

Fire Instructors Course To Be At WPCC

Starting November 13, a teacher training program for firemen will be conducted in Burke County. This course will help provide the kind of fire protection for the citizens of Burke County that other counties will look at as the best. The classes will be held over a two-week period with a week off in between for Thanksgiving.

Classes will be held from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. from Nov. 13 to Nov. 17 and Nov. 27 through Dec. 1. All classes will meet at Western Piedmont Community College. Men with a high school diploma, or its equivalent, and four years in fire fighting service are qualified to attend.

Firemen are continually training to improve their methods and techniques of protecting lives and property. Many times the citizens and new fire fighters never give much thought to the qualification of the fire instructor or training officers.

In years past, fire instructors and training officers have been promoted or employed through politics, seniority, or because he took an exam to find out what he could put on paper. Not until 1960 did the fire service start teaching training officers and fire instructors how to teach other firemen.

The first three firemen in North Carolina to become certified fire instructors were Keith Phillippe, now state supervisor of the fire service training, N.C. Department of Community Colleges, Claude Christopher of the Greenville Fire Department, and David Lee of David Lee Fire Equipment Sales.

Today for a fireman to become a certified fire instructor, he must have a high school diploma or the equivalent, four years in the fire service, and complete the 30-hour teacher training program prescribed by the N.C. Department of Community Colleges.

This course does not teach firemen how to suppress fires, but teaches the proper methods and techniques of instructing. Also included in the program is the use of training aids, and how to handle different class situations.

Many firemen may ask what are the benefits of being certified. The benefits depend entirely upon what the individual wants to make of himself.

Burke County Fire Marshal Marvin H. Sawyer, who was himself certified in 1964 and started instructing soon thereafter, said, "You have to study and prepare before a class starts, if this is not done an instructor cannot do much teaching." During this time of studying and planning, the instructor probably will learn more than he teaches his students. Teaching firemen how to improve their skills is very rewarding.

Several fire departments throughout North Carolina are now requiring their training officers to be certified before being promoted. One of the prerequisites for employment with the N.C. Department of Community College fire training programs is certification.

Also two instructors with the N.C. Department of Insurance fire training division were certified previous to employment with that division.

Sawyer stated that it was due to his part-time instructing that earned him qualify for employment with the community colleges. Working for the community colleges enables a person to work with fire departments all over the state, plus make some out-of-state trips.

Many of the community college fire training personnel have been asked to come to other states and teach classes for their firemen. Sawyer stated that he has been on some of these training missions and it is very educational.

By having six to 10 local fire instructors will improve fire services for Burke County. There are seven fire departments in Burke County that have organized since January 1969. These firemen have done an outstanding job in providing fire protection, and they are continually training.

Where does their training instructor come from? The Department of Community Colleges has some certified part-time instructors in other counties. The fire marshal conducts some training programs also, but it is impossible for one or two men to fulfill all the training needs in Burke County.

The Department of Insurance provides some training for the county, but this is far from meeting the needs, and the Department of Insurance makes no effort to assist in training for individual industry, hospitals

and civic groups.

Local fire instructors would work part-time through Western Piedmont Community College in training fire departments. Other courses taught would include hospital fire safety, industrial fire brigade training, school bus safety and evacuation, and home fire safety.

Once a firefighter becomes certified, he has to instruct a minimum number of hours plus attend up-grading sessions. There is a N.C. Fire Instructor Association that the instructor can become members of, if they so desire.

Sawyer stated that the completion of the teacher training program and being certified is a real asset to any fire fighter.



Using The Hose

An industrial fire brigade class gives a Salem Street a good dousing with a 2½ -inch hose during a practice session recently. The equipment was loaned for class use by the Salem Fire Department. Marvin H. Sawyer, county fire marshal, instructed men in proper

handling of the hose, noting that the pumper put 200 gallons per minute through the hose at 100 pounds per square inch. "It is therefore important," Sawyer said, "to teach firemen proper handling of a hose. A hose out of control whips back and forth and is very dangerous."