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Burleson Fire Department earns top rating
In 20 years the fire department transitions from an all-volunteer department to one of the best in the nation

The City of Burleson has joined an elite group of only 270 municipalities in the United States and 52 in the state to receive the highest rating possible, Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class 1.

The designation, which will begin on Dec. 1, has been a goal for the department since it received an ISO-2 rating in 2015.

With the hiring of an additional six firefighters in 2016, the continued support of City Council to provide the department with training, needed equipment and cutting-edge technology along with investments in the city's water infrastructure system the city was able to be considered for this prestigious upgrade.

While residents and businesses may experience varying declines in their insurance premiums, the designation is an enticing draw for companies looking to relocate. When businesses research prospective cities, they compare several cost and service factors. Achieving the prestigious ISO-1 rating helps distinguish Burleson as a community that is prepared to meet the current needs of the community, while at the same time maintaining a strategic focus and vision on meeting the future needs of the community.

"Our residents' and business community's safety and quality of life is a top priority for all of us on City Council," said Burleson Mayor Ken Shetter. "When companies and families look to Burleson, we want them to feel confident knowing they are served by one of the top fire organizations in the country and that we invest in areas that directly affect their day-to-day lives."

Every municipality is given an ISO rating, which ranges from 1 to 10, where one is the highest. The score is based on a city's emergency communications, water distribution system and fire department. The ISO currently evaluates over 50,000 fire departments nationwide and less than one percent are given the coveted ISO-1 classification.

Achieving this rating is especially impressive because a little over 20 years ago the city had an all-volunteer fire department. Burleson hired its first paid firefighter in 1997 and continued to be a combination department, comprised of both paid and volunteer firefighters, until 2010 when the department became fully staffed with paid firefighters.

"One will be hard-pressed to find another department within the entire U.S. fire service that has been able to achieve an ISO-1 rating within seven years of becoming a fully paid department," said Burleson Fire Chief K.T. Freeman. "It is unprecedented and helps to illustrate Burleson's can-do spirit."

Burleson currently employs 45 firefighters, and in the last year, they welcomed a new ladder truck to the fleet that consists of two engines, two brush trucks and one rescue apparatus. The city contracts ambulance services with MedStar Mobile Healthcare.

"Our department has strived to become one of the nation's best," said Chief Freeman. "This upgrade reflects the hard work and dedication of Burleson firefighters to save lives and property every day. And Burleson's city council's commitment to providing top-notch public safety to this community."

“What really sets Burleson apart in this upgrade is that we are still a city focused on maintaining a sense of community, yet we have managed to achieve a level of fire protection you generally see in a much larger city,” said Mayor Shetter. “This is just one more thing that makes Burleson hometown, done right.”

The Burleson Fire Department's ability to achieve this classification is a reflection of the City of Burleson's commitment to providing quality public safety services to the citizens, businesses and visitors of Burleson.

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