

Haslet Firefighter Completes the US&R Rescue Specialist Certificate Program at Disaster City

Division Chief Lee Godbold of the Haslet Fire Department has completed the prestigious US&R Rescue Specialist Certificate Program at Disaster City. The certificate program requires over 304 hours of advanced hands-on training at the Disaster City facility located in College Station, TX.

The Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) has launched their US&R Rescue Specialist Certificate Program in 2013 which recognizes members of urban search and rescue (US&R) teams who have completed advanced training. Eligible candidates must complete more than 300 hours of rigorous, advanced training in structural collapse rescue operations and other specialized search and rescue training. Twenty-one people qualified for the new certificate following the recent Advanced Structural Collapse 5 course. To date, 79 personnel have earned this professional recognition and include responders from Texas, New Jersey, Ohio, Iowa, Florida, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, Denmark, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Division Chief Godbold is the 79th recipient of this prestigious certification in the world.

"This is the only certificate of its kind for advanced urban search and rescue training, and very few people nationwide qualify at this point," said Brian Smith with TEEX Emergency Services Training Institute, who coordinates the program.

To receive the certificate, individuals must complete 80 hours of training in structural collapse, 50 hours in rope rescue, 50 hours in advanced exterior shoring, 50 hours in advanced interior shoring, and 50 hours in advanced breaching and breaking operations. In addition, they can choose one or more electives, which include passenger rail rescue, disaster logistics specialist, swiftwater rescue, wide area search, disaster canine search specialist and more. At least three of the classes must be completed at TEEX. "For a responder to complete this amount of training is truly a significant accomplishment," said Smith. "Graduates of this program are considered subject matter experts in the areas of constructing structural collapse shoring and in performing rescues at collapsed structures."

The courses include hands-on training in realistic structural collapses and confined spaces. Participants were able to practice conducting advanced structural collapse rescue scenarios and building of large emergency shoring systems on the exterior and interior of collapsed buildings at our specially designed emergency response training facility. The courses were a combination of classroom instruction and practical skills training taught by specialized instructors who have experience responding to some of the nation's largest disasters, including the Sept. 11th terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane Ike.

The Haslet Fire Department now has personnel with significant advanced training that can provide specialized medical care to victims trapped in structural collapses and other dangerous environments.

"Chief Godbold is one of those high energy people that loves to train and teach others. His passion for the job and eagerness to help others no matter how simple or complex the emergency might be, is what propels him to being one of the top firefighters in the country." said Haslet Fire Chief Kirt Mays

Disaster City is a 70-acre specialized urban search and rescue training facility located in College Station, TX. Disaster City is operated by the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service and is the home base for Texas Task Force 1, one of the FEMA National Urban Search and Rescue teams. Disaster City is the largest and most complex training facility of its kind in the world and provides training to thousands of responders annually. The \$7.7 million facility includes buildings in various stages of collapse, including a shopping mall, an office complex, a single family dwelling, a government building, a movie theater, three rubble piles, and a seven car passenger train wreck.