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Flat VFD increases capabilities with assistance from Texas A&M Forest Service

September 20, 2016 — FLAT, Texas — Flat Volunteer Fire Department recently received aid from two programs administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

The department received an excess military vehicle, a 1997 Steward and Stevenson M1078 two-and-a-half-ton truck, from the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program.

Flat volunteers had 180 days to convert the military truck into a service-ready firefighting apparatus.

“We really didn’t have to do a lot to this truck to make it service ready,” said Flat VFD Fire Chief Chuck Porter. “We painted it and took the side boards off so it was like a flatbed. Then we boxed in the bottom so we could store a hard suction hose and will be able to draft water from a creek, pond or lake. Finally we added lights, a red line, two whip lines, and a forestry hose.”

In addition to the military truck, the department also received a \$20,000 grant to fund a slip-on unit for the back of the truck.

A slip-on unit is designed to enhance a fire department’s fire-fighting capabilities. The apparatus is built for the rigors of the fire service and is easily mounted in the back of a pickup truck or a custom-built bed and is especially effective in handling wildland fires, car fires and others.

The slip-on unit for this truck contains a 750-gallon water tank.

“Our service area has a lot of rough terrain and cedar trees which creates the right conditions for brush and grass fires. We will be using this truck as a small brush truck. It is lighter and will be able to take the rough conditions of our area,” explained Porter.

The truck will also be used in high water rescues.

“The Leon River runs through here and it has gotten out of its banks several times in the last two years. It caused enough flooding that we had to rescue some of the residents in those areas,” Porter said.

Chief Porter said the department recently had a training session on how to safely operate the truck and that it is now in service.

Texas A&M Forest Service is committed to protecting lives and property through various fire department assistance programs. For more information on programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, please visit <http://texasfd.com>.

