

# City of Bristol Tennessee

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## “It’s A Boy” Bristol Fire/Rescue’s Early Morning Delivery



The Bristol Fire/Rescue 8 A.M. shift change on March 3, 2009 was anything but routine for Jeff Hendry, a seasoned, veteran Firefighter/Paramedic (FF/P); and his duty partner, rookie Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Robbie Simpson. The two were close to finishing their shift when their assigned unit, Bristol Fire Department Rescue 1, was dispatched to a call to assist a patient experiencing labor pains. In 2008, Bristol Fire/Rescue responded to 3,746 calls which included only 11 pregnancies, and four deliveries. “While each response brings its own unique challenges, emotions, and a wide array of outcomes, our firefighters adjust to the emotional roller coaster by relying

on their training, as well as, support from fellow firefighters and family members” said Fire Chief Bob Barnes.

“I figured this call would be like so many others: patient with pains, but no labor, which would require stabilizing and then transporting the patient to BRMC. Boy was I wrong”, said FF/P Hendry. After entering the patient’s home, the firefighters found a female lying on the floor with a blanket draped over the lower portion of her body. Upon examination, Hendry could see the baby’s head, a spot approximately the size of a silver dollar. With hopes of transporting the lady as soon as possible, Hendry asked if he and Simpson could move her to the stretcher; her answer was an emphatic “NO”. Hendry then turned to his partner and said, “Get the OB supplies for a delivery and request additional personnel; we are going to deliver a baby.”

While Hendry’s calm and reassuring tone kept Simpson focused and on task, Simpson recalled, “What kept echoing in my mind was ‘we are going to deliver a baby’ ”. Simpson’s previous limited involvement with emergency service agencies hadn’t prepared him for such a stressful incident, but his training and his confidence in Hendry did. This was Simpson’s first assigned shift on Rescue 1 since obtaining his EMT certification and his nervousness and excitement was understandable. “I never would have imagined my first shift on Rescue 1 would have ended with such an exciting and rewarding moment”, said Simpson.

By the time Simpson returned with the supplies the mother was asking for pain medication but Hendry told her the delivery was past the point of medication. She responded by gritting her teeth, refusing to push, and said “Well, then I’m just not going to have this baby”. But Hendry’s experienced prediction proved accurate as the next contraction exposed the baby’s head, and the crew began suctioning the infant’s mouth and nose. The next contraction brought finished the delivery of a beautiful baby boy. Now with two patients to take care of, the umbilical cord was cut and the new born was warmed, dried, and passed to the mother.

The mother and her baby were transported to BRMC’s Labor and Delivery unit without incident. “Having two children of my own, I must say it was an honor and my pleasure to share in this joyous experience with this family”, said Hendry. Being a single, young man Simpson had never experienced bringing a new life into the world, and said, “I feel honored to have been able to assist the family for such a joyous occasion but I’m sure glad it’s over.”

The on coming shifts’ emotions quickly heightened as the word spread from Engine 1’s personnel returning to quarters, who shouted, “**It’s a BOY**”. “Our personnel train daily for all types of responses, so they are prepared for just about any incident”, said Assistant Fire Chief Jack Spurgeon. “We view the community as our family; and, just as with our own family, we want to be ready, educated, and supportive during any type of crisis”.

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