

Paramedic Aaron Zinser: Thank You For Your Service



By Laura Lieff



While first responders have always been an imperative part of the community, the last year and a half reminded everyone how vital they are to communities surviving.

A Vail Valley resident since 2007, paramedic Aaron Zinser is one of first responders ensuring the safety of local residents. After graduating from Grand Valley State University in Michigan with a degree in Hospitality Management, Zinser moved to Eagle County for the same reason a lot of people move here – for the skiing. Also, like a lot of people, he stayed for a summer and never left.

While working in the hospitality business, he endured health issues that put him in the hospital for two weeks. Always fascinated by medicine, his hospital stint was the catalyst for his next move. “I didn’t feel fulfilled working in hotels and after I got my health in order I realized it was time to change my career,” says Zinser.

He began taking Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) classes at Colorado Mountain College and started working for the Vail Valley Surgery Center as a technician. Next, Zinser got a job with Eagle County Paramedic as an EMT and then, a few years later, spent six months in an accelerated paramedic program. The second half of the program was spent on an ambulance completing the required 500 hours in the field.

Zinser is now a paramedic for Eagle County Paramedic Services and a search and rescue and wild-land fire paramedic who works with Vail Mountain Rescue to provide a higher-level medical component on backcountry rescues. He is also a member of the hoist rescue team that works with the National Guard. When asked about the most difficult and most enjoyable aspects of his occupation, Zinser says that the former is the constant stress of having a life-

or-death job and the latter is having the ability to rescue people from the far corners of Eagle County.

“There is a big difference between city EMS and rural EMS because in the city you can be at a hospital in five minutes,” he explains. “Conversely, when we handle an emergency call, the nearest hospital could be an hour away so we really have to take care of our patients for a long period of time.”

Seven years later, Zinser enjoys his profession more than ever – even though the pandemic has changed the paramedic profession. “We have to be extra careful and prioritize our own health which adds a whole different level of stress,” he says. “Additionally, we have learned how to do the job differently and are more exhausted at the end of our 48-hour shifts. That being said, all of us have an enormous sense of pride in what we do and feel very appreciative of the support over the last year.”