

Milford, Odessa get grain bin safety equipment, training

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DOWNSTATE — First responders in Delaware will have more access to grain bin rescue tubes and training this year thanks to Nationwide Insurance and the Delaware Farm Bureau.

Nationwide's seventh annual Nominate Your Fire Department Contest saw 41 winners this year, some of which included awardees whose training and equipment was paid for by local farm bureaus. Two winners are from Delaware — Carlisle Fire Co. in Milford and Odessa Fire Co.

Delaware Farm Bureau's Sussex County Women's Committee Chair Connie Fox nominated Carlisle Fire Co. for the award.

"If the grain shifts and you're working in there, it only takes a few seconds before grain builds up around you," Ms. Fox said of the deadly accidents. "If you've ever been to the beach and put your foot in the sand, you know your feet are heavy. When kids lay down and put sand all over your body, you can't breathe.

"Grain does the same thing as sand. It puts pressure on you. You can't breathe if you're stuck. It takes less than 15 minutes."

Delaware Farm Bureau (DEFB) member and New Castle County Women's Committee Chair June Unruh nominated the Odessa Fire Co. for the award this year after hearing about the contest at a DEFB meeting.

"My husband and I are farmers, and we have grain bins, and (so do) a lot of the farmers," Mrs. Unruh said. "I think probably eight to 10 people in this immediate area have grain bins. I just think it's a real need to have something in place in case something happens. It makes me feel good as a farmer's wife to know that we will have that available to us. And it's just five miles up the road from where we live."

Mrs. Unruh noted in her nomina-

tion that the closest grain bin rescue tube was in Harrington, which is about 45 miles south of their family farm.

"That's just too much time. These accidents happen quickly," she said.

According to Purdue University, 70% of all grain bin entrapments occur on farms and 62% of all reported grain bin entrapments result in death.

Reports from United Press International found that "grain bin deaths spiked last year and in early 2020 due to last season's wet harvest," according to Nationwide's press release regarding the awardees.

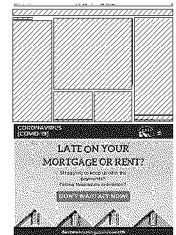
"We began our Grain Bin Safety campaign in 2014 to support the agriculture community and put an end to avoidable deaths from individuals entering grain bins without recognizing the dangers and taking precautions," said Brad Liggett, president of Nationwide Agribusiness. "Thanks to the generous and increasing support of our partners, I'm extremely proud to say that we're providing more rescue tubes and training to first responders this year than we have ever before."

As a farmer and member of Carlisle Fire Co.'s Ladies Auxiliary, Ms. Fox said she feels a passion for safety and knew her local first responders should have specialized training in case they ever encounter a grain bin accident.

Each of the 41 awardees will receive "four hours of training with a state-of-the-art grain entrapment simulator, which is loaded on a trailer and able to hold about 100 bushels of grain," according to Nationwide.

The National Education Center for Agricultural Safety will deliver the grain bin rescue tubes and training. Local training is expected to be scheduled this fall.

"Without that training, they



would have to use some good, old Yankee ingenuity to not get their own people caught,” Ms. Fox said.



Submitted photo

Makayla Parson helps demonstrate the importance of grain bin safety.