

COMMUNITY ACTION: ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY TO MAKE A CHANGE

Some ideas come to us over time; others appear in that "aha" moment. The latter case applies to Lori Knoblauch of Greenville, who knew in an instant how to fix a transportation problem she found in South Carolina and made a personal commitment to help bring a change. This community action story is of one woman's determination to assist the transplant medical teams tasked with ground transportation of lifesaving organ, eye and tissue donations to hospitals. Little did Lori know that the outcome of creating change would require lots of legwork, never taking no for an answer, and working with the legislature to amend South Carolina laws defining emergency vehicles.

In 2017, Lori Knoblauch, owner of Venture Transports in Greenville, was transporting an abdominal procurement team in a late-night delivery and observed the heart team step into the back of an ambulance. She was puzzled at why the heart team would want to travel by ambulance? There were no seat belts. It was a bumpy ride and entirely unsafe transporting the precious cargo. Lori asked the coordinator these questions and was told they needed the lights and sirens to enable a faster route to the hospital. Right then and there, Lori realized that by outfitting her vans with lights and sirens she could offer procurement medical teams a fast, safe and effective way of traveling.



Lori Knoblauch



Although Lori does not have a personal connection to organ donation, her love of medicine and helping others improve their lives is a large part of who she is. Lori's educational background is in cardiac rehabilitation and her work history includes initiating health screening programs at several medical centers. Her career path eventually led her to work in the marketing field where she spent twenty years finding solutions to a problem. You might say Lori was good at fixing things; after all, she couldn't stop thinking of the transportation side of the organ recovery process and the flaw in ground transportation.

SECTION 56-5-170. Authorized emergency vehicles defined.

(12) organ procurement organization vehicles, which means vehicles operated by organizations that perform or coordinate the procurement, preservation, and transport of organs and maintains systems for locating prospective recipients for available organs.

Lori made many calls inquiring about equipping transport vans with lights and sirens but found the current law covered ambulance only. Frustrated, Lori decided the law should be amended. Lori reached out to Senator Scott Talley who encouraged her to attend subcommittee meetings to share her vision and to plead her case that medical transport teams should sit comfortably safety-belted within a secure vehicle equipped with lights and sirens that would get them to the hospital safely and quickly. Lori eventually got a few sponsors to back the change in the law defining and including organ procurement organization vehicles. On May 17, 2018, Governor Henry McMaster signed amendment- SECTION 56-5-170.

Lori's fleet now includes vans with lights and sirens. She takes great satisfaction in helping the medical community and stated, "I want the pilot to only worry about his flights, the surgeons to only worry about their patients and the procurement medical team to ride seat-belted, arriving at the hospital safely and comfortably."