

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Randall County VFD receives new water tender through a \$200,000 grant

September 14, 2016 — AMARILLO, Texas — Texas A&M Forest Service recently awarded a \$200,000 grant to Randall County Volunteer Fire Department for a new water tender through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program.

A tender, also known as a tanker in some regions, is a specialized firefighting apparatus designed to transport water from the water source to the fire.

This tender is a 2016 4400 International chassis and is equipped with an 11,000-gallon water tank, two 20-gallon Class B foam tanks and a 250-gallon-per-minute pump. The Class B foam tanks are an especially important addition since the Randall County VFD service area includes multiple small airports and oil wells, according to Fire Chief James Amerson.

Additionally, the tender is outfitted with a double cab to carry more firefighters safely, a wireless headset for better communication between the firefighters, and a dump valve that can dump 1,000-gallons of water into a portable water tank in minutes giving the department the needed water for firefighting.

Chief Amerson said once the tender is in service, it will be the first-out vehicle for all response calls. It is not in service yet as the department is currently mounting more equipment to the vehicle, but at least one member of Randall County VFD is looking forward to taking that first ride once it is ready.

Ace, arguably the department's most beloved member, is Randall County VFD's station dog. Rescued by Lieutenant Koch three years ago, Ace comes to work every day and when the alarm sounds, he jumps into the truck and takes his place in the center seat.

"Sometimes our calls aren't always pleasant, but Ace is always there to bring a spark of comfort and cheer back into the station," Amerson said.

The department had a growth in call volume from 572 in 2009 to over 1313 in 2016. With this increase came a greater need for equipment that will meet the demand.

"Texas A&M Forest Service has been extremely helpful in the development of our department," said Amerson. "The grant programs have been a great benefit, allowing us to have up-to-date equipment, trucks and training. They have allowed us to increase our capacity to serve and protect our community and all of Randall County."

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 the Texas State Legislature and administered by Texas A&M Forest Service. This program provides funding to rural VFDs 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>.



Firefighter Derek Murray, Captain Jacob Mitchell, Deputy Chief Dennis Gwyn, Chief James Amerson, Lieutenant Joe Koch, Station Dog – "Ace" and TFS, RFC Troy Ducheneaux