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Group to submit ambulance petition today

By SAMANTHA MARCUS / La Crosse Tribune

A citizen watchdog group is expected to deliver a petition today to La Crosse City Hall opposing the formation of a municipal ambulance service.

Dave Drewes, Citizens for a Responsible Government-La Crosse County chairman, said his group collected more than 3,500 signatures since kicking off its petition drive in mid-October.

At least 2,930 names — 15 percent of voters in the past gubernatorial election — are needed.

"It was a joy to do it because the people were very anxious to sign," he said. "It was amazing how aware people are of this, we didn't have to explain hardly at all."

CRG is hoping to force a referendum on the April ballot to block the city from purchasing two ambulances and staffing one.

The La Crosse Common Council this month created a fact-finding commission to determine what role the city should play in emergency medical services. That committee is expected to report back to the council in March.

Drewes said collecting signatures was a relatively easy task, and the response was "overwhelming." Volunteers solicited door-to-door, at public forums and outside polling places on Election Day.

After the petition is submitted today, the city clerk has 15 days to review and certify the signatures, addresses and dates.

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