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Weston Volunteer Fire Department boosts skills with new training equipment

CELINA, Texas –The Texas A&M Forest Service Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program awarded a \$10,000 grant to the Weston Volunteer Fire Department to help them purchase training equipment.

The department purchased wildland training shelters, blackout masks, blast masks, a smoke machine and forcible entry door, all to aid in training. Wildland training shelters are a last resort for firefighters trapped by wildfires and are used in rare occurrences. The shelters would protect the firefighter from heat, smoke and /or ember showers. A blackout mask replicates smoky conditions in a building, the blast masks simulate a self-contained breathing apparatus, the smoke machine creates conditions like those during a structure fire and the forcible entry door allows practice opportunities in pushing, prying, cutting and bending techniques for effective structure entry.

“I looked at many training tools and felt that the ones we purchased would enhance the knowledge and skill set of our firefighters,” said Weston VFD Fire Chief Bart J. Chambers. “Training with this equipment will help to increase the department’s response capabilities in an efficient, professional and safe manner.”

The new door allows independent exercises for the firefighters and helps in gaining experience that will help them respond with greater success.

“Forcible entry is a skill set that until recently did not get the attention it deserved and is something that many volunteers do not understand,” said Chambers. “In the past, forcing entry into a structure often meant to destroy a door assembly resulting in considerable cost to the owner. Less aggressive technique will ensure reduced indirect fire damages, creating better customer service and a more professional fire department.”

Weston VFD has been serving their area since 1968 and appreciates the support of the community.

Texas A&M Forest Service is an agency operating within the Texas A&M University System and as the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program administrator is committed to protecting lives, property and natural resources. The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program is funded by Texas State Legislature and provides cost share funding to rural volunteer fire departments for the acquisition of firefighting vehicles, fire and rescue equipment, protective clothing, dry-hydrants, computer systems and firefighter training.

For more information on programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, please visit <http://texasfd.com>.

