

Firemen endure training

By Karen Krien
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Sixteen St. Francis Firemen, along with two firemen from Bird City and one from Goodland, participated in the Kansas Fire and Rescue Training Institute's interior burn lab on Wednesday, April 2, at the fairgrounds in St. Francis.

The burn lab is a semi truck trailer equipped with a room that simulates a stove fire and another which is a bedroom fire. Propane gas is used because it is easier to control, however, the heat of the fire is still there.

Before going into the training, firemen were required to take a test and make sure their masks fit right. Derrick Tice, Shannon Grover and Dan Blair were trained to prepare the firemen for the mask fitting.

George Harper, St. Francis fire chief, said following the written test, the firemen were fitted. They had to have a tight hood over their head and needed to be clean shaven. Their mask was fitted with a different filter

and a bad odor was released. If the mask leaked, the men would be asked to smell the odor.

"This was the way the masks were tested to see if they did leak," Chief Harper said.

Before firemen entered the trailer, they were instructed and prepared on exactly what to expect and what to do. The trainer told the firemen to take their time and see exactly what was happening since this was not a life-threatening situation. This would give them a better understanding of what was happening if they were ever faced with such a fire.

Firefighters were required to wear protective equipment including self-contained breathing apparatus. They also wore a device which, if the fireman wasn't moving, would beep. As they entered the trailer, they carried the hose lines into the fire and smoke-filled trailer.

Another trainer operates the controls which ensures that the firemen participating in the training will get the full impact

of fighting a live fire in a dangerous situation but where they will be safe. There is continual contact with each other throughout the training to better protect everyone involved.

Chief Harper said it was an excellent training and he was happy to see so many of the firemen attending.

Bird City firemen taking the training were James Cahoj and Jayden Cahoj. Along with firemen, Harper, Blair, Grover and Tice taking the class were: Shane Wurm, Brian Draper, Dale Weeks, Kevin Trembly, Sam Miller, Matt Smull, Kelly Frewen, Clay Keller, Dustin Gilliland, Steve Jenkins, Pat Owens and Randy Dinkel. Brian James, Goodland fire chief, was also on hand to help with the training.

Firemen's Ball
The Firemen's Ball has been set for April 26 at Riverside Recreation, St. Francis. The dance will begin at 9 p.m.

"You come to our dance — we'll come to your fire," is the theme of the annual dance.



GETTING ON THE GEAR — George Harper and Derrick Tice assist a fellow fire fighter to get ready for the training. Below: the fireman is ready!



ONE OF THE TRAINERS makes sure the men are ready to enter the training trailer.



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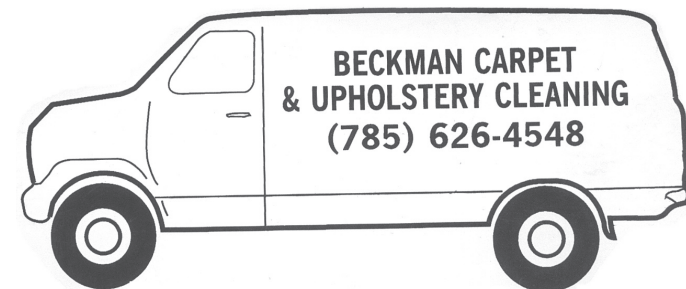


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