

**EAST SIDE FIRE
PROTECTION
DISTRICT NO. 5**

STRATEGIC PLAN



2013

Issued October 15, 2012

East Side Fire Protection District No. 5

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Dear Resident,

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, the Fire Chief, fire fighters and support staff of East Side Fire Protection District No. 5, I am proud to submit this Strategic Plan for your review.

It is our goal to set forth a clearly delineated strategic path so that our successors can be guided by the momentum that has been set in motion as we strive to perfect the art of service to others.

We are thankful to our resident communities who have supported our efforts to become “the best of the best”. East Side Fire Protection District No. 5 would not have the tools to succeed without the continued support of our residents.

Our future will be guided by the feedback of our residents as we continue into this millennium.

Sincerely,



Oscar LeJeune
President

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MISSION OF EAST SIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 5

East Side Fire Protection District No. 5 dedicates its activities to the preservation of human life and the conservation of property and the environment. To this end the District invests its personnel in the education of the public and the maintenance of a safe community environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

East Side Fire Department is dedicated to providing the highest level of dependable and professional service while protecting lives and preserving property.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the East Side Fire Department is to be a progressive, service-oriented organization, which provides opportunities for personal growth, and innovative and effective leadership. The department will continue to cooperatively participate at all levels in developing innovative concepts and issues that advance the profession.

VALUE STATEMENT

The members of the East Side Fire Department are dedicated to providing a professional and caring environment that is fair, honest, ethical, and treats all individuals with respect and dignity. All members will be supportive and responsive to the needs of both the fire department and community in a loyal, honest and proficient manner. We will do our best to rapidly and professionally mitigate all fire, rescue, medical care and hazardous material incidents and to protect lives, property, and the environment through meticulous training, disaster preparedness, fire prevention and community education programs.

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EVENTS SHAPING EAST SIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Incorporation:

East Side Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated in 1975 and the fire department began taking runs on January 1st, 1976. East Side Fire Protection District No. 5 was created on December 22nd, 1976. Our ISO rating was a 10 (worst) for the next several years.

1976 - 1991

East Side Volunteer Fire Department secured land on Old Hammond Hwy and erected a metal building to house the department's equipment. The department was funded primarily by voluntary contributions until a 10-mill property tax was passed by the voters in 1988. Employing contract labor (Paid-on-Call fire fighters from other fire departments) to man the station during the Monday – Friday daytime hours, the department's ISO rating ultimately improved to a Class 6.

1991 - 2002

Several things happened to allow East Side to improve dramatically during this time frame:

- In 1991 East Side Fire Protection District No. 5 secured additional funding by way of the \$32 per home user's fee, while at the same time abandoning the annual fund drive.
- In August of 1991, S. Dale Hancock was appointed Fire Chief by the East Baton Rouge Parish Metropolitan Council, as recommended by the East Side Fire Protection District No. 5 Board of Advisors
- In August of 1991, George R. Gateley was hired as the first full-time fire fighter, making East Side Fire Protection District No. 5 a *Combination Fire Department*.
- In 1993 the *Authority Having Jurisdiction* was changed and East Side began operating under the direction of a Board of Commissioners instead of a Board of Advisers
- In January 1998, the voters approved an additional 5-mill property tax, bringing the total millage in the district up to 15 mils.

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Results of the new leadership and additional funding are evidenced by the following:

- A new fire station was opened in August of 1995. On average, more than 400 non-departmental personnel used our facilities for training classes & civic meetings every month.
- The fire department began testing true 24-hour coverage (station manning) to reduce run times and improve apparatus response. That 24-hour coverage has been in effect for over four years now and a third fire fighter was ultimately added to the Monday – Friday day slot, the time we are typically weakest because most of our volunteers are at work.
- Our ISO rating improved to a Class 2 in 1996. At that time, there were only two fire departments in the state (out of approximately 750) with a better fire rating. East Side maintained that Class 2 rating when we were again re-rated in September, 2002.
- The fire department secured Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) in 1993 and proved their effectiveness with several “saves” in the next few years that would not have been possible without the new technology. In late 1998 our original AED was donated to another fire department and two new, later-generation, AEDs were placed into service.
- In 1999 East Side was recognized as a Fire Prevention Bureau by the Louisiana State Fire Marshal’s Office.
- The fire department has a strong fire prevention program in place for area schools & daycare centers. We regularly receive requests for our fire prevention classes from school systems outside our fire district.
- The fire department has erected a new fire training structure behind the fire station. That new structure is used to teach our fire fighters, as well as others, proper fire suppression techniques, confined space rescue, high-angle rescue and a variety of other skills.
- The fire department has established a first-class Dive Rescue / Recovery Team and has purchased the necessary equipment for that team, including underwater communications equipment.
- We have a long-established minimum-standards policy in effect which has set minimum requirements for personnel acceptance, drug testing and other procedures which assure the public is protected and our personnel are first-class.
- Our training and third party certifications remain among the best in the area. As of the date of this report, we have 13 nationally registered EMTs and 3 paramedics in our complement of 30 fire fighters and recruits.

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- And our value to the community remains excellent. Each year the Louisiana State Auditor determines our volunteers contribute over 16,000 hours to their community, worth over \$220,000. Clearly we could not have enjoyed the capital building program we have undertaken without this contribution from our neighbors.

2003- 2004

- In 2003 we made the final push to become internationally accredited. Finally, in February of 2004 East Side Fire Dept. was recognized at the Commission on Fire Accreditation International as an Accredited Agency. East Side was the first fire department in Louisiana to become accredited & the 85th accredited fire department in the world.
- In the summer of 2004 we learned that we would have to secure an aerial apparatus and build a second fire station before our next ISO grading in order to maintain our Class 2 fire rating. We would also need additional manpower.
- On September 18th the district secured additional funding by a dedicated 7 ½ mill property tax that passed by an amazing 72%.

