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# **Strategic Plan for the Edisto Beach Fire Department Town of Edisto Beach**

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This document sets out a detailed strategic plan for the Edisto Beach Fire Department. It reviews the external environment (opportunities and challenges) and internal environment (assets and limitations); presents a series of statements relating to the Town of Edisto Beach's vision, mission, mandates, strategic issues, values and objectives; and sets out its proposed strategies and goals for organizational implementation and achievement.

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## **Executive Summary**

This is the Strategic Plan for the Edisto Beach Fire Department. It contains an executive summary of the Department. This document contains program mandates, strategic issues, and strategies to improve efficiency and effectiveness throughout the Department. This document is intended to be dynamic and accessible to all employees within the Department who are encouraged to review and revise the plan. Although revisions can be made at any time, it will be emphasized that the plan be reviewed and updated at least annually. Goal successes will be documented in the executive summary.

The structure of the strategic plan is based upon *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* by John M. Bryson (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2004).

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## ***WHERE ARE WE NOW?***

### **Departmental Historical Overview**

As staff leave, the Town's historical data and information are often lost. This section provides an overview of significant changes and/or events that have affected the Edisto Beach Fire Department (EBFD). If information was available regarding the reason the changes occurred, this information was also included.

Originally, fire services were provided on a voluntary basis. The EBFD, in its current form, operates as a paid/volunteer fire department. In the 1980's, volunteers were trained as Emergency Medical Technicians with Town funds and a local rescue squad was formed. An ambulance, titled to the Town, was transferred to the volunteers.

In 1985, paramedics were stationed on the beach 24 hours each day and in 1987 an EMS crew quarters was built. In 1984, volunteers began a local twenty-four hour dispatch service. In 1985, the first career firefighter was hired. In 1986, the Fire Station was constructed. The Insurance Service Office (ISO) fire rating classification was reduced from Class 8 to a Class 7.

A new fire truck was ordered in 1994 and delivered in May 1995. On February 1, 1996, the ISO fire rating was reduced to Class 5. In 1999, the Town purchased a new ladder truck. Both lease/purchase agreements were paid in FY2009-10 at a cost savings since the Town was paying more in interest than was making in interest on funds in the bank. Blue reflectors were installed on public streets to indicate where fire hydrants are located.

Currently there are 2 paid (career) firefighters which include the Fire Chief, 1 paid shift supervisor, 8 part-time paid and 19 active volunteers. As positions became vacant due to attrition positions were filled with part-time employees. The Department began using part-time firefighters that are fully certified and have advanced certifications in fire rescue and medical training. A significant savings is realized using-part-time personnel because they do not receive benefits and they receive much of the required training along with their bunker gear from their current department. A financial savings was not the only deciding factor in changing staffing, as most calls on Edisto Beach are medical in nature, medical training of staff is critical since the ambulance is located on the Island. Most part-time employees have advanced medical training. The same applies with experience with fighting fires. Since most

part-time employees work at larger fire departments they are provided more experience fighting fires. The unfilled position was not recommended as the Department was reorganized utilizing the Fire Chief as a working Fire Chief. (See organizational chart).

## Departmental Personnel

	Fund	FY2010-11	FY2011-12	FY2012-13
Fire Chief	10	1	1.0	1
Part-Time	10	0	0	8
Fire Captain	10	0	0	0
Fire Engineer	10	0	1	0
Firefighter	10	6	4	1
Volunteer Firefighter	10	14	15	19
Total	10	8	7	29

## Department Organization Chart



# ***WHY DO WE PROVIDE THE SERVICE?***

## **Organizational Mandates**

- Ordinance of September 8, 1994 established the Fire Department, duties, committees, and personnel structure.
  - South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 5, Municipal Corporations, Chapter 25, Building Codes and Fire Prevention.
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# ***WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?***

## **Vision**

The vision of Edisto Beach Fire Department in 3-4 years' time is:

The Edisto Beach Fire Department will continue to grow stronger in the future. This Department will continue to provide services that influence the safety and welfare of the citizens of Edisto Beach and Edisto Island through:

- Protection of property and lives
- Certification of firefighters to a specific level i.e. Firefighter II, Pump Ops II
- Set the groundwork to provide the community with emergency services by having all firefighters become Emergency Medical Technician certified
- Promotion of the positive aspects of this Department through community awareness and public education
- Become more compliant with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) regarding manpower
- Locate new fire facility

The Department will achieve its goals through public education and awareness. Fees and fines may be established to achieve long-term objectives. Staff will be cross-trained to provide opportunities for streamlining operations and increasing morale and career tracking.

