators to be, as there is absolutely no cell phone access there at all. There was no FM repeater reachable from that area either, which was fine by us. We busied ourselves with FT8 and FT4 as well as phone operation. We sent several Winlink messages earlier in the day utilizing stations in Wickenburg, Arizona and Framingham, Utah. We sent SMS text messages to our grandchildren, as they don't like email.

As the evening wore on, my friend started having symptoms of a heart attack. He was familiar with the symptoms, as he had several stents and previous heart problems. We needed an ambulance, but there was no cell service, and it was miles to another phone. It was late at night and, being unfamiliar with the area, we were at a loss as to the best way to proceed.

I knew that Winlink has the ability to send SMS text messages, and my son was on call that week so he would answer a text message. I composed a message giving my location, including the GPS coordinates and the urgency of the situation. I sent the message via Winlink VARA HF to a station in Wickenburg. I waited for what seemed to be an eternity (in reality, only 10 minutes) and checked for a response. He had replied with a message that he had contacted the state police -- they would take care of the situation. In approximately 20 minutes, an ambulance arrived and my friend was on his way to the hospital. He is alive and well today.

Being a Technician licensee is a wonderful start to the world of emergency communication, but when real emergencies occur, having General- or Extra-class privileges and an HF radio is even better. -- *John Mocho, KC5QOC, Albuquerque, New Mexico (with thanks to Jay Miller, W5WHN)*