

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Roma Volunteer Fire Department increases fleet capacity

ROMA, Texas – Roma Volunteer Fire Department accepted an excess military truck from the Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program and a grant through the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program. The grant was used to help purchase a slip-on unit converting the vehicle into a tanker for firefighting. Both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

“One of the stipulations in accepting this military truck was that it be painted a nonmilitary color,” said Roma Fire Chief Alfredo Garza. “The department did all the sanding and painting on the truck and a local welder did the metal work, building a roll-over cage and front end protection that will allow us to get into the brushy areas without damaging the truck.”

The town of Roma is located near the Rio Grande and is prone to flooding. There were two weather events that had serious impact. In 2008 the area received 15 inches of rain in an hour, leaving some areas with very high flood waters and in 2010 when flood waters receded a thick deposit of sand remained.

“This all-wheel drive truck can easily get in and out of the sandy areas so it is perfect for brush fires, and is high enough to allow for high water rescue,” said Garza. “We put a lot of thought into the configuration of the 635-gallon water tank for the slip-on unit. It is positioned like an upside-down T that will safely accommodate 8 to 10 people during high water rescue.”

The Department of Defense Firefighter Property Program launched in Texas in 2005, is a program that has released over 700 retired military trucks to volunteer fire departments across the state. The agency transports the vehicle from a military installation, performs necessary repairs and delivers it to the volunteer fire department at no cost to them. The excess military equipment program is sponsored by the USDA Forest Service which also oversees the national program. The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program is funded by Texas State Legislature, both programs are administered by Texas A&M Forest Service.

For more information on programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, please visit <http://texasfd.com> .

