

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Panhandle VFD supports community with retired military truck

**August 9, 2016 — PANHANDLE, Texas** — A five-ton Bowen-McLaughlin-York military cargo truck was transformed into an emergency response vehicle by Panhandle Volunteer Fire Department. They painted the unit, outfitted it with a large water tank, dump tank and standalone pump.

“We’re really proud of this truck,” Fire Chief Dustin Tow of the Panhandle VFD said. “The city provided the material to extend the bed to fit the tank, but our volunteers did all the work to convert this vehicle. Each of them have a minimum of 50-hours a piece on it, some have a lot more than that.”

The truck, which is replacing a 30-year-old two-wheel-drive truck, has improved the department’s capabilities by allowing the firefighters to access areas they couldn’t previously. They are also able to carry more water into the rough terrain, according to Tow.

“It’s become our first-out vehicle for wildland fires and secondary for structures,” Tow said. “But it will roll to almost everything. It’s a great all-around truck.”

The department decided to show support for the children in their community by painting the truck the school colors.

This is the third truck the department has painted to match the school district’s colors.

“After we painted the truck, we took it to the school to show the kids,” said Tow. “The younger children colored pictures of the truck and the older ones had a naming contest.”

The name that ultimately won out? “Bigfoot.”

“We take a lot of pride in this truck because we built it and it represents our community,” said Chief Tow.

Chief Tow is very appreciative of the programs that brought the truck and other equipment to their department.

“I want to thank Troy Ducheneaux and the rest of Texas A&M Forest Service for their fire department assistance programs,” Tow said. “Without these programs, a lot of equipment out here wouldn’t exist.”

The DoD Firefighter Property Program, overseen by the USDA Forest Service, provides excess military equipment to fire departments and emergency service providers. Launched in Texas in 2005, this program has released over 400 retired military trucks to VFDs across the state to help them better protect lives and property. Texas A&M Forest Service transports the vehicle from a military installation, performs necessary repairs and delivers it to the volunteer fire department at no cost to them.

To learn more about this and other fire department assistance programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, visit <http://texasfd.com>.

