



Godfrey firefighter attends Hazmat training in Colorado

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY - Jacob Elder, a seven-year veteran of the **Godfrey Fire Protection District**, recently returned from a trip to **Pueblo, Colorado** funded entirely by the **Department of Homeland Security** and the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**.

Elder went to Colorado to do further training regarding an aspect of firefighting for which he has a passion - responding to hazardous material incidents. His training in Colorado was specifically geared toward responding to highway emergencies involving hazardous materials. Elder said the course focused on detailed operations and construction of cargo tanks and the vehicles hauling them on the highway. This training was beneficial for Elder as well as the people living in the Godfrey Fire Protection District, because a large amount of such materials are constantly being transported through the area.

"We have a lot of busy areas, including a section of Interstate 255 and Godfrey Road," Elder said. "A lot of hazardous commodities go through Godfrey every day. There are a lot of farms in the area who use ammonia for fertilizer."





During the training, Elder was able to learn the ins and outs of mitigating hazards associated with large vehicles and the products held within them. He was also trained in the delicate operation of transporting remaining materials from a damaged vehicle to a fresh one - which holds the silent danger of static electricity.

"We were taught grounding and bonding, which removes static charge from the product," he said. "When a truck is going down the road, and the product is sloshing around in its tank, it builds a static charge. When removing that liquid from a damaged vehicle, it has a charge to it. In order to move it safely, we must remove the charge so it can be transferred safely."

The course was provided by the **Security and Emergency Response Training Center** and was called "**Highway Emergency Response Specialist**." All travel and class expenses were provided by grants through the federal government, meaning neither the Godfrey Fire Protection District nor the taxpayers of Godfrey had to pay a dime for it.

Elder has been with the Godfrey Fire Protection District for seven years, including four as a volunteer and three as a full-time member. He is also on the Madison County Hazmat team. He said he would recommend the course to any other hazmat operator in the area, saying the training was "outstanding."



