

SAMPLE SCRIPT

INTRO: *This is the story of two ambulances and a resident in Boulder Junction who felt compelled to help out a small Alaskan town a few weeks ago. Mackenzie Martin takes it from there.*

MARTIN: Living in the Northwoods, we often feel like we live in small towns. Enter the town of McCarthy, Alaska. The population of which was just 28 at the 2010 census, actually down from 42 in 2000. In the summertime months, the population increases to 200 - 300 people with seasonal workers, and there are even more people when you count tourists. Still, it's a very small town. You may wonder what McCarthy, Alaska has to do with northern Wisconsin. Our most recent connection with the town is a guy named Jon Dobbs. Dobbs first visited McCarthy in 2014.

DOBBS: I was actually on a motorcycle trip at the time. I spent a few days there and I just loved it. I always wanted to go back. **[3:15-3:30]**

MARTIN: When Dobbs isn't traveling around Alaska, he lives in Boulder Junction with his girlfriend, Jaci Pruitt. In September of 2017, Dobbs went to McCarthy again. He was walking out of the saloon with Pruitt one evening and he noticed a flyer posted on the main street of town.

DOBBS: The flyer was looking for information about who vandalized their ambulance. **[4:10-4:18]**

MARTIN: McCarthy's only ambulance, which was more like a traveling clinic for the town, had recently been vandalized to the point where it no longer worked. The town was looking for information about what had happened.

DOBBS: And on the flyer was a picture, and the picture showed the ambulance and the center console and the center console was just a mess of wires. **[4:40-4:50]**

MARTIN: Dobbs spent 20 years as a volunteer with the Boulder Junction Fire Department. Both he and Pruitt were very disturbed by the idea that someone would vandalize something as important as an ambulance in such a small town.

DOBBS: I understand what it's like to be a volunteer in a small town. It kind of set me back and made me think about what this town really needs. **[5:00-5:10]**

MARTIN: This is a fairly common scenario. Traveling somewhere, being inspired by the people around you, wanting to help out a community. What is not common, is what happened next.

(MUSIC)

DOBBS: I always like to say it was my idea, but the truth is, it was my girlfriend Jaci's idea. She said why don't we do something? Why don't we get them an ambulance? And that's what kind of sparked the idea of what we took back to Wisconsin. That we really needed to do something for this small town of McCarthy. **[1:00-1:20]**

MARTIN: Per Pruitt's suggestion, when Dobbs got back to Wisconsin, he started calling around town to see if someone was selling an ambulance. And then he found one in Plum Lake.

DOBBS: That's when everything really fell into place. I was able to purchase the ambulance. I had it detailed out. **[5:50-6:00]**

MARTIN: Once he had the ambulance, Dobbs actually had to get it to McCarthy, Alaska. So Dobbs and his friend, Randy Samz, put two motorcycles in the back of the ambulance and set out for McCarthy.

DOBBS: The journey was from Wisconsin to Bellingham, Washington, where we put the ambulance on a ferry and then we ferried it from Bellingham, Washington, to Haines, Alaska. The reason we did that was because we wanted to keep as many miles off the ambulance as we could. Once we arrived in Haines, Alaska, it was an additional two days to McCarthy, so the entire trip took eight days. **[6:10-6:45]**

MARTIN: Once they started getting into the area around McCarthy, they started seeing people.

DOBBS: People would pass us on the highway and they knew we were coming, so they would flash their lights and honk their horns. **[7:18-7:25]**

MARTIN: When they got to McCarthy, the town had set up a big potluck lunch for Dobbs and Samz. One of the people waiting at the potluck was Jacob Shultz.

(MUSIC)

SHULTZ: Technically, I'm like the McCarthy EMS manager. **[1:10-1:18]**

MARTIN: The two men had never met in person, but they had been in contact for months about the ambulance. Shultz is part of a group of EMT's in McCarthy that share a dispatch phone to respond to emergencies. He's also the guy in charge of a project that started about five years ago to upgrade McCarthy's emergency medical services. Losing the ambulance had been a huge blow to the entire effort.

SHULTZ: It really set us back. We were so close to officially getting set up with an ambulance service. The ambulance was kind of like our cornerstone. **[3:40-3:55]**

MARTIN: His reaction when he found out that Dobbs wanted to drive an ambulance to McCarthy?

SHULTZ: He got ahold of me and he laid out his plan. I was extremely taken aback. I was like “whoa... okay.” [4:10-4:18]

MARTIN: Dobbs says he’s out of pocket about \$20,000 between the ambulance and the travel, but he says the town’s gratitude has more than paid him back. And he’s humble. He says all he did was give some well-deserving people what they needed.

DOBBS: You know, McCarthy does have the resources in the personnel. They have some wonderful people there. As far as I can tell, they are top-notch medics. But you still need the equipment that goes along with that as well. [9:55-10:10]

MARTIN: Back in McCarthy, Jacob Shultz is still in disbelief.

(MUSIC)

SHULTZ: Not to be dramatic, but it still kind of makes you speechless... the whole story. You know, you’re kind of like, ‘really?’ It hits you in the feels that somebody would go that far out of their way to help a community that they only briefly know. There really are people that want to do really nice things for other people. [11:32-11:45]

MARTIN: Jacob Shultz is the EMS manager for McCarthy, Alaska, which is where Boulder Junction resident Jon Dobbs recently drove an ambulance when he found out that their ambulance had been vandalized and they couldn’t afford another one. With WXPR News, I’m Mackenzie Martin.

OUTRO: *This story is part of our We Live Up Here series, where we tell the stories of the people and culture of northern Wisconsin.*