

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Itasca Volunteer Fire Department receives \$11,200 grant

March 15, 2017 — Itasca, Texas — Itasca Volunteer Fire Department recently replaced vital equipment with funding through Texas A&M Forest Service’s Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistant Program. The grant enabled the department to update essential breathing apparatus and other related equipment that allows firefighters to have breathable air in a dangerous or unhealthy atmosphere.

“We recently received equipment that will permit our firefighters to do search and rescue in a smoke filled building,” said Itasca Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Cameron Offutt. “The compressed air supply gives fresh air to firefighters who are often exposed to hazardous burning materials.”

According to Offutt, firefighting is a physically demanding job. The protective gear that they routinely wear weighs about 45 pounds plus the additional weight of the air bottles. The department was pleased to replace the older heavier bottles with lighter weight ones.

“The Itasca VFD members have received training on the new equipment and it is now in service,” said Matthew Schlaefer, Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator. “Having this type of updated equipment can contribute to firefighters saving lives.”

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 VFDs 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>.



Fire Chief Cameron Offutt and
Texas A&M Forest Service RFC Matthew Schlaefer