

Urban SAR Teams Conduct Exercise



Members from Arkansas Urban Search and Rescue Task Force 1 conduct joint operations at an exercise in October.

Search and rescue can be a crucial tool during any type of disaster or emergency event. Arkansas SAR teams meet at least once per month to practice their skills. Often times teams from different regions of the state are able to conduct joint training. The two primary Urban SAR teams in the state are Northwest Arkansas Task Force 1 and Central Arkansas Task Force 1.

A unique opportunity was presented to the Arkansas USAR task forces when a building in Conway was offered to the teams for hands on training. The bulk of the training consisted of creating vertical and horizontal breachings through various forms of building construction. This allowed the teams to simulate gaining access to victims in the event of a building collapse. The training also allowed team members to exercise unified command procedures that would be in place during a real world event.

"The joint training is important for team members and leadership to be able to work for and supervise members of the team as a whole," said John Luther, Washington County Emergency Management Coordinator and Program Coordinator of Northwest Arkansas Task Force 1. "It enhances our communications and skills between the two task forces. Success during real world events helps build the creditability of the USAR Task Force."

The Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas USAR Task Forces work closely together to enhance the safety and security of Arkansans. Depending on the type of event members from both regions may need to respond and cohesive, standardized operations between the teams can be paramount. Both regional teams train using the same standard and utilize the same types of equipment which leads to the ability for efficient joint operations during any type of USAR event.

"These teams aren't just thrown together. We communicate frequently to ensure that we are ready to respond to any event that arises," said Luther.