

MVFD invests in boosters to fight grass fires



Assistant Chief August Naumann poses with one of the new boosters purchased for the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Department.

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The next time the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Department responds to a grass fire, one of the new fire boosters will likely be dispatched.

A booster is a four wheel drive vehicle, primarily meant for off-roading.

The vehicles are mainly used to put out grass fires and forest fires.

The boosters are equipped with a 300 gallon tank of water and two reels, which allows for an additional person to fight the fire.

The life expectancy of the vehicles is about 10 years, MVFD Assistant Chief August Naumann said.

"These trucks are driven a little bit harder than your normal car on the road," he said.

Naumann said the purchase was important, to both replace an old booster and to ensure that each of the six stations were equipped for a quicker response time.

Naumann said on average they deal with one to two brush fires a day.

The calls are usually for small brush fires from people burning leaves or conducting controlled burns, he said.

With the low amounts of rain the area has been receiving, Naumann said it is the worst time for grass fires.

“Especially with the conditions we have now, grass fires can get out of hand very quickly,” he said.

By being able to respond faster to the fires and extinguishing them in a timely manner, it not only makes the situation safer for the public, but for the firefighters as well, Naumann said.

The two boosters cost roughly \$200,000, but by using a local business and buying their own chassis the department saved about \$60,000.

Funds for the boosters came from existing tax revenue.

After going to competitive bid, TurnKey, a truck body manufacturing company, was chosen to take on the job of constructing the two boosters.

The company’s services were used once before, to upgrade and refurbish an old 1998 model booster prior to the summer.

TurnKey Industries Chief financial officer Dane Ray said it took quite a bit of research to comply with the National Fire Protection Association, which is an international nonprofit organization.

The mission of the NFPA is to provide and advocate consensus codes and standards, among other things.

The construction process of the two new boosters took three months.

Naumann said everyone is thrilled by the arrival of the new boosters.

“Firefighters are always excited to get new pieces of equipment to try out,” he said.