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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### VBT Fire Department's 'small' idea to yield large savings

Ford Expedition now responds to calls for Emergency Medical Service

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Van Buren Township, Michigan—



With a focus on enhancing services and efficiencies, the Van Buren Fire Department has recently implemented a “smaller” response to calls for emergency medical service (EMS).

In 2012, the Fire Department responded to 2,549 calls for service last year with 1,556 of them (61%) being requests for medical care. Traditionally, the big, red front line engines had been used to respond to all emergency calls. These engines, known as Engines 1 & 2, were purchased in 2004 at a cost of about \$400,000. They average approximately 3.5 miles per gallon, and repairs are quite costly, averaging \$400 for an oil change and \$800 to replace one tire. The department's front line fire engines both have over 100,000 miles on them, and generally repairing or servicing a fire engine is not a quick fix.

Fire Department personnel are committed to extending the life of these big red engines, as well as to combatting the rising costs associated with fuel, maintenance and repairs. To do so, the Fire Department is now responding to calls for emergency medical service using its 2008 Ford Expedition Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV). The Expedition averages over triple the miles per gallon of the big red engines; oil changes average \$40, and tire replacement is \$200, comparatively. Maintenance and repairs on this vehicle are nominal in comparison, as well.

In an effort to further reduce the wear and tear on the fire engines, the Fire Department expanded the first response area for the SUV to include areas north of Belleville Lake. The medical equipment carried in the Expedition meets and exceeds both local and state licensing requirements, guaranteeing medical care will be administered as it was when the fire engines were used for response.

No additional costs are associated with this new service delivery, as the Expedition was already in the fleet as the Fire Chief's vehicle. The Fire Chief will be assigned another vehicle being decommissioned from the Police Department.

Fire Chief Besson is pleased with the newly implemented process, and stated: "Using this smaller vehicle maintains the same high quality level of service our residents expect, while we conservatively preserve our front line engines for years to come. I am eager to assess the success of this program, and we will continue to look for innovative ways to enhance the effectiveness and efficiencies of the services we provide."

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