## **Mission Statement**

The central purpose and role of Edisto Beach Fire Department is defined as:

The Edisto Beach Fire Department performs fire management services for the protection of life and property from fire and other natural and man-made events for the Town of Edisto Beach and surrounding areas.

## **Governing Principles**

The values and beliefs governing Edisto Beach Fire Department will include the following:

- Services will be effective and provided by competent staff that are accessible and strive to maintain a good public image
- Protect and preserve property with minimum damage
- Provide quality customer service
- Assistance to the community is not restricted to typical emergency responses. The Department provides assistance whenever possible within reason
- Assume a leading role in any community emergency
- Support community prosperity and growth in a safe environment
- Fair and objective in community decisions
- Respond, evaluate and perform with a positive attitude and clear decisiveness

## **Major Goals**

Edisto Beach Fire Department will achieve the following key targets: over the next 3-4 years:

- Establish productivity and performance measures for the Edisto Beach Fire Department
- Maintain the training program for both paid and volunteer personnel each month
- Update Standard Operating Guidelines and the emergency operations plan annually
- Improve station and equipment. Continue to develop a budget for the one percent fund and Volunteer fund and implement the plan each year
- Expand membership (recruitment and retention)/annually
- Accident prevention program/coordinate with safety committee quarterly

- Continue to monitor the needs of the citizens of the community
- Conduct a survey to assess the level of service provided

## Department Objectives

Short Term objectives of the Edisto Beach Fire Department are summarized as:

- Annually update the EOP and the SOG by the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the fiscal year
- Develop a training program and partner with Colleton County Web based training for paid and volunteers with emphasis in medical training and firefighter certifications by 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the fiscal year and schedule quarterly training/basic first aid and CPR classes
- Ensure NIMS compliance for all paid and volunteer department members
- Conduct a lessons learned debriefing after every fire with 7 days of incident or major community event.
- Apply for 1 grant for the FY2012-13
- Continue incident planning and addressing/monthly
- Develop an inter-departmental training program with St. Paul and Colleton County Fire Rescue to insure more efficient response
- Improve public perception that part-time employees are a part of the community

## Long Term Department Objectives

Long Term objectives of the Edisto Beach Fire Department are summarized as:

- Pursue mandating those services and programs that the public desires
- Continue recruitment and retention efforts
- Solidify training efforts and maintain all certification with high priority to emergency medical technician and basic firefighting skill sets.
- Coordinate with the Town's public works department to mark all fire hydrants with blue reflectors
- Assess sea rescue for the need for a watercraft to assist in water rescue and recovery following natural disasters such as hurricanes
- All firefighters to obtain emergency medical technicians' certification
- All firefighters to have successfully completed Pump Operations Certification

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## ***HOW DO WE GET THERE?***

### **Key Strategies**

The Edisto Beach Fire Department will pursue the following critical strategies:

1. Use the Internet (Town) web site, special events, television ads, physical fitness equipment, disability and dental insurance benefits and the purchase of training videos to promote the fire department's recruitment and retention efforts.
2. Develop quarterly medical training for those who wish to make a medical contribution to the department and or to the community by responding to medical calls and providing patient care.
3. Develop daily training for anyone wishing to develop and maintain skill sets. This would be a web based training provided by Colleton County.
4. Utilize Colleton County Fleet Maintenance division for upkeep and record historical information for regular preventative maintenance service.
5. Involve police and other departments to participate in training activities.
6. Develop a survey on the Internet to monitor type of services and the quality of service provided.

The following important strategies will also be followed:

1. Diversify funding sources by seeking grant funding in addition to general funding. 2012/13 Submit grant for new fire truck
2. Become proactive and innovative. Use part-time personnel to assist in firefighting skills and medical training.
3. Investigate carry forward of portions of the budget for major repairs
4. Develop relationship with the medical director.

### **External Environment**

#### **(Opportunities and Challenges)**

The purpose of this section is to explore the environment outside the Department in order to identify opportunities and challenges (formerly known as threats) the Department anticipates in the future. Although emphases are on future opportunities and challenges, present opportunities and challenges are also addressed. This section is further refined and detailed, if necessary to monitor forces and trends, key resource controllers and actual and potential competitors or collaborators and important forces affecting competition and collaboration the Department faces. The following is a compilation or executive summary of challenges and opportunities division-wide.

### **Opportunities:**

- Pre-incident planning
- Addressing from the beach front
- Training keeping staff on cutting edge/training techniques
- Mutual aid training between the departments
- Proactive approach through public education activities/fire reduction
- Keep abreast of new technologies and innovations
- Actively research and apply for grants, cooperative, and emergency funding
- Recruit and retain volunteer firefighters
- Provide orientation to new town council members
- Align Departmental strategies to the Town of Edisto Beach vision
- Revise Landing Zone protocols and guidelines.
- Seek A-tax funding for maintenance of 6 wheeler
- Continue to seek grant funding for fire trucks, equipment and a new station.

