

**August 29, 2011**

**News Release**

*For Immediate Release*

**Springfield Fire Department Maintains Class 2 ISO Rating**

The Springfield Fire Department has received the final results of its recent formal ISO (Insurance Services Office) evaluation. The Department is pleased to announce that it was able to maintain its Class 2/9 rating.

In 2009, the City was advised by ISO that it would not be able to maintain its current ISO classification unless a plan was developed and implemented to do so by addressing certain needs. At that time, there were several issues impacting the level of fire protection in the City, including the need for rotational closures of fire stations. Fortunately, Springfield voters approved the dedicated sales tax for the Police-Fire Pension Fund and the Department received a federal SAFER grant, which allowed the Department to hire more fire fighters and return to normal staffing levels. The Department made other changes, such as restoring the existing "burn building" back to a useable state so firefighters could once again conduct live fire training (made possible through a funding gift from the community's private sector).

These, and other steps, were instrumental in the community maintaining its current level of fire protection and ISO classification.

ISO rates fire departments on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the best possible fire protection and 10 equating to almost no fire protection. The evaluation consists of three areas. An evaluation of the fire department itself accounts for 50 percent of the rating. Water supply accounts for 40 percent and the department's communication and 911 system accounts for the final 10 percent.

Out of 100 possible points, Springfield received 81.06 points. A Class 2 rating falls between 80 points and 89.99 points. Anything less than 80 would have resulted in a 3 rating, and anything over 89.99 would result in a 1 rating. The additional Class 9 rating is a supplemental rating only for those areas in the City without a fire hydrant within 1,000 feet. There is only small amount of area within the City that falls in this classification, and most of that is undeveloped property. View a map of hydrant locations showing these areas. Areas in white are designated Class 9, while the rest in gray are designated Class 2.

While most insurance companies use ISO in some way to establish their fire insurance rates, a drop in classification would have primarily affected the rates of commercial properties rather than residential. Richard Ollis of Springfield insurance agency Ollis and Company said, "Of more concern than any rate change that might have occurred would have been the signal a drop in classification would send to the insurance industry about the erosion of infrastructure in the community. This is an important factor in how competitive companies will be in a given market. Companies are more competitive when they see communities improving, or at least maintaining, their infrastructure over those communities where it is in decline. We are very fortunate that the City of Springfield was able to avoid this situation."

Fire Departments that are rated 1 or 2 are now evaluated on a three-year basis rather than every 10 years, and Springfield will be re-evaluated in 2014. Over the next three years, the Fire Department will be focused on staffing levels, the number of available apparatus, and a

new fire station on the northwest side of town in order to ensure the City maintains a Class 2 rating. The Springfield Fire Department is already taking steps that will bolster not only its ISO rating but, more important, its level of preparedness and service to the community. These include breaking ground on the new Springfield Regional Police-Fire Training Center, developing a lifecycle plan for equipment replacements via existing Level Property Tax revenue (no tax increase), and outlining plans for a Station No. 13 in northwest Springfield, including all necessary equipment and staffing.

"We're extremely pleased about maintaining the Class 2 rating and proud of the work the Department has done to get to this point," said Fire Chief David Hall. "We will have more work cut out for us in the coming three years but I am confident that with proper planning and the continued support of the community we can keep the bar high when it comes to protecting the lives and property of Springfield citizens."

For more information, contact: Fire Chief David Hall, (417) 864-1507.