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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 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 it was making in interest on funds in the bank. Blue reflectors were installed on public streets to indicate where fire hydrants are located.

A new fire truck was ordered in 2014 and delivered in March 2015. The previous first run engine was moved to Station 2, to maintain the mutual aid agreement with Colleton County Fire and the Engine numbers were revised to engine 14, engine 14-2, squad 14 and ladder 14. On July 1, 2015, the ISO fire rating was reduced to Class 3/3X.

Currently there are 4 paid (career) firefighters which include the Fire Chief, 3 paid shift supervisors, 5 part-time paid and 29 active volunteers. As Fire Fighter positions became vacant due to attrition they 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 savings is realized using-part-time personnel because they do not receive benefits and they receive much of the required training 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 provide greater experience and training.

The Department was reorganized utilizing the Fire Chief as a working Fire Chief with two full time paid Fire Fighters per shift for continuity of coverage and communication.  
(See organizational chart).

**Departmental Personnel**

	Fund	FY2012-13	FY2013-14	FY2014-15	FY2015-16
Fire Chief	10	1	1	1	1
Part-Time	10	8	7	5	9
Fire Captain	10	0	0	1	1
Fire Engineer	10	0	3	2	2
Firefighter	10	1	1	8	8
Volunteer Firefighter	10	19	22	29	29
Total	10	29	35	46	50

**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, and aerial operations and designate pay levels.
- Promotion of the positive aspects of this Department through community awareness and public education
- Strive to become more compliant with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) regarding manpower and equipment.
- Locate and fund 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 rescue 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 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 Depart will achieve these key targets: over the next 3 years:

- Establish physical training and fire preparedness training plan
- Organize paperwork, records and files in Fire Department
- Continue to implement strategies to reduce the ISO rating by continued departmental development and infrastructure improvement
- Maintain a training program for personnel each month to include online and hands on training
- Improve station and equipment.
- Continue to develop a budget for the one percent fund and Volunteer fund and implement the plan each year to include Public Safety Day
- Expand membership (recruitment and retention)

- Accident prevention program/coordinate with safety committee quarterly
- Continue to monitor the needs of the citizens of the community

## **Department Objectives**

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

- Update the EOP's and SOG's by the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the fiscal year
- Implement Confined Space Rescue training, refresher and gear to meet OSHA requirements by third quarter FY2015-16
- Develop a training program and implement Web based training for paid and volunteers with emphasis in firefighter certifications by 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the fiscal year and schedule quarterly training/basic first aid and CPR
- Apply for 1 grant for the FY2015-16
- Develop an inter-departmental training program with St. Paul's and Colleton County Fire Rescue to insure more efficient response and oversee that training is performed annually
- Set quarterly training goals and objectives to meet ISO compliance
- Set scheduled preplan review committee second and fourth quarters FY2015-16
- Develop ICS communications plan (SOP) agreement with mutual aid companies

## **Long Term Department Objectives**

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

- Continue recruitment and retention efforts
- Solidify training efforts and maintain all certifications with highest priority to First Responder and basic firefighting skill sets
- All firefighters to have successfully completed Pump Operations I, II Certification and Aerial operations

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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 channel, 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 daily training for anyone wishing to develop and maintain skill sets. This will be a web based administered by a third party
3. Involve police and other departments in training activities.
4. Develop a survey on the Internet to monitor type of services and the quality of service provided and allow public feedback

The following important strategies will also be followed:

1. Diversify funding sources by seeking grant funding, in addition to general funding.
2. Become proactive and innovative.
3. Utilize fundraising events to fund repair parts for Beach Wheel Chairs
4. Utilize fundraising events to fund the planning and developing of the new fire station project

### **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 to include; residential large homes, solar panels, elevators, remote locations, unusual features and hazards
- Addressing from the beach front at road and back lighted numbering
- Training to keep staff on cutting edge/training techniques
- Mutual aid training between the departments
- Proactive approach through public education activities, fire prevention and annual public safety day
- Keep abreast of new technologies and innovations by attending conferences and training events
- Actively research and apply for grants, cooperative, and emergency funding
- Cross training all personnel for administrative duties

### **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, NFPA 1500, OSHA, ISO
- Lack of community knowledge regarding fire services
- Recruiting and retaining paid firefighters who cannot afford to live close to work

## **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.

### **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
- 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

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

- Inability to ensure staffing due to volunteer training levels
- Limited personnel/administrative
- Supplies, equipment and maintenance
- Difficulty getting training because of small staff and location of training and budget restraints
- Facilities/training, living quarters, storage and mechanics to repair the vehicles in a timely manner

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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 such as St. Paul's, Colleton County Fire & Rescue and 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 and other town employee's to be able to respond in a firefighter capacity.

