



PRESS RELEASE

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FIRE DEPARTMENT PUTS NEW AMBULANCE INTO SERVICE

Department purchases demo unit to replace older ambulance in Muscatine fleet

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The Muscatine Fire Department (MFD) has a new ambulance that went into service Thursday (Feb. 10), but this one becomes part of the Muscatine fleet in a different way ... as a former demonstration (demo) unit.

“Our top priority is to maintain a quality fleet of ambulances for our operations,” Jerry Ewers, Muscatine Fire Chief, said. “The purchase of this demo unit will do that.”

There are few options for replacing an ambulance that has come to the end of its useful life and supply chain issues are making the wait time for new or refurbished ambulances longer and longer.

“The new addition to our fleet is a demo unit that we purchased instead of opting for the remount/refurbishment of the current ambulance,” Mike Hartman, assistant fire chief, said.





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MFD originally sought to remount the 2012 ambulance box onto a new chassis but vendors were hesitant to bid on the remounting due to delays in delivery of computer chips and other supply chain issues that would impact the vendors ability to deliver the unit in a timely manner.

The Fire Department was looking at 18 months to get a chassis for the remount, but the ambulance that was planned for the remount already had over 260,000 miles on it.

“We just could not keep the old ambulance in service any longer,” Hartman said.

The 2021 demo unit is a Type I ambulance which means that the ambulance box is on a truck chassis (Ford F-450) instead of the van chassis that the department historically uses (Type III ambulances - E-450).

“We have some challenges on where equipment is kept due to the ambulance being a demo unit, but we were able to get everything on the ambulance,” Hartman said. “It is just that some things are in slightly different locations.

The benefits of purchasing the demo unit include quick delivery (within one month of the order). The demo unit is not exactly like the ambulances currently in the fleet, but will serve the community well according to Ewers.

“Given the condition of the present ambulances and the extended timeline for any remounting delivery, this is what will serve the community the best,” Ewers said.

MFD received City Council approval on Jan 6, 2022, for the purchase of the demo unit from Feld Fire for \$209,313.15.

A 2021 Type III Ford E450 gas ambulance was ordered in December 2020 to replace a 2011 remount ambulance with nearly 300,000 miles but the unit has not been delivered yet.



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Hartman expects delivery in March but the delivery date keeps getting pushed back due to supply chain issues.

“So that rig will have a delivery time of around 15 months versus the demo unit at around three-to-four weeks,” Hartman said. “It took us an additional week to get the demo unit ready to go into service.”

Another benefit from this purchase is that the department will be able to see how the different chassis performs.

“The ride should be better and I have heard that the truck chassis lasts a little longer,” Hartman said. “It is also a four-wheel drive, so we didn’t have to have the chain system added to the rig.”

A 2022 Type III E450 gas ambulance was ordered in September 2021 to replace a 2014 Remount Ambulance with over 260,000 miles, and that delivery also continues to be pushed back. The department plans to replace a 2016 ambulance in FY 2023-2024. That ambulance currently has 183,000 miles on the chassis.

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