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DELPHOS — While many were spending a cloudy spring Saturday indoors, the Delphos Police Department was hard at work training for an "Active Shooter Response."

The training was hosted at St. John's Schools due to the complex nature of the layout of the structure.

Patrolman Chad Cupples of the Bluffton Police Department conducted the class which included a Power Point presentation and 4-5 hours of live scenario training with student volunteers.

## PD trains for 'Active Shooter Response'

Written by Nancy Spencer Monday, April 15, 2013 1:28 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, April 16, 2013 10:40 AM

Cupples said the training is necessary even though many have the mentality "it can't happen here."

"Sandy Hook was not a large community," Cupples said. "We become comfortable in our small communities and because not a lot happens, we feel it can't or won't. We need to change the way we think. We need to assume it can happen here and be ready if and when it does."

To put the training in perspective, Cupples said the last fatality from a school fire was in the 1950s compared to numerous school shootings in the past year.

"We still hold nine fire drills a year and we don't practice for this," he said.

Officers learned about documented statistics of an active shooter compiled from reports from actual events, including mindset and goals.

"Nearly 98 percent of shooters work alone and in 90 percent of the incidents, it ends in the shooter committing suicide," Cupples said. "The goal of the police department is to minimize the activity in between so fewer, if any, lives are lost."

Cupples also stressed the facts about small-town departments and that in many cases, the first-responding officer is going to have to go in because he may be the only one on duty at the time and the first line of defense to diffuse the situation.

"The danger is going to be imminent," he said. "That officer isn't going to be able to wait for SWAT to come from Lima or maybe even backup from a fellow Delphos officer. They need to be able to assess the situation, think on their feet and react appropriately to neutralize the shooter and save lives.

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"There could be a number of things going on at the same time. There could be fire alarms going off, sprinklers going off, students and staff running and screaming. The officer is going to have to ignore all that, gather any intel he can and move toward the problem."

K-9 Officer Chad Haunhorst said the training was a must for him and fellow officers.

"We are far enough away from Lima and a SWAT team that we are the going to be the ones going in," Haunhorst said. "We know that and we know this can happen here just as it happens anywhere else. Delphos is not immune.

"We've all had the book training but a lot of us haven't done the simulation training. This is a good way to train."

Haunhorst added that while he's on duty, his K-9 is with him but in a situation like this, the dog may be more of a hindrance than a help.

"I would only take the dog in with me if I had no other choice; if it was just me," Haunhorst said. "If there are a team of us going in, he would be more of a liability than an asset."

More than a dozen local high school students volunteered, with parental permission, to portray victims and even the shooter during live scenario training. All the students said they have had concerns about a shooter entering their school but only when it has happened other places and becomes a major news story.

"I do worry about it when I see it on the news but it's not something I sit around and think about," Tyler Kline said.

Blake Kimmet agreed.

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"I've seen coverage on the news but I hadn't really thought about it. We're in a small town and it doesn't seem like it could happen here," Kimmet said.

Kaitlyn Slate said she has already started sharing the information with her friends and fellow classmates.

"I thought the training went really well and it made me feel good that our local police officers will be ready if it does happen," Slate said. "I feel better knowing the police are training to deal with this."

All three students said the officers were very professional and they appreciated what the officers have to do to be ready to face any situation.

St. John's Elementary School Principal Nathan Stant was on hand to watch the training from the school's new video monitoring system. The school has installed more than a dozen cameras with the live feed going to computers in the offices. Others can also access the system through smart phones.

"This system is a great communication tool in the case of an emergency," Stant said. "We see everything that is going in real time and can help if a situation every arises."