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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VA BHHCS Fire Department Gets New Truck

Firefighters from VA Black Hills Health Care System's (BHHCS) Fort Meade VA Medical Center are now better equipped for the job.

On October 22, they took delivery of a 2012 Ferrara Ember 77-foot Heavy Duty 1500 gallons per minute Ladder Truck. The truck replaces a 1991 truck that no longer met National Fire Protection Association requirements. The new ladder is 12 feet higher, which will allow firefighters to easily reach the second story of the VA Medical Center.

"Locally we are the only ladder truck between Spearfish and Rapid City," VA BHHCS Fire Chief George Mandas said. "Having this device on station saves us receiving help from the outside community by 40 minutes, which is a lot when you consider a fire doubles in size every minute."

The new truck will provide support to more than just VA BHHCS.

"We will also be relied upon from our community to provide mutual aid to regular citizens and Veterans in the community, should a fire occur in their home," Mandas said.

The Fort Meade VA Medical Center Fire Department has responded to 32 community calls in the past year. Four of those community calls involved Veteran motor vehicle accidents. In the past year they've responded to 63 total alarms, for on and off-station.

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