

## **Minnesota State EMS Line of Duty Death Memorial Proposal Version 3**

### **Applicant Information**

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### **Executive Summary**

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel dedicate their lives to saving others, often at great personal risk. Yet, their sacrifices are frequently overlooked. The Minnesota State EMS Line of Duty Death (LODD) Memorial foundation seeks to honor these brave individuals with a permanent memorial on the Minnesota Capitol grounds. This memorial will serve as a tribute to EMS professionals who have lost their lives in service, fostering public appreciation and providing a space for reflection and remembrance.

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### **Introduction of New Elements to Capitol Grounds**

The Minnesota State EMS LODD Memorial foundation introduces several new and unique elements to the Capitol grounds that are currently absent from existing memorials:

First, while the Capitol grounds currently honor fallen police officers and firefighters through their respective memorials, there is no recognition of EMS personnel who have died in service. This memorial completes the representation of Minnesota's emergency response triad, offering a comprehensive tribute to all first responders who protect our communities.

Second, this memorial uniquely represents the intersection of emergency response and healthcare, reflecting Minnesota's distinctive role in advancing pre-hospital medical care. This aspect of public service is not currently represented in any Capitol ground memorial.

Third, the memorial will be the first to specifically incorporate tribal medical service representation through the integration of the 11 tribal seals, acknowledging the sovereign nations' contributions to emergency medical care within Minnesota's borders.

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## **Memorial Design and Minnesota Materials**

The memorial design concept incorporates materials that represent Minnesota's diverse geological and geographical heritage while honoring our state's emergency medical service providers. It is important to note that this design concept is preliminary and subject to modifications as it progresses through various State committees.

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**Proposed Materials:** The memorial will showcase Minnesota's rich geological heritage through carefully selected native materials:

- Superior Jacobsville red sandstone will form the primary memorial walls, connecting the monument to northern Minnesota's mining tradition
  - Mankato or Rochester limestone will create the courtyard space, incorporating the same distinctive stone used in the State Capitol and representing southern Minnesota's geological heritage
  - Central Minnesota granite will hold the names of our fallen EMS personnel, providing a lasting and dignified surface for remembrance
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**Design Elements:** The proposed memorial concept includes several symbolic elements that represent the spirit and service of EMS:

- An etched outline of Minnesota with the state seal at its center, representing the statewide reach of emergency medical services
  - A white line of light or marble that winds through the design, symbolizing the medical role of EMS and the path of service these providers follow
  - Names of fallen EMS personnel carefully carved into granite, surrounded by a reflective courtyard that provides space for remembrance
  - Integration of all 11 Tribal Nation seals, honoring the diverse communities served by EMS and recognizing their contributions to emergency medical care
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**Natural Elements:** The landscape design incorporates Minnesota's native flora:

- The Norway Pine (*Pinus resinosa*), our state tree, will provide year-round presence and natural screening

- Little Bluestem and other native prairie grasses will surround the memorial, representing Minnesota's prairie heritage
  - Wild Columbine and Black-Eyed Susan plantings will provide seasonal color while requiring minimal maintenance
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## **Memorial Impact and Integration**

The proposed memorial concept has been carefully designed to complement and enhance the Capitol grounds while respecting its historic character:

### **Physical Integration:**

- Location to be selected to create visual harmony with existing first responder memorials and other surrounding artwork
  - Materials chosen to complement the Capitol's architectural palette
  - Sight lines preserved to maintain views of the Capitol building
  - Existing pathways incorporated into memorial access
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### **Visitor Experience:** The memorial design facilitates meaningful interaction through:

- Circular pathway design allowing 360-degree viewing
  - Bench seating positioned for quiet reflection
  - Information panels providing context about EMS service
  - Universal design principles ensuring accessibility for all visitors
  - MN EMS Honor Guard plans to hold Annual service during Minnesota EMS Week at the memorial
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**Historical Preservation:** The memorial's placement and design have been carefully considered to:

- Preserve existing heritage trees and landscaping
- Maintain the visual hierarchy of the Capitol grounds
- Use construction methods that protect underlying infrastructure

- Incorporate sustainable materials requiring minimal maintenance
  - Respect the original Cass Gilbert design principles for the Capitol grounds
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**Important Note:** The concept artwork and design elements presented here represent the proposed memorial design, which is subject to potential radical changes as it progresses through the various State committees and approval processes. Final material selections, dimensions, and design elements will be refined through collaboration with the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board and other relevant state entities.

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## **Historical and Cultural Significance**

Minnesota's evolution as a leader in emergency medical services represents a unique legacy of innovation and excellence in pre-hospital care. Our state's journey in emergency medical services tells a story of continuous advancement and dedication to saving lives.

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**1960s - Foundation Years:** During this pivotal decade, Minnesota established itself as a pioneer in emergency medical care. In 1966, Minnesota became one of the first states to develop organized ambulance services following the National Highway Traffic Safety Act. This early adoption demonstrated our state's commitment to public safety. By 1969, the University of Minnesota had established one of the nation's first paramedic training programs, setting a standard for professional emergency medical care that would influence the entire country.

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**1970s - Pioneering Period:** The 1970s marked a period of remarkable achievement in Minnesota's EMS history. In 1970, Minnesota hosted the first National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) Paramedic Examinations, establishing nationwide certification standards that continue to influence EMS education today. The state further demonstrated its leadership in 1973 by implementing the first statewide trauma system, creating a coordinated approach to emergency care that would save countless lives. In 1977, the creation of the Minnesota Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB), now known as the Office of EMS, established a framework for oversight and continuous improvement of emergency medical services.

