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## **TWO FIRE TRUCKS DONATED TO LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

**Harrisburg, IL, February 25, 2008** –The Shawnee National Forest, with assistance from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), acquired two surplus federal wildland fire trucks. These trucks were subsequently donated to the Pope County Fire Protection District and the Cypress Fire Department on February 19, 2008 during an afternoon ceremony held at the Forest Supervisor’s Office in Harrisburg, Illinois.

Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas opened the ceremony by welcoming everyone and recognizing those present for the ceremony that included Holly Healy and Deb Detmers representing Congressman Shimkus office; Gary Stratton from Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Cypress Fire Chief J. O. Fadely, Assistant Chief Jake Perkins and Safety Officer Rick Acuff; and Pope County Fire Chief Vincent Baker, Chairman of the Fire District Board Leonard Jackson and Fireman Eric Wood.

Holly Healy and Gary Stratton both spoke briefly to the group of dignitaries, media and Forest employees who were present. Shawnee National Forest Fire Management Officer Chris Peterson thanked everyone who helped make the donations possible. The grand finale of the ceremony was when Peterson handed the fire truck keys to fire chiefs of Pope County Fire Protection District and the Cypress Fire Department. The Fire Chiefs acknowledged receipt of the keys to

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the fire trucks with broad smiles and words of gratitude. Each department has great plans for their donated piece of equipment.

The two trucks are different styles and will benefit the needs each of the departments. The truck donated to Pope County is a 1986 International 1900 4x2, capable of carrying 500 gallons of water, foam capability and five personnel. The truck donated to Cypress is a 1995 Ford F-350 4x4 with 125 gallon slip-on unit and will be used to fight wildland fires in the Cypress Fire Department's response area. Both trucks previously served the Angeles National Forest in southern California protecting the wildland urban interface.

The Forest Service was able to acquire the truck for Pope County, since the devastating fire in July 2007 destroyed their Dixon Springs fire station and most of their equipment. The truck donated to Cypress will augment their fire suppression capability.

Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas said "The partnership between forest fire personnel and IDNR was instrumental in acquiring these trucks for local communities in the face of nation-wide competition. It was a definite case of being in the right place at the right time with counties whose needs matched the available resources. I am very pleased that the Shawnee was able to assist local departments and hope the trucks will benefit the counties' residents. The efforts expended to acquire these vehicles by Chris Peterson, Forest Fire Management Officer, Shawnee National Forest and Tom Wilson, IDNR State Fire Supervisor are to be commended".

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