

Joint Training Session

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unaccounted for. The firefighters wearing full bunker gear (a firefighter's personal protective equipment) and SCBA's (self contained breathing apparatus) entered the "home" in pairs in an attempt to find the missing occupants. In order to simulate the smoke-filled home, firefighters had their masks blackened out and were effectively unable to see.

The simulation helped the firefighters practice specific search techniques while dealing with the additional stress of not being able to see and having to monitor their oxygen use with the SCBA.

Geoff McLaughlin, Chief of the Economy Fire Brigade said "While the majority of our calls are for medical assistance, we need to practice these skills for what could easily be a real-life situation. The training also allowed members of one brigade to work directly with a member of another brigade building trust and confidence in each other. I'd like to see more of this and, based on the feedback, so would the others. We also had 3 junior members on hand and they were able to participate as well. It's a pretty intense situation for a 14, 15, or 16 year old to find themselves in and we were blown away by how well they did!"

For some of the participants, it was their first time using an SCBA which can be nerve wracking and claustrophobic. Prior to suiting-up they were taught about the equipment and how to use it safely. The Economy Fire Brigade also had several Medical First Responders on hand taking blood pressure before and after the exercise as it can be anxiety provoking and physically exhausting. The MFR's also benefited from the additional practice.

It was great to see that it wasn't just younger members involved. Several veteran members participated including Chief McLaughlin of Economy and Chief Grue from Bass River. Par-

ticipants were coached through the simulation by, among others, Tom Beaton-EFB, a veteran with over 20 years experience as a volunteer Firefighter and Don Conrad, Deputy Chief (BRFB) who spent his career in the professional fire service.

Based on the feedback from the various brigades it's likely we'll see more of this going forward.

If you'd like to get involved with your local Volunteer Fire Department as a firefighter, Medical First Responder or both, visit your local brigade on any training night or speak with a member. It's a vital and highly rewarding volunteer position.

Rob Poirier, Economy, is a volunteer firefighter with the Economy Fire Brigade.



To simulate total darkness and a room filled with smoke, volunteer firefighters with heads covered were forced to navigate an area searching for victims. (Poirier Photo)



With only the exit lights in the Economy Rec Centre turned on part of the training involved crawling on hands and knees with only a hand held light while working around obstacles. (Poirier Photo)



Supervisors used ropes to simulate other hazards, which needed to be avoided. (Poirier Photo)



This large culvert was incorporated into the training obstacle course. (Poirier Photo)



Volunteers were watched and checked as they made their way around the obstacle course set up in the Economy Rec Centre. (Poirier Photo)



In this photo trainees are shown crawling on their side or back to avoid simulated live electric wires. (Poirier Photo)

facebook.com/welcomeukrainians

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Finally, our technical people have been able to develop and launch within the past week, a Facebook site -facebook.com/welcomeukrainians

This Page is completely open to the public for any to post on or ask questions; it's not a Private Group page, no membership needed. You can choose to Like or Follow it to keep up with ongoing postings. If communicating with others via an email use: www.facebook.com/welcomeukrainians and it should be a live link. If printing it or giving it out verbally you just say: facebook.com/welcomeukrainians. No capitals are required, No www.

As publisher, I did not want to complicate things, or for people to assume, we were going to be involved in the approval process, or sourcing people wishing to relocate to Nova Scotia. The objective was to develop a database or listing of people who would wish to provide accommodations or billet Ukrainian refugees into their home for a short period of time, provide accommodations, food and help get them situated. Information on our capacity to accommodate will be shared with appropriate government departments.

Ideally, based on our level of compassion, I set a target for Nova Scotia to accommodate 10,000 to 20,000 immigrants. Yes, it is a large number, but if we collectively decide to move forward we can do it. As homeowners, and business executives, we are investing time, money and our expertise to provide a new home, but think of it this way:

Nova Scotia has a shortage of labour in all areas: hospital-ity, construction, agriculture,

fisheries, and forestry. A large number of them can help build a stronger Nova Scotia and be contributors to our economic betterment.

After watching many, many hours of television reporting, I personally am amazed at high level of proficiency of Ukrainians, especially their command of the English language. My confidence is extremely high a large number of refugees from Ukraine would help to increase population in rural Nova Scotia; provide more students for rural schools, and with their talents and work ethic we would be happy to have them part of our society and working with us to build a better Nova Scotia.

Rural residents, for decades, have been heroic in helping each other. In each of the rural communities, people work together and each community has a leader. Here is what I hope will happen. Leaders in the community will take up the challenge, consult with their neighbours, develop a list of families wishing to accommodate Ukrainians and how many they can accommodate. By developing a list of accommodators in each community the immigrants will not be alone, as there would be several other families / people who have suffered the same fate of being invaded by Russia and driven from their homes.

Along the shore from Truro to Parrsboro there are many large homes, which are occupied by an older couple who could accommodate three or four people or more. If we extend the arm of friendship, it is amazing what could be accomplished.

I am hopeful if we work together to accommodate

Ukrainian refugees, we go far beyond our local community, by reaching out to friends and relatives in other areas, and promoting the idea on Facebook. Here's a simple to do list:

- Seek help from others in your community to see who will accommodate, how many can be accommodated locally, to develop some critical mass for each area. (Gather the names and number as if a petition).
 - Post the number of participants and how many they will accommodate.
 - Send email to: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com, so we can record the capacity information of the community.
 - When we have developed some critical mass, we will share more detailed information with the powers that be with names of community collectors, accommodators, and numbers to be hosted submitting information to required government departments.
 - Contact friends and relatives in other communities, to do local canvassing.
 - Let's build an informal group to communicate regularly, post updates on Facebook, and strive to accommodate as many Ukrainian refugees as possible.
 - Can we reach the target of 10,000 - 20,000?
- If you have questions, advice, concerns please contact me at 902-890-9850 or maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

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