

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS

DISTRICT 1 KAREN L. MONTOYA, CHAIRWOMAN
DISTRICT 2 PATRICK H. LYONS
DISTRICT 3 VALERIE ESPINOZA
DISTRICT 4 LYNDA LOVEJOY, VICE CHAIR
DISTRICT 5 SANDY JONES



NMPRC MEDIA CONTACT

Carlos A. Padilla
Public Information Officer
Office: 505-827-4446
Mobile: 505-467-9116
carlos.padilla2@state.nm.us
1120 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe, NM 87504

CHIEF OF STAFF

S. Vincent Martinez

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 2, 2015

NEWS RELEASE

Las Cruces Fire Department Becomes First in NM to Achieve Class 1 ISO Rating

City of Las Cruces awarded top rating for fire suppression services

The City of Las Cruces has become the very first community in the state of New Mexico to obtain a Class 1 rating from the Insurance Services Office Inc. (ISO). Class 1 is the top ranking for ISO, and is a distinction held by just 97 communities nationwide.

ISO ratings are based on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the highest rating. The higher the rating, the lower the insurance premiums for residential and commercial policyholders.

“Las Cruces is our poster child,” New Mexico State Fire Marshal John Standefer stated Thursday, April 2.

Fire Marshal Standefer went on to provide information regarding the breakdown of the ISO ratings for New Mexico’s 368 fire departments. Las Cruces sits alone at the top, followed by six Class 2 departments, 10 in Class 3, 20 in Class 4, 67 in Class 5, 77 in Class 6, 38 in Class 7, 26 in Class 8, 121 in Class 9, and two at Class 10.

By classifying communities’ ability to suppress fires, ISO helps the communities evaluate their public fire-protection services, according to the ISO website.

ISO provides reliable, up-to-date information regarding a community’s fire protection services to help establish appropriate fire insurance premiums for residential and commercial properties through the Public Protection Classification (PPC) program. The program provides an objective, nationwide standard that helps fire departments in planning and budgeting for facilities, equipment and training. By securing lower fire insurance premiums for communities with better public protection, the PPC program provides incentives and rewards for communities that choose to improve their firefighting services.

“It takes a community effort to obtain these ISO ratings,” stated Vernon Muller, Deputy Fire Marshal at the Fire Service Support Bureau of the State Fire Marshal’s Office. Muller works closely with fire departments throughout the state in preparing for ISO inspections, along with the Fire Service Support Bureau’s staff. Deputy Fire Marshal Muller explained that half of the ranking provided by ISO is comprised of the fire department’s abilities, while 40 percent of the evaluation rests upon the community’s water availability and the final 10 percent comes from the community’s emergency communications abilities.

“The fire department was only half of this,” Las Cruces Fire Department (LCFD) Chief Travis Brown – who has been with the LCFD for 25-1/2 years, and has served as chief since May 2010 – stated humbly Thursday morning, adding, “The city’s utilities and dispatch made up the other half. City management played a big role.”

LCFD Chief Brown stated that the process of improving the city's ISO rating has been a 15- to 20-year process that had the department looking at ways to improve their ISO rating. "It's not so much about obtaining a higher rating, but improving our level of service," said Chief Brown. "We have a very strong Fire Prevention Bureau. That is why we were able to score 5.25 points out of a possible 5.5 points."

"Obtaining a Class 1 ISO rating is of extreme significance for Las Cruces," Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima said in statement provided by LCFD. "It demonstrates the City's ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety of our residents, and the protection of residential and commercial properties. I commend the fire department for their hard work and dedication to make our community one of the safest in the nation while helping to reduce insurance costs."

The new rating will take effect July 1, 2015. The Las Cruces Fire Department will notify insurance companies by mail, advising them of this change in rating. LCFD further encourages residents and business owners to contact their insurance agents to determine how the improved ISO classification may affect insurance premiums. A copy of the letter LCFD will send to insurance providers will soon be available on their website: www.clcfd.com.

The LCFD serves New Mexico's second largest city with professional firefighters, who are licensed EMTs, and civilian employees. The department responds to more than 14,700 calls for service annually with seven engine companies, two truck companies, a battalion chief, and several support vehicles. In addition to fire suppression and emergency medical services, LCFD also offers special response teams that provide technical rescue, hazardous materials response, and aircraft rescue firefighting.

About the NMPRC

The NMPRC regulates public utilities, telecommunications companies and motor carriers operating in the State of New Mexico. It also administers the State Fire Marshal's Office, the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy in Socorro, N.M., and the Pipeline Safety Bureau.

###