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Mertens VFD adds new brush truck to fleet

MERTENS, Texas — Mertens Volunteer Fire Department received a \$100,000 grant through the Texas A&M Forest Service Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program. The cost share grant was used to purchase a 2017 Ford F550 small brush truck complete with four-wheel-drive, a 300-gallon water tank, 10-gallon foam tank and bumper nozzles.

“This new addition to our fleet is a huge deal because as a small VFD our revenue is limited,” said Mertens VFD President of the Board of Directors, J.R. Surovik. “We greatly appreciate the grant to help purchase better equipment to protect our community. Our area is rural with a lot of agricultural related fires, either crops or farm equipment. This new truck will allow us to respond quickly and with fewer firefighters if the need should arise.”

Fire Chief Chad Degner oversees Mertens VFD located in the far north east corner of Hill County and encompasses a 41-square-mile service area. Most of the response calls are for wildland fires, agriculture fires and automobile accidents. The department is also called on for mutual aid with neighboring departments.

“There aren’t any paved streets in our area so this 4-wheel-drive truck will easily get out into the fields and rural areas,” said Surovik. “Many of our responders are in the agriculture business so when a crop catches fire we know how hard they worked to produce that crop and how important it is to help protect our neighbor’s livelihood with a quick response and knockdown.”

Mertens VFD was established in 1978 and provides fire service to a population of 1,700. The department’s mission is to save lives and property endangered by fires and other disasters, and to promote the teaching and practice of fire prevention and protection.

According to Surovik, the new brush truck will help the department to fulfill that mission.

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>.



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