

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cookville VFD adds military truck to fleet

COOKVILLE, Texas — The Cookville Volunteer Fire Department converted a 2.5-ton military cargo truck into a firefighting apparatus. The department also accepted a \$20,000 Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program grant to purchase a slip-on unit for the conversion. The truck is an excess military vehicle from the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program (DOD FFP). Both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

Recipients of the DOD FFP program are required to convert the vehicle into a service-ready unit within 180 days of acquisition.

“A lot of thought went into the alterations for this truck. It was meticulously designed to meet the needs of the department,” said Cookville VFD Fire Chief Wesley McCollum. “This is a huge truck. We wanted it to be the safest, most well-designed brush truck possible.”

A brush truck is an initial-attack unit used to help meet the demands of the fire service. It is a pickup truck or chassis that has a slip-on unit mounted to the bed or platform and is used as a quick assault on grass and brush fires.

“The slip-on unit has a 700-gallon water tank and gives us the ability to fight a fire longer,” said McCollum. “The brush truck can respond as a one-truck unit, ‘putting the wet stuff on the hot stuff,’ with greater knock-down power.”

The size of the truck contributes to its versatility. It can be used not only for wildland and structure fires but can perform high water rescues as well.

Cookville VFD currently has 16 volunteers and the department has been serving their community and surrounding area since 1990.

Chief McCollum would encourage citizens in all communities to consider volunteering at their local fire departments.

“Not everyone who volunteers at our department is a firefighter,” said McCollum. “There are other jobs that need to be done around the fire station or helping with fund raisers and keeping the grounds. All volunteers are appreciated.”

Anyone wanting to volunteer and commit to giving back to the Cookville community may check out the fire department’s Facebook page and post a message requesting an application. <https://www.facebook.com/Cookville-VFD-188468494507445/>

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 600 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.

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