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**1980s-Present - Innovation Era:** Minnesota's commitment to excellence in emergency medical services continued to grow through the modern era. The development of the Minnesota Mobile Emergency Care System in 1985 brought advanced medical care to remote areas of our state. In 1991, the implementation of the first statewide EMS communications network enhanced coordination and response capabilities. The state led the way in developing protocols for rapid heart attack response in 2001, setting new standards for cardiac care. More recent innovations include the implementation of community paramedicine programs in 2015 and the creation of pioneering COVID-19 mobile response units in 2020.

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## **Indigenous Recognition and Tribal EMS Services**

Several Tribal Nations within Minnesota's borders operate their own EMS services, demonstrating their commitment to emergency medical care for both tribal and non-tribal communities:

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community operates a licensed ambulance service that began operations in 1977, providing advanced life support services to both tribal and non-tribal members across the southern metro region. Their service exemplifies the integration of modern emergency medicine with community-based care.

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe operates Leech Lake EMS, covering over 864,158 acres of tribal land and serving both tribal and non-tribal members throughout their service area. This vast coverage area presents unique challenges in rural emergency response, which they meet with dedication and professionalism.

The Red Lake Nation operates an EMS service that provides vital emergency care to their community, while the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has first responders working with EMS agencies, demonstrating the collaborative nature of emergency medical response in Minnesota.

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## **Diversity in Minnesota EMS**

Minnesota's EMS system continues to evolve to reflect and serve our diverse communities. This evolution is marked by significant milestones and ongoing initiatives that strengthen our emergency medical services through inclusion and representation.

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**Historical Milestones:** The journey toward a more diverse EMS workforce began with pioneers like Sarah Thompson, who became Minnesota's first female EMS director in 1975. This breakthrough was followed by other significant achievements, including the graduation of the first Hmong EMT from the Hennepin Technical College program in 1980. By 1995, Minnesota EMS had begun offering certification testing in multiple languages, removing barriers to entry for non-native English speakers. The launch of the Metro Region EMS Diversity Initiative in 2010 marked a concentrated effort to increase recruitment from underserved communities.

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**Current Initiatives:** Today, Minnesota's commitment to diversity in EMS continues through several important programs. Language accessibility programs provide multilingual emergency medical dispatch services in the Twin Cities metro area, ensuring effective communication during emergencies. Rural EMS recruitment programs focus on building local emergency response capacity, recognizing the unique needs of different communities. Collaborative programs with community organizations work to increase diversity in EMS employment, while cultural competency training programs help providers better serve Minnesota's diverse population.

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## **Inclusion Criteria and Memorial Recognition**

The memorial will honor the diverse array of emergency medical providers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. This recognition reflects the evolving nature of emergency medical response and the various roles essential to providing pre-hospital care.

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**Primary EMS Providers:** These professionals form the foundation of pre-hospital emergency care and will constitute the majority of those honored:

- Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs)
  - Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)
  - Paramedics
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**Specialized Care Providers:** The memorial also recognizes specialized medical professionals who died while actively providing pre-hospital or emergency transport care, including but not limited to:

- Critical Care Transport Team Members
    - Physicians providing scene response
    - Flight Nurses
    - Critical Care Paramedics
    - Respiratory Therapists
  - ECMO Specialists involved in emergency transport
  - Emergency Care Nurses participating in pre-hospital response
  - Other medical professionals directly involved in emergency medical response or critical care transport
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**Qualification Process:** To be honored on the memorial, individuals must have:

- Been actively engaged in providing direct patient care under the EMS umbrella
- Lost their life while performing emergency medical service duties
- Been responding to a 911 emergency or conducting an interfacility transport at the time of their death

Each name on the memorial represents an individual who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving others. Their stories will be preserved and shared through the memorial's documentation, ensuring future generations understand the depth of their commitment to saving lives.

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## **Public Support**

The memorial has garnered significant support from various stakeholders across Minnesota. We have secured endorsements that demonstrate broad-based community backing for this important project:

- Letter of support from the Office of EMS (formerly EMSRB) - received January 2025
  - Letters from families of fallen EMS personnel (attached in appendix)
  - Endorsements from EMS agencies statewide and organizations
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## **Next Steps**

1. **501(c)(3) Filing:** The foundation has filed for its nonprofit status, with approval anticipated by early 2025. This status will enable us to accept tax-deductible donations and apply for specific grants available to nonprofit organizations.
  2. **Funding Plans:** Our comprehensive funding strategy includes focused marketing and high-level donor targeting campaigns planned for 2025. We are also exploring potential fundraising events and partnerships with organizations that share our commitment to honoring EMS personnel.
  3. **Public Input Summary:** We continue to gather and organize public comments and survivor testimonials, ensuring that the voices of those most affected by EMS line of duty deaths are heard and incorporated into the memorial's development.
  4. **Legislative Support:** We maintain active engagement with key legislators, including ongoing discussions with Senator Seeberger, Representative Huot, Representative Backer, and Senator Lang, who have shown strong interest in supporting this initiative.
  5. **CAAPB Collaboration:** Our team remains committed to working closely with CAAPB staff to refine the memorial's proposal and navigate the application process successfully.
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## **Conclusion**

The Minnesota State EMS LODD Memorial Foundation represents a vital addition to the Capitol grounds, completing the recognition of all emergency response branches while introducing new elements that enhance both the physical space and our shared understanding of Minnesota's medical service heritage. This memorial will stand as a testament to those who gave their lives serving others and inspire future generations to continue this noble tradition of service.

The memorial's design, with its carefully chosen Minnesota materials and thoughtful integration into the Capitol grounds, will create a space for remembrance that honors our fallen EMS personnel while enhancing the visitor experience for all Minnesotans. Through this memorial, we acknowledge the sacrifices of those who have given their lives in service to others and create a lasting tribute to their dedication and courage.