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Gholson Volunteer Fire Department maximizes firefighting capabilities

GHOLSON, Texas – Gholson Volunteer Fire Department increased the effectiveness of their fleet by accepting and converting an excess military cargo truck. The truck was released to them through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program and the conversion was completed thanks to a slip-on unit grant through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program, both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

The rugged body and low mileage are positive features of this firefighting machine.

“This Stewart Stevenson cargo truck is a great conversion that has a slip-on unit with a 750-gallon water tank and foam capability,” said Gholson VFD Fire Chief Mitch Vaughn. “It is a much-needed tool to help our department in wildland firefighting.”

Lack of readily available water makes this truck essential.

“The water capacity of the new slip-on unit on the Gholson VFD truck is something that not only the Gholson community will benefit from but the whole mutual aid response area will be impacted by its vital capabilities,” said Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Matthew Schlaefer.

As part of the stipulation for receiving the military truck it had to be painted a nonmilitary color and made service ready within a 180-day acquisition period. These changes are at the expense of the volunteer fire department.

The department’s two fund raisers a year help with equipment upkeep and expenses such as this new addition.

“We greatly appreciate our community’s support during our fund-raising efforts,” said Vaughn. “This backing makes it possible for the VFD to purchase and maintain firefighting tools that will increase fire suppression capabilities.”

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> .

