

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Irion County (Mertzon Station) Volunteer Fire Department transforms an excess military vehicle into a lifesaving apparatus

MERTZON, Texas – Irion County (Mertzon Station) Volunteer Fire Department accepted an excess military Stewart Stevenson and a \$20,000 grant. The grant helped with the addition of a slip-on unit that transformed the truck into a firefighting machine, increasing the capacity of the department’s fleet. The truck was received through the Department of Defense Federal Property Program (DoD FFP) and the grant was awarded through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program, both administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

“The VFD members did a lot of the conversion themselves,” said Irion County (Mertzon Station) Fire Chief Bill Taylor. “We added an 800-gallon water tank and a 20-gallon Scotty Foam System that will be very beneficial in our area for oil field fires. The foam creates a barrier between the hydrocarbons and the oil and helps to suffocate the fire.”

The high clearance for the truck will be very useful for the terrain around Mertzon.

“Last year we had three high water rescues,” said Taylor. “We received seven inches of rain in two hours and with the ravines in our area, it created flooding. We had to rescue two individuals from the top of a pick-up truck so this converted military truck will help save lives and do well in those types of situations.”

One of the stipulations for receiving the truck is that it be painted a non-military color.

“We did some fund raising to help with the cost of having the truck painted and we appreciate the community’s support that helped make this important addition to our fleet possible,” said Taylor.

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 800 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 USDA Forest Service oversees the program nationwide and is the supplier of the excess military equipment to fire departments and emergency service providers.

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

