

NEWS RELEASE: April 6, 2012

Nebraska canine USAR team to hone skills at Willard training site

Nebraska Task Force 1 (NETF1), an Urban Search and Rescue team based at Lincoln Fire and Rescue, will conduct and participate in a two-day Canine Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) in Willard, Missouri on April 7 and 8. The assessment is part of a rigorous national certification every canine-handler team must pass in order to work with an Urban Search and Rescue Team.

Four canine-handler teams from NETF1 will participate in the testing. The Missouri-based task force will also have two teams participating. The Nebraska teams are traveling to this site because the FSA testing must be conducted at sites unfamiliar to the teams.

During structural collapses, canines help search teams locate victims using their sense of smell to detect live human scent, even from a victim buried deep in the rubble. The FSA measures canine capabilities in the categories of obedience, bark alert, direction and control, agility and ability on the rubble pile.

Members of the media are invited to observe from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The assessment will take place at the Regional Disaster Search Canine training site at Conco Quarries Inc. The training site is located on Farm Road 105, one block north of Highway 160 in Willard. (Going north on 160, turn right at the intersection next to McDonald's. The training site is one block north on the right.)

For more information, contact Steve Dolezal, NETF1 K9 Coordinator, at 402-540-3288 or check out the NETF1 website at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: usar). You can also contact Ryan Nicholls, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management, at 417-869-6040 or Warren Robinson, Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management Public Information Officer, at 417-869-6040 or 417-861-2478.