

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **An excess military truck is added to the Lakeview Volunteer Fire Department fleet**

LAKEVIEW, Texas – Excess military vehicles fill the role of firefighting apparatus for many Texas emergency service providers. Lakeview Volunteer Fire Department received one of these trucks and converted the excess Stewart Stevenson into a firefighting machine. The conversion included the addition of a slip-on unit.

“Lakeview VFD received an excess military truck through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program and a slip-on unit grant through Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program, both administered by Texas A&M Forest Service,” said Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Matthew Schlaefer. “Having extra water will be a big asset to the department when responding to wildland fires.”

One of the stipulations for receiving the truck is to paint it a nonmilitary color.

“Our department members painted the duce-and-a-half truck, and a third party installed the slip-on unit with a 500-gallon water tank and a 20-gallon foam tank,” said Lakeview VFD Fire Chief Bob Wilkins. “This truck will not be used in mutual response. It will be reserved to respond locally when our other trucks are out on other calls.”

The converted truck will carry a full complement of wildland tools but will also be a dual-purpose apparatus.

“We will not only use the truck for grass fires but also as a rescue vehicle when there is snow or high standing water,” said Wilkins.

The department completed special training on the operation of the military truck and the new slip-on unit.

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 was launched in Texas in 2005 as a program to help increase the capacity of Texas volunteer fire departments. In 2018 FEMA indicated that Texas is one of the top-rated states where 84 percent of the fire service is provided by volunteer fire departments. The Texas A&M Forest Service excess military equipment program is sponsored by the USDA Forest Service which also oversees the national program. The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program funded by Texas State Legislature currently provides 100 percent funding up to \$20,000 for the acquisition of slip-on units that are to be installed onto excess military vehicles helping in their conversion into firefighting apparatus.

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

