

Area farmers and ranchers know the dangers that can be associated with their work on a farm. When farm-related accidents happen, emergency service providers need to know how best to respond to situations that are out of their ordinary routine. Over the weekend, representatives with Oklahoma State University Fire Service were in Coweta to put on two days of training for area firefighters. Their focus was basic response to grain handling hazards and farm rescue. The training, attended by 16 firefighters representing the Coweta, Oak Grove and Tri-District fire districts was paid for by the Susan Harwood Training Grant through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. "Our grain handling hazards class was originally constructed so grain workers could attend. Firefighters are a part of it so they can all work together if you have an entrapment. This is awareness for working around grain," explained OSU Fire Service Instructor Mike Mahoney. "We monitor the air inside the grain bin as there are a lot of things that can happen. Grain can put off carbon dioxide and deplete the oxygen level. This is a confined space, so we monitor oxygen, carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulfide (very toxic gas) levels. Mahoney said while grain bin fires are not a common occurrence, it is one that departments should train for. "In Hydro, the fire department lost a fire chief due to low oxygen levels in a grain bin," the instructor noted. Mahoney said the weekend classes are part of ongoing training that is offered by OSU Fire Service. "When fire departments have to cut their budgets, training can be one of the first things they cut," he noted. "With these OSHA grants, it makes it very important that firefighters get training. We try to include as much in it as we can for the departments." Coweta firefighters taking part in the training sessions included Captain Jeff Beller, Captain Ben Neff, Lieutenant Jeff Waller, Corporal Eric Denissen, Austin Addington, Chris Ford, Eric Coates and Matthew Eddy. Be the first to know

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