

In the SPOTLIGHT

FireRescue focuses on unique training centers around the country

EDITOR'S NOTE:

One of the most challenging tasks facing today's fire service is how to effectively prepare and train today's firefighters. The following article has been designed to provide an overview of just a few ideas and concepts currently being employed by fire departments/academies across the country. It's our hope that one or more of these simulators/props might spark an idea or help deliver a more effective message to your firefighters during an upcoming training session. Remember, all training should be conducted in compliance with applicable safety standards: *Realism should not trump safety!*
—Timothy E. Sendelbach

The cornerstone of the SFD Regional Readiness Complex is the 26,126-square-foot Field House, a five-story structure that allows firefighters to train on a variety of props.



PHOTOS COURTESY SFD

SPOKANE FIELD HOUSE

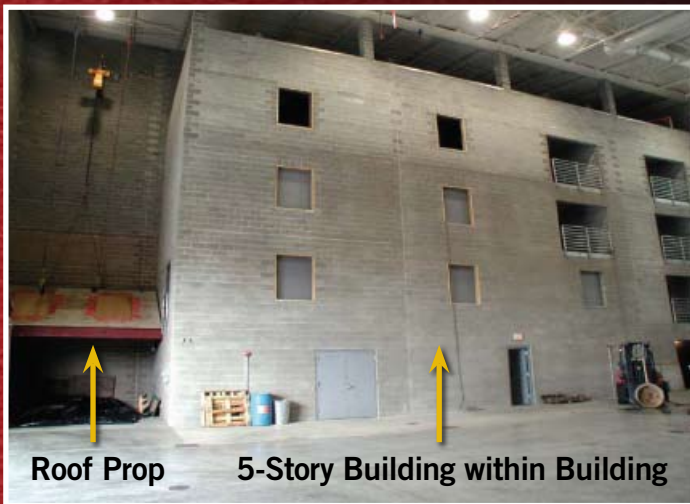
Spokane, Wash.

By Fire Chief Bobby Williams, City of Spokane Fire Department

In 1989, the Spokane Fire Department (SFD) initiated a plan to partner with other emergency response agencies to construct a training facility that would prepare emergency personnel to respond to all types of disasters. Combining resources would enhance the facilities beyond what each agency could do separately, improve training capabilities, develop and encourage inter-agency cooperation and communications and maximize the use of public funds.

When voters approved the 1989 Fire Department Bond, a portion of the funding was directed toward making this plan a reality. A 23-acre site east of Spokane Community College was purchased, and the first buildings constructed on the site included a fire station, a vehicle maintenance shop and a burn building.

Today the 23-acre SFD Regional Readiness Complex is home to a wide variety of SFD support functions, including Fire Station No. 8; a combined communications building, which houses the



FAR LEFT: The five-story structure contains a building within a building to provide for year-round training even in inclement weather.

LEFT: The building features a portable roof prop for ladder and ventilation exercises at multiple pitches.

city/county 911 call center, as well as police, sheriff and countywide fire/EMS dispatch; a USAR collapse rubble prop; a tech rescue skills prop; an underground confined space prop; a burn building; hazmat and railroad props; a drivers' skills course area; a vehicle maintenance facility; the Washington State Department of Military Readiness Center; and training offices and classroom buildings, plus the city/county emergency operations center.

The cornerstone of the campus is the 26,126-square-foot Field House, a five-story structure that contains a building within a building to provide for year-round training even in inclement weather.

The Field House, which was completed in 2002, was funded by the 1999 Fire Bond issue at a cost of approximately \$2.3 million.

The Field House is divided into three

general areas: 1) a five-story training building; 2) a 7,500-square-foot open-space floor designed to act as a training area and to accommodate two operating fire apparatus; and 3) a support area for SCBA filling/storage, PPE storage/cleaning and restroom/shower facilities.

A vehicle exhaust system is built into the floor that allows indoor pumping or aerial operations. Also within the building is a portable roof prop for ladder and ventilation exercises at multiple pitches.

Designed to provide maximum flexibility, the five-story training building has an enclosed stairway with standpipe system. Each floor can be configured differently to simulate various situations. It's possible to train on rappelling, ground-ladder throwing or aerial-ladder placement both inside and outside the building.

The Field House also allows firefighters to train on the following:

- Search and rescue
- Confined-space rescue (up to four stories)
- Technical rescue
- Hose and ladder evolutions
- Ventilation exercises (roof cutting)
- Multi-company drills
- Interior and exterior rappelling
- Pump operations training

The Field House provides more opportunity for various types of training activities to be conducted concurrently with the other facilities on site, such as the live-fire burn building.

Bobby Williams is the fire chief of the Spokane Fire Department. Located in eastern Washington, Spokane is the second largest city in the state.



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The Field House features a support area for SCBA filling/storage, PPE storage/cleaning and restroom/shower facilities.