

Farmington Accepts Donations for Long-Awaited Fire Training Facility

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FARMINGTON — The fire department last week accepted the first donations for a long-planned live fire training facility that would provide hands-on training for area firefighters.

The department accepted two donations for the project, a \$2,500 donation from Farmington Community Chest, and \$10,000 check from Dyno Nobel. "We are excited to be the first donor to this, and we looked at the project for six to eight months and we realize how important this is," said Jennifer Hogan, the president of the Farmington Community Chest.

The fire training facility will be built on Round Hill Road, near the Farmington Police Department's shooting range. Harper said the town purchased the land and committed an additional \$175,000 to the project.

The total cost of the project is about \$1.4 million, said Mary-Ellen Harper, the town's director of fire and rescue services. She said the department needs to raise \$1 million, which will be divided between \$500,000 for a pre-fabricated building and \$500,000 for a water recapture system, Harper said.

The \$10,000 donation was secured through the help of Tunxis Hose Company No. 1 Fire Chief Richard Higley, who works as plant engineering manager for Dyno Nobel.

Higley said he applied for funding through a program offered by the company, and said he learned recently that the fire training facility was one of 18 projects chosen. He presented the check from the company at last week's town council meeting.

"When the [fire department's] live training facility is completed, it will be a major asset for the whole Farmington Valley community," said Margaret Seeger, plant manager of Dyno Nobel's Simsbury manufacturing plant, in a statement. "Dyno Nobel is very pleased to help provide a facility that will enable volunteer and career firefighters to train under more realistic conditions simulating real emergencies."

Harper said the project has been in the works for "about 15 years. It's been a long project in the making." She added the hardest part was finding a place to build it.

The fire department is hoping to raise the \$1 million through cash donations and in-kind services by July 2014.

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