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Live Fire Trainer for Nevada County Firefighters

By YubaNet

Sep 23, 2003, 08:00

The Nevada County Consolidated Fire District (NCCFD) took delivery of a firetrainer last week. The 40-foot trailer, purchased with a FEMA grant, will serve the training needs of all Nevada County Fire Departments.



Structure Fire Training

Chief Tim Fike and members of NCCFD's Board watched the demonstration of the trainer's capabilities on Thursday. The module was built and delivered by Symtron Systems one year after the Fire Department won a grant of \$170,000. This was the department's second application for Fire Act money. Congress approved \$750 million a year to help fire departments acquire much needed equipment.

"When we wrote the grant proposal, we first had to identify which piece of equipment could benefit us the most. In the process, we realized that a live fire trainer could benefit all agencies in Nevada County. The trainer will be available to all and we are organizing joint training sessions for structure protection," said Fike while walking through the trainer.

The module has reconfigurable interior walls and two interior fires. One of the fires is capable of producing the flash-over effect you can see in the left-hand picture. But Chief Fike has ideas to enhance the training sessions, like creating crawl-throughs and additional obstacles for the firefighters. Training for structure fires was sporadic before the fire trainer, but not anymore.

"The trainer can be used safely at any time," Fike told YubaNet.com "There's no polluting run-offs generated, we're able to produce thick, non-toxic smoke on demand and the system is inexpensive to operate and maintain," he continued.

Safe and Regular Training Opportunities

Being able to safely train for structure fires not only enhances efficiency but also helps firefighters to become familiar with all possible situations encountered. A building filled with smoke, zero visibility and fires burning in several places was not a readily available tool until now. Training was possible when a homeowner contacted the department to burn down a structure. Then tests had to be run to determine that no toxic smoke would be generated and the structure could be demolished by fire safely.

2002 Statistics

In 2002, NCCFD alone responded to 68 structure fires, 84 vegetation fires and 58 vehicle fires. This was in addition to medical assistance, vehicle accidents and alarm calls that made up the bulk of the department's interventions. In total, NCCFD responded to 3,068 calls for assistance in 2002.



Chief Fike was already looking forward to the first joint training session and shared some of the plans for the coming years: "We'll try and apply for an interactive fire prevention trailer for kids next year.

This would allow us to go to the schools and demonstrate fire prevention to children. We're also looking forward to receive a set of 'Jaws of Life' to complete our equipment for vehicle accidents."

The live fire trainer is stationed at NCCFD's headquarters at the Fairgrounds.

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