

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Members of the Imperial rural fire district board voted unanimously Tuesday night to purchase a new tanker for rural fire coverage.

Rural Board President Doug Wenzlick said they took the recommendation of the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) truck committee for the new unit that will feature a larger water tank and aluminum body.

The board accepted the bid from Heiman Fire Equipment of Lyons, S.D., for the fire apparatus and an International chassis. Cost of the tanker will be \$238,998.

Wenzlick said the new unit, which has a 295-day delivery schedule, will replace an aging 20-year-old tanker.

The new unit will meet all of the latest requirements of the National Fire Protection Agency, Wenzlick noted, but is "a pretty basic unit."

"It's about as basic as we can get," he said.

The two major features on the new unit will be a larger 1,800-gallon poly tank, up from the 1,250-gallon tank in the old unit

Its body will also be built out of aluminum versus steel.

Wenzlick said the 20-year-old tanker had become very unreliable in recent years and was breaking down a lot of the time. It will be sold, he said.

The rural board plans to meet with a bonding agent from Ameritas in January to set up a bond issue for the purchase. Wenzlick said the entire purchase will be bonded.

Wenzlick said it's important to the board to have good, reliable equipment for the IVFD.

"We have a very big district and we want to have good equipment," Wenzlick said.

Earlier this year, the rural board also voted to purchase a new pumper, which is expected to be delivered in February, 2009.

In addition to its two tankers in its fleet and the pumper, the rural district shared costs with the city of Imperial on purchase of the department's quick attack unit, rescue unit and command car. The latter three units are used at both rural and city calls.

In addition, the rural district owns the tanker and quick attack unit housed at Lamar. Lamar is expecting delivery of a new quick attack unit in about two weeks, according to Fire Chief Bryan Dannatt.

All five board members voted to purchase the new tanker. Others include Irvin Bauerle, Keith Wood, Pete Dillan and Steve Wallin.