

# LIFESTAR lands in Monroe

**M**onroe County can lay claim to something most counties in Tennessee can't, a medical helicopter stationed inside the county giving residents and local industry the best and fastest patient transport. At the end of 2016, UT LIFESTAR opened a new base along Interstate 75 in Sweetwater.

"We were very fortunate to find this piece of property," said Jeff Gregory, representing Regional Business Development for UT LIFESTAR.

LIFESTAR in November celebrated the opening of its new base with a dedication ceremony attended by dozens of LIFESTAR, Med-Trans, local government officials and area firefighters and first responders on hand.

Gregory said the new base has a medical helicopter just about 5 minutes away from not only all the towns in Monroe County.

"They are a tremendous asset here," Sweetwater Mayor Doyle Lowe said.

Monroe County Mayor Tim Yates also praised the partnerships that have come together to keep LIFESTAR in Monroe County for 10 years. LIFESTAR first opened a base at Sweetwater's Fire Hall No. 2 in 2006 but grew to need its own facility and sought an even more central location now achieved



with the new base. LIFESTAR still has a fuel farm at the Fire Hall and can transport patients from a pad there if needed.

UT LIFESTAR has transported about 60,000 patients since forming in 1984.

In 2007, LIFESTAR partnered with the Dallas-based Med-Trans, which now oversees the flight operations for the program.

Fred Buttrell is president and CEO for Med-Trans. He spoke of all the teamwork involved to bring the new state-of-the-art facility to completion.

"We are here today because a lot of people came together to make this a reality," he said.

"Thank you all for allowing us to be a part of your community," said Teresa Levey, senior vice president and chief administrative officer for the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

The new spacious \$750,000 building has living quarters and is constructed so that the helicopter can be worked on inside the building, which will be able to deploy an engine lift for the multi-million dollar helicopter for repairs and maintenance. The property for the base was acquired from developer Nicholas Cazana, who has proposed a 184-acre business and industrial park across from the LIFESTAR base.