

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Firefighting capacity increases at Rockdale Volunteer Fire Department

ROCKDALE, Texas – Rockdale Volunteer Fire Department converted an excess military tactical vehicle into a firefighting machine. The large quantity of water that it will carry will help the department gain quick control of a fire.

The military vehicle was awarded through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program. The department also accepted a \$20,000 grant from the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program to purchase a slip-on unit for the truck. Both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

One of the stipulations when receiving an excess military truck is that it be painted a nonmilitary color and be service ready in 180 days.

“Department members spent many hours converting the truck into a firefighting apparatus,” said Rockdale VFD Fire Chief Herbie Vaughan. “We are pleased to have it as part of our fleet because it will serve as a dual-purpose apparatus, not only will it be useful in wildland firefighting but in high water rescue as well.”

The truck has a 500-gallon water tank and is replacing an older apparatus that could only carry 200 gallons of water.

“Excess military trucks have a rugged reputation and this one will strengthen the Rockdale Volunteer Fire Department’s fleet,” said Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Matthew Schlafer. “Its significant water carrying capacity will impact the department’s fire suppression abilities.”

Rockdale VFD has been serving their area since 1872 and is grateful for community support.

“All of our trucks have been purchased using money raised at our once-a-year fund raising event,” said Vaughan. “We appreciate the community helping to make the event successful.”

The department has open enrollment for volunteers. Applications may be picked up at the Rockdale City Hall, 505 W. Cameron Ave., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Texas A&M Forest Service is an agency operating within the Texas A&M University System and 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>.

