

Fire station gets quake upgrade

Project's aim: Dallas facility could hold up to 9.0 shaking

By **Jolene Guzman**
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DALLAS — A five-month-long seismic rehabilitation at the Dallas Fire Station is well under way. And you can tell.

Walking is through the front office doors, people are greeted with a message that is cluttered with an odd assortment of items, refrigerators stacked with food, desks and chairs that clearly don't belong and even a couple of rollers pulled out of the restrooms while work is being done.

Almost all the ceiling tiles have been removed above the first floor, and the second floor has been stripped to the floor boards.

The chaos is manageable though, said Chief Bill Hahn, especially when considering that the building built in 1972 will be fit for duty for years to come.

The improvements will give the aging building the strength to withstand a major disaster.

"Theoretically, the idea is that in a magnitude 8.5 earthquake, this building will be standing and functional," Hahn said.

The work is being paid for with an \$800,000 grant through the state's Office of



Dallas Fire Chief Bill Hahn (top, left) watches as workers pump cement into a form around what will be a new elevator shaft and support tower for the fire station.

Emergency Management's seismic rehabilitation program. The program provides money to municipalities to upgrade hospitals, schools and fire stations to the level that they could still function in the event of a major earthquake or other natural disaster.

Dale Stuart, the superintendent for Baldwin General Contracting, the contractor on the job, said

the building will be braced with steel bars and straps, two concrete reinforced towers and a huge anchor embedded in the ground.

Last week Baldwin crews were excavating an en-

ormous hole for the anchor below what will eventually be a concrete elevator tower.

A system of steel bars and straps will run throughout the station and connect to the anchor.

"That will be holding this building together," Stuart said. "The load during an earthquake will get transferred from the roof to the ground."

A second tower, the station's old hose-drying tower will be reinforced to add more support to the structure.

While the station is being shored up, Baldwin's

crews will complete other upgrading projects, such as selective abatement, access upgrades, installation of an elevator, and new shower and bathroom facilities for men and women.

The roof, windows and many of the floor and ceiling tiles will be replaced, as well.

The station remains open during construction. However, the department's administrative offices have been moved to the small house next to the station.

Construction is scheduled to be finished in December.