Current berthing consists of two barracks rooms with limited privacy and no room to store additional equipment. The Fire Department needs to conduct a space analysis to document space needs for personnel, 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 for training and requalification (Off season)
  2. View as an opportunity to recruit seasonal volunteers
  3. Identify state park personnel to be utilized as volunteer firefighters.
  4. 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 POAs is an on-going need and benefit to a working relationship.

Implementation and the use of a Turbo Jet pump/educator and other necessary equipment to be staged at strategic locations to improve and provide needed fire protection capabilities in remote and under supported water locations. Possibly alleviating the 1000 feet from water source issue allowing for an ISO reevaluation and greater firefighting capabilities.

- 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 have been resolved with implementation of the 800 system and installing mobile repeaters in critical equipment. Colleton County has converted to the 800 Digital early 2014. Charleston County also utilizes digital. The Edisto Beach Fire Department communication has greatly improved with both Charleston and Colleton County and with the State Emergency Management Division on occasion.
  2. Resident and business addresses 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. Fire Department should be dispatched first to save valuable time in medical emergency's situations. Training and experience has greatly reduced the occurrence of this issue.
  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.
  5. The VHF and UHF (old) radio system has been reutilized as an on scene volunteer communication system alleviating unnecessary radio traffic on the county wide 800 system.
  6. The VHF and UHF (old) radio system has been reutilized as the backup communication system.
  
- Recruitment and retention of volunteers continues to be an issue. However current efforts to revitalize the volunteer department has improved recruitment and retention with 7 new volunteers this calendar year.

The Edisto Beach Fire Department has lowered the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification for the Town of Edisto Beach from a 4/9 to a 3/3x. ISO number classifications go from 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria. These ratings affect the insurance premiums of citizens. 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 re-graded 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. Hydrant testing and inspection cost exceed \$5,000 each year. In FY2015-16, the Fire Department conducted pressure and fire flow testing on all 133 hydrants. The hydrants were inspected and tested for operability. Annual maintenance and painting was also performed. Hydrant repairs and flow and pressure testing were forwarded to the water department. 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 with 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. Point Street was completed in 2013, with new fire hydrants installed and larger diameter lines. Lowering the ISO rating from 4 to 3, 2, or 1 could impact fire insurance costs. It should be noted that during peak times additional pumps can be placed on line to maintain necessary water flows and pressure. Jungle shores hydrant project is scheduled to begin in November 2015.

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

### **Performance Measures**

Each Department has established performance measures.

### **Financial Data**

Department	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Budget	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget
EBFD	\$557,696	\$533,836	\$503,454	\$498,140	\$527,257	\$570,454

## **Performance Measures**

Measures:	Actual FY 12	Actual FY 13	Actual FY 14	Actual FY 15
<b><i>Workload indicators:</i></b>				
# of EMS assistance calls	242	224	127	234
# alarm calls	23	25	23	30
# of investigations	20	20	17	25
# of structural fires	9	6	5	5
# of brush fires	5	11	5	5
# of trash fires	0	3	0	1
# of vehicle fires	1	0	0	0
# of electrical line/transformer fires	10	10	1	5
# of accidents responded to	10	11	4	9
# of extrications	2	1	0	0
# of miscellaneous calls	204	398	337	544
# of calls unincorporated Colleton County	8	27	11	20
# of presentations to the public	3	32	81	137
# of training exercises	225	351	190	278
# of grants submitted	1	3	7	7
# of volunteers recruited and retained	16	0	4	7
# of inspections	46	28	36	39
Hrs. of pre planning meetings for Edisto Island	18	31	18	58
<b><i>Effectiveness indicators:</i></b>				
% of structures saved	100	100	100	100
<b><i>Efficiency or unit-cost ratio:</i></b>				
Average cost per call	\$149			
Average cost of maintenance per unit	\$911			
Average cost of pre-planning Edisto Island/Hour	\$302			
Average cost of Calls to Colleton County	\$241			
Average cost of calls to Charleston County	\$145			

➤ Call volume has increased annually by 14.3%