### **Challenges (Threats):**

- Funding based on the economy
- Incorrect addressing or directions
- Assessing needs for an area that is not contiguous
- Loss of knowledge due to staff turnover and/or relocation
- Unpredictability of natural weather events and disasters
- State and federal regulations and mandates
- Lack of community knowledge regarding fire services
- Presidential initiative to convert to digital communication
- Recruiting and retaining paid firefighters who cannot afford to live close to work
- Changes in Fire Marshall recommendations that state all firefighters must have Firefighter I and Firefighter II certifications

- Develop a working relationship with Colleton County EMS to utilize the medical director allowing part-time personnel to use medical certifications at Edisto Beach

## **Internal Environment**

### **(Assets and Limitations)**

The purpose of this section is to explore the environment inside the Department in order to identify assets (formerly known as strengths) and limitations (formerly known as weaknesses) the Department currently faces. This process is utilized to induce both group cohesion and action. Assets are defined to build upon and limitations are set forth so they can be faced and addressed. This section is further refined and detailed along with the external environment, if necessary to monitor forces and trends, key resource controllers and actual and potential competitors or collaborators and important forces affecting competition and collaboration the Department faces. The following is a compilation or executive summary of assets and limitations division-wide.

#### **Assets (Strengths):**

- Dedicated, professional firefighters
- Work well together
- Understand each other's strengths and weaknesses
- Close knit, family-type group
- Dependable
- Positive attitude
- Training provided
- Experience combined with youthfulness, new innovative techniques
- Provide direct services that impact citizen public health and quality of life
- First- hand knowledge of community layout providing ability to respond effectively
- Excellent response time
- First class equipment and facility function
- Excellent leadership/ setting good examples
- Constantly strive to further education and training

#### **Limitations (Weaknesses):**

- Technologically limited communication reception capabilities
  - Inability to ensure staffing due to volunteer training levels
  - Lack of adequate certified volunteer reserves.
  - Limited personnel/administrative
  - Supplies, equipment and maintenance
  - Difficulty getting training because of small staff and location of training
  - Cost associated with training
  - Facilities/training, living quarters, storage and mechanics to repair the vehicles in a timely manner and aging fleet
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## Strategic Issues

- How does the department address manpower and facilities?

The Fire Department staffs two firefighters per 24 hour shift. The NFPA recommends (2 in 2 out rule) that if two firefighters enter a building that is on fire, two firefighters must remain outside in a rescue capacity. Staffing levels do not accommodate this scenario unless other strategies are implemented utilizing personnel from mutual aid companies or other jurisdictions. Most volunteer firefighters are not certified to actually fight fires. There are three potential solutions to help the Department meet this recommendation. 1) Increase staff levels ( is this prudent in a recessionary economy?) 2) Train volunteers and certify as firefighter I and II in a retirement community where the average age of the volunteer is 50 years old. 3) Cross train police officers to be able to respond a firefighter capacity. The second issue is limited space. The Fire Department needs to conduct a space analysis to document space needs for equipment and tools.

- As a Tourist destination, the population on Edisto Beach fluctuates and service demands vary greatly between the non-tourist season and tourist season. How does the Fire Department meet these changes in demand?
  1. View as an opportunity
  2. Identity state park personnel to see if they can be utilized as volunteer firefighters.
  3. Potentially target Wildlife reserve personnel i.e. Botany Bay.
- Unincorporated areas have no available water sources and accessibility is limited. How does the Edisto Beach Fire Department assist these areas so they have adequate fire protection?

The EBFD needs to look at ways to provide water sources such as dry hydrants etc. Any provision needs to be reassessed by the residential owners' insurance carriers to determine if insurance rates can be reduced by providing additional fire support. The EBFD has been working with communities to pre-plan for fire protection. POAs have been trimming trees and working with the EBFD to pre-plan routes into and around these developments. A positive relationship with POA's is an on-going need and benefit to a working relationship.

- What can the Edisto Beach Fire Department do to provide better services for the citizens utilizing a paid/part time/volunteer capacity?
  1. Communication issues need to be resolved. Colleton County is currently utilizing VHF for communication. Charleston County utilizes digital. The Edisto Beach Fire Department must be able to communicate with both Charleston and Colleton County and with the State Emergency Management Division of occasion.
  2. Addressing in the resort area will need to be updated to improve response times.
  3. Colleton County Dispatch is located in a law enforcement environment prompting calls to be dispatched to law enforcement before fire rescue. Police department doesn't provide medical services.
  4. The EBFD will continue to use due diligence in communicating the needs of the community to policy makers. Pre-planning needs to continue in the adjacent unincorporated areas so fire services can be provided when the need arises.

