



YFD opens new training facility

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The City of Yuma Fire Department officially dedicated a new Public Safety Training Facility Wednesday morning during an opening ceremony that was attended by city officials and representatives of other public and private organizations.

The 20-acre training facility, located at 3575 South Avenue 4E, has been through several phases of construction since ground was first broken in September of 2009. It will allow firefighters and law enforcement personnel to create training simulations that are as close to the real thing as possible.

"It is going to serve the community well," said Yuma Mayor Al Krieger. "It is the latest state-of-the-art facility that will allow the firefighters to train in a realistic, controlled environment, yet stay safe."

Yuma Fire Department spokesman Mike Erfert said the facility includes an outdoor classroom, a driving track, and two multi-tiered "burn" buildings. It also has paved streets with functional fire hydrants that will allow firefighters to duplicate real-life situations in their training without disrupting any residential neighborhoods.

"The 'burn' buildings are used to re-create the conditions a firefighter would encounter inside a burning structure," Erfert said. "They have different uses to simulate different environments."

The taller of the "burn" buildings provides training for a variety of exercises Erfert said, such as live fire training, hose advancement, fire attack, search and rescue, laddering and rappelling, roof penetrations, and high angle rescues. It also has a 40-foot shaft that allows for confined space exercises.

This type of training used to be conducted at Fire Station #1, but Erfert said the building there is no longer usable. With another 40 acres still available for construction, future plans include the addition of more mock-up structures.

Krieger added the facility also fills another huge public safety need in that while crews are training, if they get a call, they can still respond.

Sgt. Clint Norred, spokesman for the Yuma Police Department, said the facility's features make it ideal for law enforcement agency's training scenarios as well. YPD already uses the paved track for its driving training, as well one of the buildings for its Special Enforcement Team and canine units.

"This place provides a lot of realistic and quality training for both the police and fire departments," Norred said.

Erfert said the training facility will be used by multiple local law enforcement and fire service entities. It was constructed with a combination of state grants and funds raised through the Public Safety sales tax.

All the work on the project was done by local contractors.

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