

Belton Fire Department trains

By Grayson Edds

Journal Reporter

Three fire engines, two ambulances, and numerous personal vehicles lined the street at 11th and Main Street in Belton on Saturday as the Belton Fire Department concluded its week-long training event.

The Belton Fire Department conducted training of their full-time firefighters throughout the week, concluding with training volunteer firefighters from Belton and Sparta

Valley.

The house, formerly used as student living, was donated by the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor to Belton Fire Department before its demolition to make room for larger parking accommodations.

The fire department was grateful for the use of the house, as it's not every day that they get to train in such a realistic environment.

Outside, the temperatures surpassed 100 degrees and a smoke machine filled the 1,500 square-foot house to

such a thick density, the effect was a complete white-out.

While the smoke would be black in a real house fire, and the temperature would be more than 300 degrees, the simulated smoke gave the trainees the same blinding effect for their search and rescue and ventilation training.

The rigorous training of the volunteers has a direct and beneficial impact to the fire departments as well as

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August 2, 2012 • Volume 146, Issue No. 31

volunteers to save lives



Firefighters exit the smoked out building after successfully completing their training mission.

Photo by Grayson Edds

Training

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the community, said Volunteer Fire Chief David Bumpus.

"Belton is a combination paid, volunteer department," Bumpus said. "They've got 30 paid firefighters on staff. When you get to thinking about it, if you've got anyone out on a medical run, we're down two firefighters. If we've got both ambulances out, now we're down four firefighters. If we have 10 on shift, that leaves the driver and the captain and a couple of more people. That's where we come in. We come out and train with these guys so they know what we can do

and who they can work with, and they can see what their qualifications are or what each one of these firefighters can do."

Both the volunteer and the paid firefighters completed training that included a search mission for a dummy under the pretense that a child was left inside the house and a simulation of a man-down rescue where two firefighters go in, but only one comes out.

The full-time firefighters also practiced ventilation techniques, where they practiced cutting holes in the roof to safely let smoke and heat out.

Until the volunteers complete 70 hours of training, they cannot legally fight a fire, said



Photo by Grayson Edds

Belton Fire Department and volunteer fire fighters for both Belton and Sparta Valley gather as the house fills with smoke.

Bumpus, which is one of the main reasons training like this is so important.

"It's a job that carries a lot of weight with it, and we all take

that seriously," he said. "The more experience you get, the better you get at it. The more practice you get, the more it comes natural to you."