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Cochranville gets new training unit

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By Marcella Peyre-Ferry

October is Fire Prevention Month, and Cochranville Fire Company wants the community it serves to know that they are keeping up to date with new equipment to be able to serve the area. On Sept. 22, the fire company held its annual informational meeting where township supervisors, and state officials had a chance to see what is happening at the station.

The addition most residents are likely to see is the 2009 Pierce Pumper that recently replaced a 1983 truck. The fire truck can pump up to 1,500 gallons per minute, and carry six fire fighters to the scene. The tank capacity is 1,000 gallons of water and 30 of foam. "For structural fires, it's our first piece out the door," chief Doug Lapp said. "We expect to get 20 years out of it."

Also on the grounds at Cochranville is the MTS Fireflash Trainer. The portable unit provides training space to help the volunteer firefighters train in a variety of simulations using real fire in a controlled environment.

The trainer was purchased jointly by seven area fire companies with the aid of grant money. Cochranville, Oxford, Kennett, West Grove, Longwood, Avondale and Po-Mar-Lin fire companies each have a chance to use the facility for a month at a time to train their members.

Volunteer Kim Harvey has been trained to operate the unit, working from a control panel with a view of the interior and monitoring equipment on all areas. She can produce flames in various intensities that present different challenges to the fire fighters.

The simulator helps fire fighters learn fire suppression techniques for interior and exterior fire attacks, helps them practice rescues, confined space entries, ventilation, and forcible entry. It also trains them to recognize flashovers and backdrafts and much more. "Here you can train and learn to do the skills in a safe environment," Harvey said.

Cochranville also now has the Mass Causality Unit that was part of the South East Regional Task Force. Useful for any type of emergency where there might be a large number of injured people, the truck is capable of bringing a roll off container to a mass causality site to provide emergency equipment and supplies.

There are two vehicles like this stationed in Chester County. "With the roll off system, trucks can go anywhere, drop off the pod and leave," explained Rob Linnenbaugh, who operates the vehicle.

The Cochranville Fire Company serves West Fallowfield, Londonderry, Highland and portions of Upper Oxford townships as well as responding when needed in surrounding communities. The department depends on community support and fund-raisers. Their annual fund raising auction will be held on Oct. 23. For more information visit the fire company Web site at www.cochranvillefire.com.
