

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harleton VFD increases fleet capacity with addition of a large brush truck

HARLETON, Texas — The Harleton Volunteer Fire Department received a \$218,000 cost share grant through the Texas A&M Forest Service Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program. The award was used to purchase a 2018 International 7400 brush truck.

The department is very happy to have a vehicle with 4-wheel-drive to better serve their farming and ranching community where roads can be inaccessible at times. The new vehicle has a 1,000-gallon water tank, Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS), drop tank, front bumper turret, wench on front and back and a LED light package.

“The primary mission for this truck will be for grass and woodland fires,” said Harleton VFD Fire Chief Mike Harper. “The CAFS unit is especially beneficial because the foam will increase the 1,000-gallon water suppression capabilities to 3,000-gallons of water.”

A CAFS system is used in firefighting to deliver fire retardant foam for the purpose of extinguishing a fire or protecting unburned areas. The foam system can aid in quickly extinguishing a fire which helps limit the damage that fires can inflict and helps to increase the effectiveness of the water.

According to Fire Chief Harper, the truck was built not only for firefighting but for high water rescue. In the past the department faced both devastating wildland fires and flooding from the Little Cypress River.

“Emergency responders have to be versatile in their area and the historic 2011 wildfire siege showed a need for Harleton VFD to have a multipurpose platform to tackle the worst, so they have continued to enhance their capabilities with this large brush truck,” said Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator, Josh Bardwell. “The overall design will allow the Harleton firefighters to tackle a variety of emergencies effectively and safely.”

The truck has been put into service and used to respond to two grass fires.

The dedicated volunteers from Harleton VFD offer fire service to a community of 2,500 and have been covering the 112-square-mile rural area since 1954.

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>.

