

Community Close-up | Cedar Park fire-training center

By Jenn Rains

The Cedar Park fire-training center, located off of North Kent Lane, opened in 2005 with a six-story training tower and two houses—one a classroom and the other for training purposes.

The tower is divided into two parts, a commercial side and a residential side, to allow firefighters to get training for different types of fires.

Prior to the facility opening, the Cedar Park Fire Department would use Pflugerville's facilities for training, Larry Mulrain, battalion chief for training said. With its own training center, the ISO 1-rated department has live burn training twice a year and regular training once a month.

Other fire departments in the area, including Jollyville, Sam Bass and Travis County Fire Control, use the training center. Mulrain said Leander used the facility in the past before its own training center opened July 10. Williamson County field day is also held at the center twice a year.



1



2



3A



3B



4



5



6

Elements of training

1 Hay bales are used as the fire product for live burn exercises. Two hay bale holders are found in the residential burn room downstairs. Each holder can hold two hay bales and control the temperature between 300 degrees and 900 degrees in the burn room.

2 A smoke machine is located on the ground floor and can filter smoke throughout the building, simulating the limited visibility found in a burning building. The smoke is a nontoxic, oil-based substance commonly used in haunted houses and for special effects and is not hazardous to air quality.

3A & B There are other elements of the fire-training center aside from the tower. Door props (3A) have different locks and hinges that are used to teach firefighters forcible entry, or how to open locked doors properly. A commercial roof and residential roof (3B) are used in teaching proper techniques for cutting ventilation holes.

4 The commercial side of the building features a standpipe, which can be found in all commercial buildings taller than three stories. The standpipe is a water hookup for fire hoses, allowing firefighters easy access for carrying hoses upstairs.

5 The commercial burn room is made of metal walls with paneling to help trap the heat in the room. The temperature in the room can be controlled and trains firefighters in dealing with commercial fire situations by allowing them to experience the conditions of a fire.

6 The roof of the tower features several elements including a small elevator shaft (background) where training exercises are held on rescuing victims who are stuck in an elevator shaft. A rappelling post (foreground) is also on the roof for rappelling exercises down the side of the tower.



Cedar Park firefighters Kirby Wiseman, Jeremy House and Glenn Creel are suited up and ready to put their training to use.

The training tower is six stories and is divided into two parts with a commercial side and a residential side, allowing firefighters to experience different conditions they could face in houses or commercial buildings.