



Lufkin PD to unveil new armored rescue vehicle after city council meeting

Monday, June 18th 2018, 2:06 pm MST Monday, June 18th 2018, 2:06 pm MST

From the Lufkin Police Department

LUFKIN, TX (News Release) - The Lufkin Police Department will debut its newest piece of safety equipment, the BATT-X rescue vehicle, tomorrow during a 5 p.m. city council meeting.

The BATT-X or Ballistic Armored Tactical Transport, manufactured by The Armored Group LLC., is built on a Ford F-550 SuperDuty Commercial Chassis with a V8 Turbo Diesel Engine and is 4-wheel drive. It has an armored shell to protect from gunfire with bullet-resistant glass, providing ballistic protection for rescue teams, crisis negotiators and citizens in harm's way.

"The vehicle is defensive in nature in the sense that it does not have a weapon mounted on it, but provides ballistic protection to the occupants," Lufkin Police Chief David Thomas said. "The closest vehicle of its kind and capabilities is assigned to the Texas Rangers and is housed in Conroe with a response time of more than 2.5 hours."

The Department looked into obtaining a surplus vehicle from the military, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) program, but realized it had limited ballistic protection, inadequate off-road capabilities for an urban setting, would have to be serviced/repared by someone with prior knowledge of an MRAP and would be partially owned and regulated by the federal government.

The sense of urgency and community support for the rescue vehicle increased earlier this year when the Angelina County Sheriff's Office took heavy gunfire from a barricaded subject in April. That incident left several of their vehicles damaged.

The Department's calls of barricaded, armed individuals have also increased.

"Times have changed from the public asking 'Why does local law enforcement need an armored rescue vehicle?' to 'Why doesn't the Department have an armored rescue vehicle?'" Thomas said.

The Department was awarded \$100,000 through a charitable organization earlier this year to put toward the \$234,750 purchase. Lufkin City Manager Keith Wright and city council later approved \$67,375 toward the vehicle purchase and the Department used \$67,375 of funds awarded by the courts that were proceeds of criminal enterprises (seized money from drug dealers and organized crime) to pay the balance.

“It’s definitely a lot of money, but the safety that it would provide to officers and citizens can’t be measured in dollars and cents,” Thomas said. “The vehicle’s total cost is equivalent to a commercial garbage truck or a fully equipped ambulance, but could potentially be in use for decades.”

Citizens may frequently see the vehicle around town because the Department’s Special Response Team will train with it twice per month and it will be their primary transport vehicle. It will also be on scene at most city-sponsored, large-scale events.

As part of the grant requirement, upon request of a law enforcement agency that has encountered an armed, barricaded suspect or hostage situation, the vehicle would be deployed within the DETCOG region with one Lufkin Police SRT driver and one crew chief. The vehicle would never be “loaned out” or deployed without Lufkin Police SRT personnel on board to account for its use.

Specific policies and procedures will be implemented and officers will be trained on its use prior to full deployment of the vehicle later this month.



The Lufkin Police Department will debut its newest piece of safety equipment, the BATT-X rescue vehicle, tomorrow during a 5 p.m. city council meeting. (Source: Lufkin Police Department)



Lufkin City Manager Keith Wright inspects the Lufkin Police Department’s rescue vehicle shortly after its arrival Monday morning. (Source: Lufkin Police Department)



Special Response Team Commander Sgt. Travis Strickland (left) and member Quintin McClure pose with the BATT-X rescue vehicle. (Source: Lufkin Police Department)



This is what the BATT-X will look like after it has been outfitted with Lufkin Police decals this week. (Source: Lufkin Police Department)