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### **Walterboro ISO Fire Rating Improves to a Class Three**

**Walterboro, S.C.** – Insurance rates should be going down in the City of Walterboro soon due to the results of a recent Public Protection Classification (PPC) evaluation. The PPC is an evaluation of the fire services staffing, training, equipment as well as communications and water supply. According to the Insurance Services Office (ISO), “PPC is important to communities and fire departments as well. Communities whose rating improves may get lower insurance rates. PPC also provides fire departments with a valuable benchmark, and is used by many departments as a valuable tool when planning, budgeting, and justifying fire protection improvements.”

The evaluation, conducted in early February of this year, resulted in the City of Walterboro elevating its rating from a Class Five to a Class Three. This two-step improvement was accomplished during a period of geographic growth for the City. It came about after a concerted effort by the City to improve both the Public Safety Department fire suppression capabilities and the ability to provide appropriate water flow. Large water mains installed throughout the City, particularly in recently annexed areas, helped with the higher rating. All of this was accomplished over the past several years during tight economic times. The City’s property taxes and utility rates were kept low by leveraging millions of dollars in grant money, thereby limiting the burden to the tax payers.

“It has been an important goal of City Council to improve the City’s ISO fire rating, and we couldn’t be prouder of our dedicated employees for making that happen. This evaluation assures that our citizens are receiving competent and professional fire protection services, and getting more for their money too,” said Mayor Bill Young.

Public Safety Director Otis Rhodes commented, “Our Public Safety Officers work hard every day to provide the citizens of Walterboro with a professional fire service, and it’s great to see this effort and dedication recognized in such a relevant way. I would also like to thank the Colleton County Sheriff’s Office 911 Dispatching Center for their cooperation and assistance during the evaluation.”

In 2011, only six percent of the communities in the nation had a rating of Class Three or better.

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