Recruitment and retention of volunteers continues to be an issue. Over the course through normal attrition the Fire Department has also been heavily impacted by legislative action.

- Does the Edisto Beach Fire Department need to lower the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification for the Town of Edisto Beach? The ISO ratings go from 1 to 10, with 1 being the best, and 10 the worst. These ratings affect the insurance premiums of citizens. The Town has a current rating of 4. This problem is multi-faceted. The ISO PPC program evaluates communities according to a uniform set of criteria defined in the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule. This criterion incorporates nationally recognized standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association and the American Water Works Association. Lowering the Town's PPC rating results in lower premiums for the residents. The evaluation process considers three topics: 1) Receiving and Handling fire alarms, 2) Fire Department and 3) Water Supply. Cities are regraded every ten years. Sprinkler systems in large buildings reduce the need for engine and ladder capacity.

According to the Town of Edisto Beach Water Master Plan prepared by Earth Tech in 2008, fire suppression capabilities need improvement. The Edisto Beach

water distribution system consists of pipe sizes ranging from 2” to 10” in diameter. The Town has 133 fire hydrants dispersed throughout the Town limits along Palmetto Road and at the state park. Hydrant flows ranged from 750 gallons per minute to 1400 GPM. Most hydrants are dated 1976 or newer. Hydrant maintenance and testing has been performed by Bishop Hydrant Service. Hydrant testing and inspection cost exceed \$5000.00 each year. In FY2012-13 the Fire Department will conduct pressure and fire flow testing on all 133 hydrants. The firefighters will inspect the operability of the hydrants while conducting these tests. Hydrant repairs and flow and pressure testing will be forwarded to the water department. Although system testing shows that all hydrants produce satisfactory fire flows during normal water demand periods, during high demand periods such as the fourth of July, Memorial Day and Labor Day, calculations show fire flows may not be satisfactory. Also, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) requires that each fire hydrant produce a minimum of 500 GPM while maintaining a 20 psi residual in the water system and leads to the hydrant be no smaller than 6” diameter pipe. The Town’s distribution lines range in size from 2” to 6” in diameter. Several areas were identified that needed to have the distribution lines increased in size from 2” diameter lines to 6” diameter lines and additional fire hydrants. These areas are the Point Street, Jungle Shores Drive and between Dorothy Street and Cheehaw Street. Current conditions only provide the Town the ability to fight a fire for 95 minutes at the recommended 1000 Gallons per minute rate at peak demand times. Earth Tech has recommended that storage capacity be increased by constructing a 200,000 gallon elevated storage tank on the east end of the beach. However, lowering the ISO rating from 4 to 3, 2, or 1 does not impact fire insurance costs.

What level of risk does the Town want to assume?

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## ***HOW DO WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS?***

### **Performance Measures**

Each Department has established performance measures.

### **Financial Data**

Department	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget
EBFD	\$598,110	\$607,165	\$534,436	\$557,696	\$561,562	\$510,696

## Performance Measures

<b>Measures:</b>	<b>Actual FY 09</b>	<b>Actual FY 10</b>	<b>Actual FY 11</b>	<b>Actual FY 12</b>
<b><i>Workload indicators:</i></b>				
# of EMS assistance calls	125	139	212	242
# alarm calls	27	22	25	23
# of investigations	N/A	9	29	20
# of structural fires	4	11	11	9
# of brush fires	3	4	7	5
# of trash fires	0	0	1	0
# of vehicle fires	0	3	2	1
# of electrical line/transformer fires	0	7	13	10
# of accidents responded to	9	11	13	10
# of extrications	1	1	0	2
# of miscellaneous calls	5	140	194	204
# of calls unincorporated Colleton County	N/A	14	22	8
# of presentations to the public	6	1	9	3
# of training exercises	N/A	44	261	225
# of grants submitted	2	1	1	1
# of volunteers recruited and retained	16	16	19	16
# of inspections	N/A	24	27	46
Hrs of pre planning meetings for Edisto Island	20	50	14	18
<b><i>Effectiveness indicators:</i></b>				
% of structures saved	100	85	100	100
<b><i>Efficiency or unit-cost ratio:</i></b>				
Average cost per call	\$388	\$182	\$204	\$149
Average cost of maintenance per unit	\$650	\$2,430	\$1,214	\$911
Average cost of pre-planning Edisto Island/Hour	N/A	\$214	\$34	\$302
Average cost of Calls to Colleton County	N/A	\$100	\$165	\$241
Average cost of calls to Charleston County	N/A	\$238	\$139	\$145