

RV upgraded for fire investigations

PHOENIX — In the past, Phoenix fire investigators would spend hours at the scene of a suspicious blaze, shifting between the remains of a charred building and the cab of a pickup truck

The Fire Department's 16 investigators now have a fully loaded, 35-foot recreational vehicle from which to file search warrants, document evidence and conduct other business.

Fire officials last week unveiled the donated RV, worth \$120,000, announcing that it could hit the streets this month.

The vehicle and equipment were donated through the coordination of the **100 Club** of Arizona, a local non-profit group that raises money to support law-enforcement officers and their families.

Fire Chief Bob Khan said the vehicle will make investigators' jobs easier.

The interior includes a flat-screen TV, refrigerator and other amenities to keep investigators or witnesses comfortable. A computer, fax machine, phone and video camera are inside, also.

Suspicious fires are "sometimes sinister, sometimes accidental," Khan added, and there is only a limited amount of time to gather evidence. In the past, fire investigators would rely on police or federal agencies like the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to expedite investigations.

The Phoenix fire investigations unit has responded to 508 fires this year, 137 of which were classified as arson.