2005

- In 2005 we submitted our specifications for a new 100 ft aerial platform and began the process of procuring land for our new fire station. Both of these substantial endeavors were the result of ISO grading requirements.
- At 6:10 AM on Monday morning, August 29th, the eye of hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana. East Side would be directly involved in rescue and, later, recovery efforts for the next two months, committing more than \$98,000 in manhours & materials, supplies and equipment costs to relief efforts in East Baton Rouge, Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes. Ultimately the majority of the expenditures the fire district commits are reimbursed by FEMA and other government entities.

2006 - 2008

- The fire district received a federal government grant that allowed the district to hire seven new full-time employees in late 2006, increasing the full-time staff from two to nine.
- A new 104 ft aerial platform was placed into service in the summer of 2006.
- The \$2.3 million Station 92 was occupied in December of 2007.

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- Hurricanes Gustav and Ike challenged the fire district in 2008. East Side was much better prepared than three years previous as the new fire station (Station 92) had already been placed into service and both stations were equipped with emergency generators. With both generators operating and two industrial-capacity ice machines we were able to produce nearly a ton of ice per day and house many public safety personnel and their families. This allowed those same public safety employees to be available to respond to emergencies knowing their families were safe and cared for.

2009

- The fire district was re-accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, remaining the only accredited fire department in Louisiana and one of only 134 in the United States.
- The fire district has hired new employees and now has eleven (11) full-time civil service firefighting employees and continues to make use of contract firefighters and volunteers.

2010 - 2012

- The fire district replaced two very old fire engines (E-940, 1980 Ford and E-910, 1983 American LaFrance) with new rescue pumpers, each on Spartan chassis' and with integrated generators, elevating light towers and Hurst rescue pumps.
- The fire district increased the full-time complement of firefighters to thirteen (13).

Today and Tomorrow:

Issues that will guide our future progress:

- Limited geographic growth in our area: we are and will remain the smallest fire district in the parish with only 8 square miles
- Limited commercial and residential growth: although our area is certainly growing, we will see a plateau of new growth as the available undeveloped land diminishes.
- Limited funding: we must continue to generate our own revenues for our operating expenses. Because our fire district has only limited commercial and industrial properties the ad valorem property taxes only generate a limited

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income for the fire district. For example, in 2005 the fire district operated on about \$57 per capita per year while the Baton Rouge Fire Department operated on a budget in excess of \$230 per capita per year. In 2013 the fire district will operate on an income of approximately \$117 per capita per year.

- Fire classification and accreditation: we will strive to remain the “best of the best” as we work to renew our international accreditation and strive to maintain our excellent ISO rating which was renewed in early 2012.

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TRENDS IN SOCIETY:

Trends throughout the nation, in the Fire Service and in our fire district that will affect how we manage our business in the coming years:

- Overcrowded arterial road network
- Information management and reporting requirements
- Population aging
- Health care management
- Health care expanding into the community
- Dual income families and resultant unsupervised children
- Increased tax burden on the average citizen and the frustration of “over-taxation”
- Educational crisis in our community schools
- Increased need for specialization and higher-technology equipment
- Busy personal lifestyles and the resultant decrease in our pool of qualified volunteers

ISSUES EAST SIDE FIRE DISTRICT IS FACING TODAY:

- Increasing local traffic
- Stabilizing income due to reduction in residential and commercial construction
- Expanding technology applications
- Dramatic reduction in pool of qualified volunteers
- Health care reform
- Substantial mandates by the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL) & Insurance Services Offices (ISO) to maintain our low fire protection rating.

ISSUES EAST SIDE FIRE DISTRICT WILL BE FACING TOMORROW:

- Construction of the Central Bypass, extending O’Neal Lane and bringing more traffic into our area.
- Municipal vs. private service emergency medical providers
- Increased service demand
- Unfunded state and federal mandates
- Continued mandates by the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL) & Insurance Services Offices (ISO) to maintain our low fire protection rating.

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KEY STRENGTHS:

PERSONNEL

- All fire fighters above the rank of Recruit are either DOT certified First Responders or nationally registered EMTs and are AED certified.
- Diverse and efficient use of part-time fire fighters and contract personnel
- Empowered fire officers
- Cohesive fire administration
- Cohesive fire commissioners

SERVICE DELIVERY

- Financial strength
- Effective and efficient service delivery
- Innovative programs
- Customer service oriented
- Quality delivery focused

RELATIONSHIPS

- Community
- Cohesive management team
- Positive growth oriented inter-governmental relationships

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Fire suppression fleet & equipment
- Emergency medical service equipment
- Fire Stations
- Support systems and management information services
- Fire training structure & training grounds
- Dive Rescue / Recovery equipment

KEY RESULT AREAS

The Strategic Planning process began with a review of the history of East Side Fire Protection District No. 5. The past growth of East Side Fire Protection District from a volunteer fire suppression department to a full service provider of prevention, suppression, emergency medical services and rescue services have documented a service

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commitment to the population of the fire district. The challenges of the future were then reviewed and placed into the plan for tomorrow. The projected emergency service demands, the changing health care industry, and yet to be determined new responsibilities to be placed on East Side Fire Protection District were identified as goals and objectives for the fire district to achieve.

- **QUALITY OF SERVICE**
- **EMPLOYEES**
- **COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION**
- **STRATEGIC & FINANCIAL PLANNING**
- **HUMAN SERVICES**
- **COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION**
- **RELATIONSHIPS**

While the future is impossible to predict completely, this strategic plan is the means for addressing the future as forecast today and will be modified as the future becomes reality.