

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 9, 2019

### Southside Henderson County Volunteer Fire Department/ESD 11 readies for fire season

ATHENS, Texas — Southside Henderson County Volunteer Fire Department/Emergency Service District 11 added a 2019 water tender thanks to a \$200,000 cost share grant through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

“This new water tender is replacing a smaller converted farm truck that we used to shuttle water,” said Fire Chief Dylan Mayo. “Our district only has five fire hydrants so having the capability of a larger water supply at the onset of attack on a fire gives us the ability to fight the fire longer with a quicker knock down.”

The new tender has a 3,000-gallon water tank, an equal size drop tank, deck gun and drafting capability.

“This truck helps to meet our challenge of lack of a water supply,” said Mayo. “Our other truck could get us started on fighting a fire but it just didn’t carry enough water to get the job done. We had to depend on mutual aid from our neighboring departments to shuttle more water and that could sometimes take 15 to 20 minutes. In the meantime the fire is regaining momentum. This tender allows for a quicker knock-down, potentially saving lives and property.”

According to Mayo the new tender/pumper will be a benefit not only to the community but will be used in mutual aid in their 100-square-mile protection area.

The tender is in service and has been to two house fires and an 18-wheeler fire.

“This VFD, like many, covers a large area that encompasses rural and urban environments requiring versatility,” said Josh Bardwell, Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator. “They have designed an apparatus that will serve their area well.”

Southside Henderson County VFD/ESD 11 has been serving their community since 2011 and has open enrollment for volunteers age 18 and older or junior volunteers ages 16 to 18. To apply, come to any department meeting the first or third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at the fire station located at 8781 Hwy. 59, Athens..

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 Texas State Legislature and administered by Texas A&M Forest Service. This program provides funding to rural Volunteer Fire Departments 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>.

