

# **Reservoir Response**

**By Ed Harris, San Diego**

**An Orange County-based company, Air Resources, Inc., has arranged to loan the city of San Diego the use of a Bell 407 helicopter for 30 days. The helicopter is capable of carrying a pilot and six passengers. The San Diego Lifeguard Service has been training with the helicopter, called Copter One, in hopes that the aircraft can be used in some emergencies. Days after the helicopter arrived, it was put into action. This is the story:**

**At 14:07 on October 29, 2000, SD Lifeguards received a report of a missing swimmer at Sweetwater Reservoir. Three teenage boys had attempted to swim across a 150 yard portion of the reservoir. Approximately half way across one of the boys drowned.**

**SD Dive Team members, Lifeguards II John Odou and Rich Haynes, were first to arrive at 14:41. Then SD River Rescue Team members, Lifeguards II John Bahl and Leslie Mendez, arrived soon after in Copter One.**

**Copter One returned to Headquarters and picked up Sergeant Dave Rains and Seasonal Sergeant Ed Harris and transported them to the scene. Dive Team Sergeants Andy Lerun and John Sandmeyer arrived and quickly started assisting with the operation. Rains assumed the position of Operations Officer and assigned Odou and Haynes as divers with Harris as line tender and Bahl as the boat operator. Lt. Wright arrived on scene and coordinated lifeguard resources.**

**Because of the “black out” conditions, it was determined that it would be best to control the search from the surface and have one diver feeling along the bottom at a depth of 57 feet. The witness was interviewed while the team setup for the search. After searching for approximately 30 minutes, the boy’s body was discovered by Odou. The speedy recovery was made possible because of great teamwork and planning. Hats off to Odou and Haynes on a remarkable effort in such difficult conditions.**

**Copter One was instrumental in the speedy recovery. Normally, dive team members are unable to carry enough equipment for a full search utilizing scuba in a patrol vehicle. Copter One had the ability to transport Harris and Rains plus all the necessary equipment of the search.**