

## Firefighters become canine caregivers

Written by MARK JAEGER

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### Humane Society serves as training site for rescue personnel

Firefighters with the Saukville Fire Department gained some valuable tips on rescuing pets during fire calls during a recent training session at the Wisconsin Humane Society shelter in Saukville.



About 20 local firefighters took part in the training.

The program was arranged by Saukville Fire Department Training Officer Jason Laabs, who has a special place in his heart for rendering care to pets at the scene of emergency calls.

“My family was unfortunate enough to lose a pet when my parents had a fire at their house,” Laabs said.

In recent years, the fire department has had several calls where pets died from exposure to smoke.

In response to that need, the department has begun equipping trucks with oxygen masks for pets.

“Most of the masks are getting pretty old and should probably be replaced,” Laabs said.

The Humane Society is collecting money to do just that for departments throughout the county.

There is usually a \$60-per-student charge for the Humane Society training session, but that cost was waived in part because Saukville firefighters were so quick to respond to a fire call at the building on Dekora Woods Boulevard when it was under construction in 2011.

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The shelter — formally known as the Wisconsin Humane Society Ozaukee Campus Victoria Wellens Center — is about a quarter mile away from the fire station.

“Luckily there weren’t any animals in the building at the time of that fire, or we would have probably lost some,” Laabs said.

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Image Information: SAUKVILLE FIREFIGHTERS were trained in the emergency care of pets during a recent training session at the Wisconsin Humane Society shelter in Saukville. Above, shelter volunteer Sue Schulkers (left) and veterinarian Marla Lichtenberger (right) assisted as firefighters Jason Laabs and Jim Schlegel examined Carley, a somewhat curious canine patient. Below, firefighter Kyle Miller practiced CPR on fake Fido hooked up to a monitoring device.

Photo by Sam Arendt