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Western Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council, Inc.

Western Virginia EMS Council Selects Next Executive Director

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, Roanoke, VA- After an extensive search, the Western Virginia EMS Council (WVEMS) Board of Directors has appointed the next Executive Director, Debbie Akers.

This comes after the position was vacated earlier this year, when previous Executive Director, Steve Simon, stepped down to take on the role of Fire Chief for the City of Salem.

Akers, who is originally from the New River Valley, previously worked for WVEMS from 2002 to 2011 as the council's Regional Education Director. More recently, she has worked for the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services as the Division Director for Accreditation, Certification, and Education for the past 14 years. Debbie is known for her passion and dedication to EMS community, that she has demonstrated throughout her career.

Debbie got her start with the Christiansburg Rescue Squad and has spent the last 45 years teaching, mentoring, and advocating for prehospital care and EMS providers in the Commonwealth. She has been a certified paramedic in the Commonwealth and with National Registry since 1999 and still maintains those credentials today.

"I'm honored and humbled to serve as the Executive Director of the Western Virginia EMS Council. My goal is to listen, learn, and work with our EMS community to continue strengthening the care our region depends on. With your assistance, we will drive innovation, support our dedicated EMS workforce, and build on the Council's strong foundation of service across Western Virginia," said Akers.

"I am thrilled to welcome Debbie back to where she began her journey in Western Virginia. Debbie possesses a unique skillset that our Executive Board feels certain is exactly what WVEMS needs at this critical point in time. The EMS system in Virginia has changed significantly in the past two years. Debbie is already a trusted and well-respected stakeholder who can develop new relationships, reinforce existing ones, and provide a renewed focus on our mission, said Jason Ferguson, President of the WVEMS Board of Directors."

Executive Director Akers will begin serving in her new role on January 12, 2026. The WVEMS Board of Directors would like to extend its thanks to former Executive Director, Steve Simon, who has remained on the team while the search for his replacement took place; as well as Interim Executive Director Sandi McGrath who has been vital to maintaining the day-to-day business operations of the council.