January 13, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Fire Training Goes Underground

The Springfield Underground came to the rescue of the Springfield Fire Department by providing a location for the department's recruits to learn to operate the engines and aerial ladders in spite of the below-freezing temperatures of the past two weeks.

While the recruits went through their initial training last summer and fall, each is sent to the stations to develop their basic firefighting skills before returning for four more weeks of training to learn how to drive and operate the apparatus. Normally, this type of training occurs during warmer months, but due to timing issues, the Department needed to do it in the middle of winter. Unfortunately, the sub-freezing temperatures do not allow for this type of training to occur for long periods of time.

When contacted by the Fire Department, Springfield Underground quickly agreed to allow the Department to use its extensive underground facility, which has both fire hydrants and static water sources at a constant 68 degrees.

According to Training Captain Richard O'Connor, this training could not have occurred without the generosity of the Springfield Underground. "With their assistance, we have the ability to provide the level of training necessary to get our personnel ready for their State certification as Pumping Apparatus Operators and as Aerial Apparatus Operators. We are very fortunate to have this resource available in Springfield."

The Department requires all new recruits to go through this intensive driver/operator academy to develop the necessary skills to perform to the highest expectations on the fire ground, as well as while driving to the emergencies.

If any media would like to photograph or capture video of the training starting at 12:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 14, or for more information, contact: Fire Chief David Hall, (417) 838-4730.

Springfield Fire Department

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