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Ellis PD hosts active shooter training

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Ellis Review

Policing in a small community can always come with its surprises, despite the area's seemingly-Mayberry-like atmosphere.

It takes a special law enforcement team to handle not only threats to the public and hardened criminals, but also the young lady who locked her keys in her car and the loose dog called in earlier that morning.

The Ellis community has just that kind of team currently being built, under the steady hand and strong leadership of Ellis Police Chief Avery Smith.

'Be Prepared' is the motto of Chief Smith, who has been proactive within

his new department in the various fields of specialized law enforcement training.

Smith's latest training for his team was an intense Active Shooter response and tactical entry instruction session.

"We decided we had a shortcoming in our training, and we found an organization that does great training that is free," said Chief Smith. "We then extended the invitation to our neighboring agencies."

Another pro-active move on Chief Smith's part, as if an active shooter situation ever happen, these departments would be the Ellis Police Department's backup.

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MAKING SURE THE BUILDING IS SECURE-Law enforcement from the Ellis PD, Hays PD, Ellis County Sherriff and Kansas Highway Patrol trained together at Ellis High School recently in an active shooter drill.

Cheryl Kinderknecht/Ellis Review

Cooling off!



Active Shooter training

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Taking Down the Intruder-Law enforcement from the Ellis Police Department trained with the United States Deputy Sherriff's Assocaiaion at Ellis High School. *Cheryl Kinderknecht/Ellis Review*

Over this past weekend the United States Deputy Sheriff's Association, based in Wichita, trained the Ellis Police officers, as well as law enforcement from the Hays Police Department, Ellis County Sheriff's office and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

Unfortunately active shooter training and quick, safe response is a number one priority of law enforcement today.

"These incidents will happen somewhere. They happen in big cities, small towns, and rural areas," said Mike Willis, National Training Director/Law

Enforcement Program Coordinator. "We do not want to wait until that incident happens to try and figure out how to handle this. I think it is fantastic that Chief Smith made the decision to be prepared for something that may never happen."

Getting the area law enforcement on the same page is a must for these types of situations. Willis said the group in Ellis worked well together.

"This is really good team work. It's nice to see a really great working relationship between the police department, sherriff's

department and the Kansas Highway Patrol. We don't see that everywhere we go," Willis said. "It's nice to see the good coordination and communication between them, because in a situation like an active shooter, which we've recently seen, you are going to have everybody and anybody responding. Trying to get a game plan at the last minute is not the time to do it, you have to do it ahead of time."

Chief Smith said that for optimal training for a criminal incident like an active shooter situation, the ideal location would be in a school or other large structure. The Ellis Jr. Sr. High School was the chosen location for the training.

The training focused on small group movement through the school, clearing and securing the rooms with two or more law enforcement officers.

Officers also performed building check drills with up to five officers at a time.

Some of the more intense training was with live 'active shooter' captures that included simulated gun fire with projectiles.

The US Deputy Sheriff's Association does this kind of training across the United States with City, County, State and Federal officers, as well as military law enforcement.



Checking Every Room-Law enforcement from the Ellis PD, Hays PD, Ellis County Sherriff and Kansas Highway Patrol trained together at Ellis High School. *Cheryl Kinderknecht/Ellis Review*

The invaluable training not just within the Ellis Police Department, but with other agencies who would respond to an emergency with the EPD, was well worth the effort to bring the specialized training to Ellis.

Chief Smith said this training was very important to him.

"With everything that is going on, this is a priority. We want to make sure our schools are secure," he said. "That's the number one thing right now to make sure we have the tools and training necessary to respond to a threat to the school if we ever have to."

Sadly, we hear about mass shooting situations too often. It is an incident we hope will never happen in the Ellis area.

It is comforting to know, however, that Ellis Police Chief Smith decided this

kind of tool was training that could save lives, and his officers needed to have it, with the understanding that it is knowledge these law enforcement officers will hopefully never have to use.

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