

Highway tragedy sparks life saving campaign

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When dealing with victims of serious motor vehicle accidents, timing is crucial and can sometimes mean the difference between life and death.

The Jaws of Life is a \$15,000 hydraulic tool specifically designed to cut through metal wreckage in a matter of minutes to gain fast access to trapped victims.

A committee of eight in the Bay Roberts area is organizing a fundraising drive to obtain the expensive, but vital tool which has saved many lives.

The effort is being instigated by friends of a recent fatality victim who, they believe, may still be alive today if he had been reached sooner.

"We thought maybe if he had gotten out of the car quicker things might have been different," Jeff Atkinson, committee spokesper-

son, said regarding the death of 32-year-old Glenn Thistle in a car accident on Roaches Line two weeks ago.

"We thought it would be good to have a Jaws of Life in this area in memory of Glenn," he said.

Mr. Thistle, a native of St. John's but former resident of Spaniard's Bay, died Oct. 18 when the vehicle he was driving hit the shoulder of the road, rolled twice and came to rest in the middle of the highway.

Corp. Holmes of the Bay Roberts RCMP detachment said although the number of accidents in this area requiring the tool are few, it would be good to have it on hand.

Currently, the nearest Jaws of Life is at least 30 minutes away in Whitbourne or Holyrood.

"It's nice to have," Corp. Holmes said. "Only needing it once certainly justifies it. We haven't had a big rash of accidents where we needed it, but if it's here and we need it that's great."

In an accident on Roaches Line early Monday morning, a man

was trapped in the cab of his tractor trailer for nearly four hours before rescuers gained access with the use of the Jaws of Life from Whitbourne.

The accident occurred shortly before 5 a.m. when the vehicle hit a moose and overturned in the ditch. The man was freed and taken to the Carbonear General Hospital at approximately 8:30 a.m. with minor injuries.

The Jaws of Life was developed specifically for fast entry through wreckage to get trapped victims the medical help they need as quickly as possible.

The Jaws of Life campaign for the Bay Roberts area is barely off the ground, but spokesperson Mr. Atkinson said the committee is investigating several different avenues for fundraising.

An account has been set up at a local bank to accept donations from the public. Donations can be made to the Glenn V. Thistle Memorial Fund at the Bank of Montreal in Bay Roberts.