



10/05/2006

Trailer teaches fires safety

By KIM SCHMIDT , Hub Staff Writer

KEARNEY — Within seconds, smoke fills the room. You can't see, and breathing becomes difficult. You head for the door, but it's warm to the touch. What do you do?

The scenario could happen to anyone, Kearney volunteer firefighters say. But with the help of a new hands-on fire prevention unit, firefighters can teach fire safety to the public.

The Kearney Volunteer Fire Department recently received a 35-foot fire prevention trailer that will be used to teach children and adults about fire safety and prevention and severe weather. Equipped with a kitchenette and a child's bedroom, the trailer allows firefighters to teach the importance of a family escape plan, how to call 911, how to identify fire hazards in the house and about the need for smoke detectors.

"It's another tool that we can use to bring our message across to fire prevention, fire safety and emergency preparedness," said Ken Tracy, KVFD administrator.

The trailer will be on display from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday at Fire Station 1 at 2211 Ave. A, just in time for Fire Prevention Week, which is Sunday through Oct. 14.

A feature of the trailer is a nontoxic smoke simulator firefighters operate by remote control. The simulator creates the illusion of a smoldering fire. The bedroom also has a window with an escape ladder so children can learn to use a second exit in the event their primary exit is blocked.

The trailer includes a weather-smart package that simulates severe weather, including tornadoes, lightning and thunderstorms.

The trailer cost \$46,000 and was purchased with a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Kearney-area donations and other grants. Other departments within 50 miles of Kearney also can use the trailer.

Anyone interested in having a fire prevention demonstration can contact Tracy at 233-3226.

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Hub photo by Kim Schmidt Ken Tracy, administrator of the Kearney Volunteer Fire Department, shows how a pot handle should face inward on a stove while cooking. The kitchenette is just one of several safety scenarios in KVFD's new fire prevention unit.

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