

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 31, 2019**

### **Hereford Volunteer Fire Department's new equipment helps safeguard firefighters' health and safety**

HEREFORD, Texas — Hereford Volunteer Fire Department received a \$14,000 equipment cost share grant through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program administered by Texas A&M Forest Service. The grant was used to help purchase a washer/extractor and dryer that will properly clean their personal protective equipment (PPE). The effectiveness of fire gear can be reduced without the correct upkeep. Dirty gear can conduct heat and electricity, lacks liquid shedding properties, can become flammable or will expose firefighters to carcinogens. The proper care and maintenance is extremely important for a firefighter's health and safety.

“We are pleased to have received a cost share grant to assist in purchasing these machines,” said Fire Chief Robert Murray. “The challenge we had was finding something that could clean our gear without damaging it. This set is replacing a residential washer and dryer that was harmful because it would twist and tumble the PPE during the process.”

According to Murray, the new machine can be programmed to the type of matter that is deposited on the gear during a fire or after a vehicle accident where rescue operations exposed the gear to chemicals, blood or body fluids.

“The old system only cleaned one set of gear at a time and took a long time to dry,” said Murray. “This new system will wash up to four sets at a time and allows you to choose which type of cleaning process is needed, then automatically dispenses the proper amount of cleaning/sanitizer. It is quick and more efficient, helping to extend the life of the expensive gear.”

Hereford Volunteer Fire Department is grateful for the grant that made this purchase possible and for the support of the community. Their cost share portion was achieved thanks to community participation in their yearly golf tournament fundraiser. Their next tournament will be August 24, 2019.

The department was established in 1908 and has open enrollment for new volunteers. To pick up an application, come by the fire station at 215 North Miles in Hereford any first or second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.

Texas A&M Forest Service is committed to protecting lives and property through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program, a cost share program funded by Texas State Legislature and administered by Texas A&M Forest Service. This program provides funding to rural Volunteer Fire Departments for the acquisition of firefighting vehicles, fire and rescue equipment, protective clothing, dry-hydrants, computer systems and firefighter training.

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

