

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Whitney Fire Department receives a grant to help transform military truck

**June 12, 2017 — WHITNEY, Texas** — Whitney Fire Department received an \$18,700 cost share grant to purchase a slip-on unit that was installed on a 5-ton excess military cargo vehicle, transforming it into a firefighting machine. The grant was through the Texas A&M Forest Service Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program.

A slip-on unit is a complete self-contained firefighting system used in wildland firefighting as well as structure and automobile fires. The unit that the department purchased has a 1,000-gallon water tank and foam capability. The foam cools the fire and coats the fuel, preventing contact with oxygen. The firefighter spreads a blanket of foam on the area involved, smothering the fire and decreasing the possibility of it reigniting.

The vehicle has 6-wheel-drive and is automatic which makes it easier to drive. It was painted a nonmilitary color and to complete the conversion, two whip lines, lights, a siren and radio were added. The steel soldier was obtained through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program.

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 500 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.

“This truck will be used as a multipurpose large brush truck,” said Whitney FD Fire Chief Wayland Price. “It will meet the demands as a brush truck but can also be used for high water rescues and because of its ability to carry 1,000-gallons of water, will serve as a tanker to haul water to fires in the rural areas.”

Whitney FD has been providing fire service to their community since 1880. The department’s 14 volunteers help extend fire service to a 68-square-mile protection area that has a population of 6,500.

“Forty percent of our response calls are for grass or wildland fires and since we are a rural, lakeside community with diverse terrain including farmland, hills, creeks and rocky gullies, this truck will help the department meet the challenge of getting into areas that are too difficult for our smaller trucks,” said Price.

The department appreciates having the opportunity to acquire equipment and training through the various grant programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service. According to Price, the grants give the volunteer fire departments a resource for updating their equipment and increase their capacity to protect their communities.

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

