

Improving the Efficiency and Delivery of Fire Protection Services

The focus of any fire department is to reduce deaths and injury due to fire related hazards. Having protective clothing as well as updated trucks and equipment is vital, which improves the efficiency and delivery of fire protection services.

The Lake Andes-Ravinia Fire Protection District in Charles Mix County recognized the need to replace its 1990 Ford F350 Rescue Chassis along with their 1988 Brush Fire truck. The trucks were unreliable, and maintenance was constant. In addition, some of the fire department's gear was outdated and falling apart.

Through three USDA Rural Development Community Facilities loan and grant packages totaling \$138,400, the District is in the process of purchasing a 1.5-ton grass rig with a 300-gallon tank, as well as a new chassis to replace the old rescue truck. In addition to these two trucks, the District has purchased three new sets of fire gear including boots, pants, vests, helmets, hoods, and an electric fan.

These investments will help the District fulfill their mission to prevent loss of life and property for 2,438 individuals in the District's service area, which is comprised of five townships and the three municipalities of Lakes Andes, Ravinia and Pickstown. In addition to responding to calls for fire suppression, the fire district responds to medical emergencies, incidents involving hazardous materials, rescue calls, and motor vehicle or other accidents. Annually, the fire district presents fire prevention/safety tips to the elementary students at Andes Central School District as well as other local organizations.

Emergency management efficiency is important, and these upgrades will allow the volunteer fire department to have all of their equipment such as the Jaws of Life, saws, air chisels, air bags, rescue gear, emergency generator for on-scene lighting and power sources, and jacks stored in the rescue vehicle.

"We purchased both of the new trucks through the South Dakota state bid. The grass rig we have in service and the rescue truck is on order but got delayed due to COVID-19," said Rod Bergin, Lake Andes-Ravinia Fire Protection District Board Member and Lake Andes Fire Chief. "I would like to recognize the local businesses in Charles Mix County who did all of the customization and configuration of the grass rig. Meyerink's Farm Service (MFS) and B & L Communications did a great job getting the rig ready for service. MFS did work such as built and installed the flatbed and firefighting unit. B&L Communications did all the electrical configuration for lights and radios. I would also like to thank USDA Rural Development Specialist Austin Claeys and his office for helping with the application process."



Photo shows one of the new trucks the Lake Andes-Ravinia Fire Protection District purchased. Photo courtesy of the Lake Andes-Ravinia Fire Protection District.

Obligation Amounts: \$73,300 loan/\$65,100 grant, for a total of \$138,400 Community Facilities

Date of Obligations: 04/26/2019; 08/01/2019; and 02/14/2020

Congressional District: Representative Dusty Johnson, District; Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds

Partners: Lake Andes-Ravinia Fire Protection District and USDA Rural Development

Demographics: Service area is comprised of five townships and three municipalities of Lake Andes, Ravinia and Pickstown. Service population area is 2,438.

Impact: These upgrades will allow the volunteer fire department to have all of their equipment such as the Jaws of Life, saws, air chisels, air bags, rescue gear, emergency generator for on-scene lighting and power sources, and jacks stored in the rescue vehicle.

Story updated Month June 2020 • USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

