

Touch the Truck shows children possibilities



Members of Lebanon Fire Department talk to local Boy Scouts from Pack 13 about their job and the fire engine they use Saturday at Lebanon City Hall. From left, are Lowell Bartruff, Firefighter Tyler Vastola, Lucas Thompson, and Engineer Tommy Chaffin.

Photos by Chandler Inions/
Lebanon Democrat



Easton Downs, 2, of Lebanon, gets to see what its like to sit in the seat of an excavator Saturday at City Hall during the Touch the Truck event. His mother, Mary Downs, said that he loves machines and that no amount of rain was going to deter him from coming out to see them.

Lebanon brought out big toys for display over the weekend

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For many children, becoming a firefighter or police officer is a dream job. Of course, it will take many years and training before they are old enough and eligible but that shouldn't stop them from being able to interact with those workers in a unique and engaging way.

On Saturday at City Hall in Lebanon, members of local law enforcement, utility employees, electrical technicians, and firefighters showcased the vehicles and equipment regularly deployed in their day's work.

There were Kubota excavators and a Vactor Plus pipeline cleaning truck

SEE TRUCK/PAGE A4

TRUCK

FROM PAGE A1

used by the city of Lebanon Public Works, as well as fire engines and the Lebanon Emergency Services response truck that is used for floods and other disaster rescues.

For some of the children attending, it was a chance to get the latest badge for Boy Scouts. Lowell Bartruff and Greyson Rice are both members of Pack 13, a Scout group from Carroll-Oakland Elementary School.

Pack 13 Den Leader Richeal Bartruff said that the two young Scouts were out working on their council fire badge. To earn it they needed to meet and interact with community helpers like the firefighters they were talking to. Bartruff said a secondary part of the badge was going to be earned by a visit to the city's library so they could learn what Lebanon used to look like.

Lt. Don Winfree with the Lebanon Fire Department was supervising the interaction between his engineer/driver Tommy Chaffin

and firefighter Tyler Vastola as they spoke with Bartruff and Rice about what it's like to work at the first department.

"They do a great job day in and day out, I brag on them all the time," said Winfree.

An officer with the Lebanon Police Department's Emergency Response Unit, Jeff Pickens, was on site answering questions about the large vehicle his department had brought for the children to see.

Pickens said he prizes opportunities like these to make their jobs look appealing to the next generation, who may be interested in becoming law enforcement and those who may not have considered it.

"It's for the people so they can see what we do. Kids get to come out and see all the trucks. It's something most of them probably haven't had a chance to do.

For other kids like Easton Downs, it was just a fun and exciting way to spend his Saturday morning. Easton's mother, Mary, said that "he loves big machines. Trucks, construction, he just loves it all."

"Even with the weather like it is today, we couldn't pass it up."