

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Noonday Volunteer Fire Department updates rescue equipment

NOONDAY, Texas – Noonday Volunteer Fire Department increased the department's rescue capacity by adding battery powered rescue tools to their cache.

“Noonday VFD added two sets of extrication tools to their engines with a grant from the Texas A&M Forest Service Rural VFD Assistance Program and another entity,” said Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Fire Coordinator Josh Bardwell. “The VFD has a high call volume of rescue requests due to its proximity to Tyler and major highways within their area. These new battery-operated cutters and spreaders will help them rescue motorists more efficiently.”

The cutters are used to cut through metal and the spreaders are used to enlarge the opening to extricate victims after a vehicle accident. The Noonday VFD cutters have 295,400 pounds of cutting force and the spreaders operate with a maximum spread force of 228,126 pounds.

“We appreciate the opportunity to purchase these time saving tools thanks to the Texas A&M Forest Service grant combined with a TC Energy grant and backing from Smith County ESD, the Noonday City Council and the community,” said Noonday VFD Fire Chief Mel Harper. “The tools replace older hydraulic gasoline powered tools that took a lot of time to set up at the scene of an accident. We can basically start using the tools immediately upon arrival, lessening precious rescue time.”

The department received training to become familiar with the new equipment.

“One of our local towing companies donated two cars for our department, so all the members were able to receive hands on training,” said Harper.

The tools have already proven to be very useful and effective.

“The department recently used the tools in response to a vehicle accident and they functioned very well, confirming the value of the updated tools,” said Harper.

The department was established in 1972 and has open enrollment for volunteers. To apply please email Fire Chief Harper at [mel.haper@smithcountyfire.org](mailto:mel.haper@smithcountyfire.org).

Texas A&M Forest Service is an agency operating within the Texas A&M University System and as the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program administrator is committed to protecting lives, property and natural resources. The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program is funded by Texas State Legislature and provides cost share 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>.

