

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2016

Local VFDs increase capacity to serve communities

June 21, 2016 — HILLSBORO, Texas — Hill County lives and property are now better protected due to recent equipment additions to area fire departments.

Lakeview Volunteer Fire Department and the Bynum Volunteer Fire Department both received five-ton military excess vehicles through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program, which is administered by Texas A&M Forest Service. Both departments also received grants for slip-on units.

The Itasca Volunteer Fire Department purchased a new slip-on unit through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program that is also through Texas A&M Forest Service.

A slip-on unit is a self-contained apparatus used as an initial-attack unit to fight wildland fires. The unit consists of a poly tank and pressure pump that are easily mounted on the back of a pick-up truck or custom built bed.

All three units are new additions to their respective departments.

In Whitney, Lakeview VFD Chief Bob Wilkins expects to use their converted military truck for high water rescues in addition to fighting fires.

“This vehicle allows us to have a multipurpose truck with 6-wheel drive that can get off the highway and go where our other vehicles cannot go,” Chief Wilkins said. “We will use it for search and rescue, grass fires, high water rescue and as a tender.”

Bynum VFD will use their military truck for traffic accident response in addition to firefighting and high water rescues.

“We mutual aid with other departments on Interstate 35,” Bynum VFD Chief Kyle Radke said. “Even though the construction is complete on I-35, there are still a lot of accidents, especially when it rains. The truck will also be very valuable to carry water to the rural areas where there are no fire hydrants.”

Itasca VFD Chief Curtis Cameron is anticipating an active wildfire season once the vegetation dries out.

“This year has been slow for grass fires but we anticipate a change since we received a lot of rain that has increased the vegetation growth,” Chief Cameron said. “Once the grass starts drying out it will just be increased fuel for grass fires. Having this slip-on unit gives us a more dependable piece of equipment to better protect our community and makes for safer firefighting for our volunteers.”

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



Lakeview VFD



Bynum BVD



City of Itasca VFD