

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grants increase capabilities at Willow City Volunteer Fire and Rescue

July 20, 2016 – WILLOW CITY, Texas – Willow City Volunteer Fire and Rescue has enhanced its fire service capabilities with the help of grants totaling \$218,000 administered through Texas A&M Forest Service's Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program.

The grants helped purchase a new tender truck and a slip-on unit for one of the department's existing trucks.

"This tender is a replacement for an old 1974 model," said Willow City VFR Chief Stanley Rabke. "The new tender is a 2016 Kenworth chassis and carries about 2,500 gallons of water."

Rabke said the tender can pump 1,250 gallons-per-minute and is also outfitted with a dump tank, rope rescue equipment, vehicle stabilization equipment and self-contained breathing apparatuses.

The slip-on unit, is a versatile, cost-effective tool that is replacing an older unit that did not meet the station's needs, Chief Rabke said. "The slip-on doubles the water and has a foam system which gives us more firefighting capability."

"We have used it for several wildland fires which were about 10-acre burns with two of them being along the highway," Chief Rabke said. "With all the new vegetation growth and warmer temperatures, I think we can expect more grass fires."

The old slip-on unit is being donated to Texas A&M Forest Service's Helping Hands program and being earmarked for Doss Volunteer Fire Department.

The Helping Hands Program allows the donation of used equipment while providing liability relief to the donor. The program routinely receives donations in the way of structural gear, fire hoses, nozzles, rescue tools, ladders, and other items that are essential to the operation of a fire department. Donating departments have the option to earmark their donations for fellow fire departments.

"In this case, two or three local departments will be benefiting from one Rural VFD grant," Regional Fire Coordinator Garry Barney said. "This is generally what happens when new equipment is received, the older equipment is donated to another departments that can benefit from its use."

Willow City VFR serves a population of approximately 1,440 people over 166 square miles in Gillespie County.

Texas A&M Forest Service is committed to protecting lives and property through its various fire department assistance programs. For more information about the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance program, Helping Hands, or other programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, please visit <http://texasfd.com>.



Pictured left to right holding the big check. - Tim Pearson, TFS Task Force Coordinator I,
Garry Barney, TFS, RFC, Willow City VF&R Fire Chief Stanley Rabke
Others pictured are Gillespie County Fire Chiefs and Drew Lindell, TFS RS