Evan Long drives cancer patients to appointments

By Teresa Douglass
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Like most volunteer drivers for the American Cancer Society, Evan Long's had a brush with cancer.

Three of his four brothers died from lung cancer over a span of 30 years. He found himself helping the widows.

"I was not a professional," he said. "I was just a brother-in-law who would help."

Of the five boys, his surviving brother was the only one who didn't smoke cigarettes. But Evan Long did.

"I quit smoking before my

HOW TO VOLUNTEER OR GET HELP

New volunteer drivers go through a 2-hour teleconference training. Every three years, they get re-certified. To volunteer or if you are a cancer patient and need a ride, call 1-800-237-2345 or go to www.cancer.org.

Long had retired from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention in 1990 after a 40-year career. And he served on the Visalia City Council from 1991-1999.

But Bakke was talking about volunteering. She wanted him to be the coordinator who organizes volunteer drivers with cancer patients who needed rides to medical appointments. He agreed.

"That's a favorite of mine."

drive patients sometimes as far away as Terra Bella to treatment in Porterville. But at other times, volunteers go short distances such as from Quail Park Retirement Community down the street to Sequoia Regional Cancer Center in Visalia. The longest drive is to Children's Hospital Central California.