

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 14, 2018**

**White Oak VFD prepares for future emergency incidents**

WHITE OAK, Texas — White Oak Volunteer Fire Department has added an excess military vehicle to their fleet to help with fire suppression and water rescue operations.

“We are very pleased to have this truck in our fleet and have offered to make it available in mutual aid to the Gregg County Sheriff’s Department,” said White Oak VFD Fire Chief Bill McBride. “Hurricane Harvey was one of the main reasons we applied for this truck. Though we haven’t had that magnitude of devastation it reminded us of flooding problems in our area with the Sabine River.”

White Oak Volunteer Fire Department converted an automatic, four-wheel drive 1997 military vehicle with only 7,000 miles on the odometer. They had the truck painted, added a step to the back and a top rack for fire hose, and will be installing a radio, overhead lights and siren. It was acquired through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program. The department also accepted a \$20,000 Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program grant for a slip-on unit with a 500-gallon water tank and foam capability. Both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

Fire Chief McBride recalls the 2011 wildfire season in East Texas.

“We didn’t have enough trucks during that fire season,” said McBride. “We lost a business and a couple of houses because we didn’t have the trucks and mutual aid departments were battling their own fires. The addition of this truck will give the department greater capacity to meet the challenge of a difficult fire season should the need arise.”

White Oak Volunteer Fire Department has been serving their city and surrounding area since 1963. The 29 volunteer firefighters are dedicated to protecting the 8,000 residents.

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>.

