

AirLife Denver provides emergency/critical care transport to an eight-state area. The new plane can transport Perkins County Health Services patients from the Grant Municipal Airport. Hospital and emergency personnel, along with members of the public were able to view the inside of the aircraft when it landed at the airport on Friday for a demonstration.



By Jan Rahn
Managing Editor

A new Lear31 jet from Denver made its debut in Grant and Imperial on Friday morning to demonstrate its resourceful capabilities in the medical field.

Local medical personnel and residents were given a chance to see inside the well-equipped aircraft used in transports. The jet, along with another new counterpart, have recently been added to the HealthONE AirLife Denver medical flight program. (HealthONE is the largest health care system in metro Denver, including 10 medical facilities.)

Dr. Clifford Colglazier, Dr. Kristi Kohl, Perkins County Health Services Administrator Pam Holm, Fire Chief Wade Rahn, along with other Grant Volunteer Fire Department personnel were able to view the plane's compartment and equipment.

Two pilots and two crew members were greeted by Mayor Mike Wyatt and other members of the community who showed up at the airport to peer inside the latest addition to adult and pediatric patient transport.

Present at both the Grant and Imperial airports was Brandy Whitlow, physician relations manager for the HealthOne System.



Pilots Rod Champney and Matt Fishback, accompanied by flight nurses Bob Greene RN and Susan Tishendorf RN, took time to let people on board and answer questions before flying back to Denver early afternoon.

A small world connection was discovered when introductions were made and nurse Tishendorf announced she'd been born in Grant and lived in Venango until the third grade before moving to Chappell.

"I'm still a Big Red fan!" exclaimed Tishendorf, the flight nurse who serves aboard AirLife Denver as clinical nurse coordinator and as a member of the high risk obstetrics flight team. She has been employed by AirLife for 12 years.

Flight nurse Greene is a member of primary care and is on the stroke team.

The Lear31 jet is now among the emergency flight options the physicians will have to choose from, said Holm. The aircraft will be just as quick as a helicopter and provides more space for

family to travel with a patient.

The jet can land in rain on a wet runway, and the equipment on board is perhaps a little better than what some of the helicopters have, Holm said.

About AirLife Denver

At a cruising speed of up to 500 mph, the jets can minimize out-of-hospital time for patients who need to be airlifted to a larger medical facility.

Once on the ground at the other end, AirLife provides the patient with a helicopter shuttle from the airport to the hospital.

Estimated flight time from Denver to Grant Municipal Airport to pick up a patient is 30 minutes.

Besides speed, the AirLife jet can land and take off on shorter runways, it has a state-of-the-art GPS navigation system and high-tech anti-icing systems, which are perfect for the Rocky Mountain and surrounding regions.

The critical care transport covers an eight-state region including Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, New Mexico and South Dakota. Quiet, modernized engines and 30 percent better fuel efficiency that reduces overall costs are additional features of the new Lear31 jets.

The AirLife is equipped for pediatric, stroke, high-risk obstetrical and neonatal transports.

The plane's size provides more space when a family member wishes to travel with a patient.

The new aircraft available for transferring patients provides another option when a helicopter might not be available, is appropriate, or when weather conditions are prohibitive.

Established in 1983, AirLife Denver has been serving the metro Denver area and region for more than 20 years, completing more than 30,000 missions.

Each transport team includes two nurses who each have a minimum of five years emergency medicine and critical care experience.

With more than 2,200 transports a year, AirLife Denver is one of the largest and busiest medical transport programs in the region providing service 24 hours a day.