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Winters Volunteer Fire Department receives grant to help transform military vehicle

WINTERS, Texas — Winters Volunteer Fire Department received a \$20,000 grant to assist in the conversion of a 1996 Stewart Stevenson 2.5-ton cargo truck with only 7,259 miles on the odometer. The accompanying slip-on unit was awarded through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program and the excess military truck was through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program (DoD FFP), both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

“The department members did all the work to make the conversion possible,” said Fire Chief Mark Bridgeman. “They put in a lot of man-hours to paint the truck and make the conversion by adding our first ever slip-on unit with foam which will be a great asset. The 550-gallon water tank and a 10-gallon foam tank will help in rural areas where water isn’t always available.”

The stipulations for receiving an excess military vehicle are that it is painted a nonmilitary color and made service ready.

“We have 600-square-miles in our rural response area, so having more water on arriving at a fire gives us the upper hand for a quicker knock-down or containment,” said Bridgeman. “Adding the foam to the water will be even a greater benefit because it increases the water capacity and smothers the fuel, helping to reduce the possibility of rekindling.”

Bridgeman expressed his appreciation to the department members for their hard work in the transformation of the truck and to Nick Dawson, Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator for his dedication in getting grant program information to the VFDs in his Region.

Texas A&M Forest Service is committed to protecting lives and property through various fire department assistance programs. The Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program launched in Texas in 2005, is one such program and has released over 600 retired military trucks to volunteer fire departments across the state. The agency transports the vehicle from a military installation, performs necessary repairs and delivers it to the volunteer fire department at no cost to them. The Texas A&M Forest Service excess military equipment program is sponsored by the USDA Forest Service which also oversees the national program.

For more information on programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, please visit <http://texasfd.com>.

