

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Franklin County to benefit from Purley Volunteer Fire Department's new fleet addition

MT. VERNON, Texas – Purley Volunteer Fire Department received a \$220,000 cost share grant through the Texas A&M Forest Service Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program to help purchase a 2021 Kenworth pumper/tender with a 2,000-gallon water tank and a 2,000-gallon portable drop tank.

“This pumper will be taking the place of an older apparatus in our fleet with its primary mission being to supply water to grass and structure fires,” said Purley VFD President Wesley Sargent. “The truck has a tool rack and an internal ladder rack giving easy access to different types of tools and ladders.”

The truck's capabilities have already been tested when it was used in response to several emergency calls that included a structure fire and as water support.

"Purley VFD is a small department located in Northeast Texas and has a solid group of volunteers," said Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Cody Mayo. "With this new apparatus they will be able to support their community with a large water capacity when responding to wildfires, structure fires and vehicle fires."

Franklin County has four fire departments that serve in emergency response.

“This pumper/tender will be used mainly in Franklin County, helping to increase firefighting capabilities, since there are not a lot of fire hydrants out in the county,” said Sargent. “Having the large quantity of water at the onset of a fire is extremely important in quickly controlling and knocking down a fire.”

The department met their cost share portion through outside support.

“We appreciate the grant opportunity through Texas A&M Forest Service and the monetary support from Franklin County Commissioners and the community, both helped us meet the cost share portion of the purchase,” said Sargent.

The department has open enrollment for volunteers and anyone wishing to apply may come by the department at 513 FM 900 any first or third Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Texas A&M Forest Service Acting Director Al Davis and other senior leadership participated in the big check presentation that commemorated the award of the grant.

“The men and women of Texas A&M Forest Service are proud to support the volunteer firefighters who keep the people and property of their communities safe,” said Davis. “Enhancing wildfire preparedness in rural areas where wildfires can impact human life is critically important to safe, timely and efficient emergency response; having the proper equipment is a key component of protecting life, property and the environment.”

Texas A&M Forest Service is an agency operating within the Texas A&M University System and as the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program administrator is committed to protecting lives, property and natural resources. The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program is funded by Texas State Legislature and provides cost share 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>.

