

LOCAL

# Wings Partners With First Responders For Training Exercise



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE SUN/TUSCULUM VFD

Tusculum Volunteer Fire Department and Greeneville Emergency & Rescue Squad members were among first responders from a number of agencies who participated in a landing zone training exercise with employees of Wings Air Rescue Monday at the Greeneville-Greene County Municipal Airport.

# St. James VFD Puts Upgraded Brush Truck Into Service

BY KEN LITTLE  
STAFF WRITER

The St. James Volunteer Fire Department has a new tool to douse brush fires before they spread out of control.

The fire department recently put into service a 2003 heavy-duty Ford 550 brush truck with equipment adaptations that include four spray "air actuator" nozzles under the front bumper that allow a single operator to drive through a burning area and spray pressurized water on the flames. The truck has a 350-gallon water tank.

The rear dual-wheel truck only has 9,000 miles on it and was obtained online from a fire department near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, St. James Fire Chief Wesley Holt said. A fire broker was able to negotiate the sellers down from an asking price of \$43,000 to \$32,000.

"They used it to mostly put out mulch and brush fires. It basically hadn't been used," Holt said. "This one came fully equipped. It is actually built for grass fires."

The money to pay for the truck was donated by the VFD's supporters through various fundraising activities.

The fire department will begin its annual mail-in fundraising campaign starting next week, Holt said. A fish supper fundraiser will also be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, April 21, at Nola-chucky Elementary School.

"We've been blessed by support from the community," Holt said.

The truck is a welcome addition this time of year, the peak of wildfire season in East Tennessee. Burn permits must be obtained from the state for any controlled burn through May 15, although the potential for brush fires exists throughout the year, Holt said. He estimated that St. James firefighters respond to 15 to



SUN PHOTO BY KEN LITTLE

The St. James Volunteer Fire Department recently put a 2003 Ford 550 heavy-duty brush truck into service. The low-mileage truck will be used to extinguish brush and grass fires. From left, St. James Board of Directors Chairman David Neas and St. James Fire Chief Wesley Holt.

20 brush fires annually.

The truck has an all-aluminum body and dual rear wheels. It takes the place of a 1979 Chevrolet brush truck the fire department has been using for many years. That truck is still operational and will be sold to help defray the cost of the "new" Ford 550 now in service, Holt said.

"We were blessed to have found it. It's in such great shape," Holt said.

The older Chevrolet has a straight shift, and some newer members of the fire department are not familiar with standard transmissions, Holt said. The Ford 550 V8 diesel brush truck has four-wheel drive and an automatic transmission.

The truck arrived in early February and had to have some equipment installed, along with lettering identifying it as a St. James vehicle.

The St. James VFD was formed in 1974. Charter member David Neas, chairman of the fire department board of directors, was also pleased to be able to obtain the brush truck.

"I like it. The first truck we had for years was a 1961

Dodge," Neas said, explaining that truck was used until the 1979 Chevrolet was purchased.

The department now has the brush truck, in addition to two pumper trucks and one tanker truck. The brush truck can go where the larger firefighting vehicles can't, including many of the remote areas within the St. James district, Holt said.

"It's good if you've got a fire off the roadway or something," he said.

Holt, also a Greene County Sheriff's Department captain, has been able to obtain a variety of equipment for the St. James Volunteer Fire Department through federal grants. The sheriff's department has also been successful obtaining surplus military equipment through grants.

Using grant applications for the fire department, Holt said he was able to obtain air tanks, turnout gear and a compressor to fill air bottles. A new washing machine and dryer obtained through grants to clean firefighter gear and obtained through grants are expected to arrive soon.

## IT HAPPENED HERE

**Kristey M. Belt**, 44, of 1325 Whitehouse Road, was taken into custody Wednesday on an active warrant for prescription drug fraud. Belt was also charged with driving on a suspended license, Greene County Sheriff's Deputy Aaron Spears said in a report. Belt was not home when deputies went to the address to serve the warrant, but a short time later, she pulled into the driveway and was taken into custody, the report said. The warrant states that on Jan. 21,

Belt filled a prescription for Alprazolam in the name of a recently deceased person. A records check showed Belt's driver's license was also suspended for failure to maintain insurance. Bond was set at \$11,000 pending a first scheduled appearance Friday in court.

A battery charger and other items were stolen Wednesday from a barn in the 600 block of Dashaway Drive, Deputy Andrew Long said in a report. Also taken were

a socket set and a wrench set. The property owner told sheriff's deputies he found possessions missing when he went into the barn. Combined value of the items was about \$325.

**Seth Weese**



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**LOVE Your Life!**  
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It is a wonderful thing, to share love and kindness to others. But what about yourself? Do you extend the same loving kindness and grace you offer to everyone else? Self love is of utmost importance. If you hate yourself, how can you truly love another? It's kind of like, when you're on an airplane and the flight attendant says to place the oxygen mask over your own face before helping others. We cannot give to others what we don't have in ourselves.

1. Set boundaries-Let others know what you will and will not tolerate. You are a valued person and deserve to be treated as such. Being assertive and standing up for yourself will build your self-esteem because it will reinforce the fact, in yourself and others, that you deserve to be loved and respected.
2. Embrace the true you-Figure out what brings you joy. Start to become aware of your feelings during different activities. Do you feel happiness when you go fishing? Then do it! Do you feel drained when you are around certain people? Choose to find friends who uplift you instead! Embrace your uniqueness, your quirks, even your shortcomings, because we all have them.
3. Pay no mind to people's judgements-No matter what you do, there will always be a person saying it is wrong. I used to care so much about what people thought, I allowed it to hold me back. One day, I said to myself, "Enough is enough! From now on, I am doing what I want!" Not caring about what other people think is like breaking free from a prison.
4. Forgive yourself-Try not to dwell on past "failures" or "mistakes." We all have them, and if we view things in the right way, we can learn and grow from them. Going around with a dark cloud of guilt over your head is no way to live life! Everyday we are born again, what we do today, matters most.
5. Talk to yourself with love-We all have an internal voice. You know, the one that says your body is not perfect, and you're not smart enough or good enough. Work on noticing your internal dialogue and changing

- it to be more positive. Look in the mirror and find one thing you are proud of. Take time to reflect on things you have done that made you feel good about yourself. Maybe you offered an elderly person your seat on the bus when no one else did. Maybe you spoke up when the cashier accidentally gave you an extra dollar back in change. There is absolutely nothing wrong with telling yourself "I am a good person, and I am proud of that!"
6. Avoid comparing yourself to others-This can be hard to do, especially when everywhere you look, there are magazines, ads, and tv shows full of "beautiful" people, telling you that you aren't good enough the way you are. You go onto social media and compare other people's highlights to your behind the scenes life. Try to keep in mind that nobody's life is perfect. We are all dealing with things behind closed doors. Nobody is better than you and you are no better than them. "Comparison is the thief of joy"-Theodore Roosevelt
7. Make yourself a priority-A lot of times, especially those of us who are parents, feel guilty for spending time and/or money on ourselves. However, if this exercise class or the extra 10 minutes in front of the mirror make you happy, why second guess it? Remember, you are worth it! The better you feel, the better parent/person you will be!

"When you become your own best friend, life is easier!" Diane Von Furstenberg

Love, *Randalle*

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