

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2019

### Kountze VFD adds offensive apparatus to their fleet

KOUNTZE, Texas — Kountze Volunteer Fire Department added a converted military truck to their emergency response fleet in preparation of wildland fire and flooding.

“This is the first off-road type apparatus that our department has ever had,” said Fire Chief Barry Mitchael. “Our area went through Hurricane Harvey but seems to be getting 2-3 floods a year now and high water rescues are becoming more common.”

Kountze VFD received a 1998 Stewart Stevenson 2.5-ton cargo truck that sits high off the ground and has 4-wheel-drive which will be beneficial for high water rescues. The department added a 300-gallon water tank with foam capability and a high pressure pump that will contribute to a quick knock-down of wildland or structure fires. The unit can also draft water from swimming pools or streams to replenish the water supply when fighting a fire in the more rural area.

“We converted the truck by painting it and adding a slip-on unit but the unit can be temporarily removed if flooding occurs again,” said Mitchael. “After removing the slip-on, we can use the truck to rescue up to 12 people.”

According to Mitchael, as a safety precaution the truck was equipped with a back-up camera and a camera in the bed of the truck, giving the driver full view of any individuals being transported during high water rescue.

The excess military truck was awarded through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program (DoD FFP) and the slip-on unit was granted through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

“We really appreciate receiving the truck and slip-on grant from Texas A&M Forest Service and for the support of the Hardin County ESD #1 and our local community,” said Mitchael. “It gives us the opportunity to take the fight to the fire and the potential to save lives in the event of flooding.”

Texas A&M Forest Service is committed to protecting lives and property through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program funded by Texas State Legislature and administered by Texas A&M Forest Service. This program currently provides funding to rural Volunteer Fire Departments for the acquisition of slip-on units that are to be installed onto excess military vehicles helping in their conversion into a firefighting apparatus.

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

