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New cameras bring increased capabilities for Boonsville/Balsora VFD

May 2, 2016 — BRIDGEPORT, Texas — The Boonsville/Balsora Volunteer Fire Department recently received a \$15,000 grant for rescue equipment, including new thermal imaging cameras, through Texas A&M Forest Service's Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program.

A first for the department, the decision to apply for the cost-share grant was based in part on a recent firefighting experience with a mutual aid department.

“We recently were on a fire on the edge of our district. It was a grass fire that went right up to a mobile home and was touching the under pending,” explained Boonsville/Balsora Chief Andrew Wood. “The other department had a camera and it detected a hot spot in the mobile home. If we had left the scene not knowing there was a hot spot then the story may have ended differently. This was influential in our decision to apply for a grant to get a camera.”

The thermal cameras are valuable tools when attempting to locate hot spots, victims or downed fire fighters in heavy smoke. They can also be helpful when attempting to locate ejected victims of auto accidents.

The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program provides funding to rural VFDs for the acquisition of firefighting vehicles, fire and rescue equipment, protective clothing, dry-hydrants, computer systems and firefighter training. It is a cost-share program funded by the Texas State Legislature.

Often, the fire departments rely on funds from the community to assist with their cost-share.

Boonsville/Balsora VFD holds an annual bar-b-que fundraiser complete with a live band, auction and a raffle according to Chief Wood. This year the event is May 21st.”

The department also has open enrollment for those seeking to become volunteer fire fighters.

To learn more about this and other programs offered by Texas A&M Forest Service, visit <http://texasfd.com>.

