

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Apple Springs Volunteer Fire Department receives a \$200,000 grant

APPLE SPRINGS, Texas — To commemorate receiving a cost-share grant from Texas A&M Forest Service, the Apple Springs Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) recently planted a tree and held a formal check dedication ceremony.

The tree symbolizes the interagency partnerships needed to help protect forests and natural resources against wildland fires. The grant was used to purchase a new, large brush truck with an 800-gallon water capacity. It also has a 10-gallon foam tank, remote controls for the front bumper monitor, scene lighting and seating for five firefighters.

Fire Chief Brett Selman and department members carefully considered their options when equipping the new truck.

“We really didn’t have a large brush truck even though we cover 200-plus acres of the Davy Crocket Forest,” said Apple Springs VFD President Gary Mathison. “This truck is very versatile and will greatly increase our wildland firefighting capabilities. It has all the bells and whistles to make wildland firefighting safer for our volunteers and allow a faster knockdown of fires.”

The truck is in service and has been used on several calls.

“Lack of water can be a major issue in our area since we don’t have traditional fire hydrants,” said Mathison. “This truck’s capacity to carry a large volume of water, plus the addition of foam that helps smother the fire, really increases the water’s effectiveness.”

The grant covered a large portion of the cost but the department was responsible for the cost-share portion.

“Our community, county judge and commissioner’s court are all very supportive,” said Mathison. “They realize that the volunteer fire department is for the benefit of the community. We are people of the community serving the community. Anyone wanting to join can volunteer not only as a firefighter but there are other areas of need in the department such as administration, maintenance or cleaning the building. Come by the station and talk with us if interested.”

Apple Springs VFD has been offering fire service since 1972. The department has participated in several of the Texas A&M Forest Service assistance programs including the Helping Hands program that issues gently-used, no-cost personal protective equipment.

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://texasafd.com>.

