

## Whitetail Ridge VFD receives two new trucks with aid from Texas A&M Forest Service

**WHITETAIL RIDGE, Texas** – Volunteer fire departments across the state of Texas often find themselves struggling to come up with the funds to purchase the essential equipment needed to serve and protect lives in their county.

Whitetail Ridge VFD recently received a grant in the amount of \$166,500 from Texas A&M Forest Service to purchase a new tanker.

“[The tanker] is going to increase productivity dramatically,” Whitetail Ridge Fire Chief Robert Hoffman said. “Before we only had two small brush trucks. When fighting house fires or grass fires we always had to wait for other departments to bring more water supply to us. With this truck we won’t have to rely on other departments.”

According to Hoffman, the VFD operates off of funding from taxes and donations.

“If it wasn’t for TFS we would never have been able to purchase this tanker,” Hoffman said. “We only get about \$6,000 a year from our taxes. There is no way we could even attempt to afford a truck like this.”

The Texas A&M Forest Service passes approximately \$12.8 million along to volunteer fire departments across the state every year, helping them purchase equipment to better protect lives and property.

“This is the first new truck this department has seen,” Regional Fire Coordinator Ricky Holbrook said. “They were in dire need. They are a small department so the cost-share program provided by TFS was the only way they would be able to afford a new truck.”

The department also received another truck through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program. Through this program, fire departments receive retired military trucks and are given 180 days to convert them into fire trucks.

“These two new trucks are by far the best this department has,” Holbrook said. “The other two trucks they had were both old and run down so this equipment will help them big time.”

