



WHITESVILLE RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT
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Moncks Corner, SC 29461
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9 May 2016

The Honorable Nikki Haley
Governor of the State of South Carolina
1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia, South Carolina, 29201

Whitesville Rural Volunteer Fire Department
c/o District Board Chairman, Stewart Driggers
115 Sunview Ave
Moncks Corner, SC 29461

Reference: Cane Bay Fire Station, Berkeley County, South Carolina

Dear Governor Haley,

The Whitesville Fire Department is a small rural area located near Charleston, South Carolina with a large response area of 47.3 square miles, protecting residential, commercial, industrial, and rural areas. The impact of new industries in the area has caused a huge influx of new people; making the Cane Bay Planned Community the fastest growing community in South Carolina and the 8th fastest growing community in the United States. The Boeing Manufacturing plant has added more than 1,400 residents, 30% of the Cane Bay population. The number of homes is expected to reach 3,000 roof tops with approximately 12,000 residents; nearly doubling the overall population of our entire district. The new Volvo industry will also have a dramatic effect on our community; the plant is scheduled to be less than 15 miles from of the planned development. We respectfully request financial assistance in construction and furnishing a new fire station for this rapidly growing area.

Berkeley County residents enjoy the lowest taxes in the area and The Whitesville Fire Department's budget is based on a fire fee set by Berkeley County Council and does not fluctuate with rising costs or increased requirements. The department receives \$70.00 per occupied dwelling within the fire district and commercial facility fire fees are based on square footage. The current budget of the department is projected at \$480,000.00; this is a projection only because the monies collected are based on fee payments and the department loses approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually in delinquent fees and monies collected by Berkeley County for Emergency Repairs. This limits the ability of our department to purchase new equipment, update outdated equipment, or purchase capital items, such as Fire Apparatus or Fire Stations.

The Whitesville Fire Department is the primary Fire Protection Agency for all hazard emergencies within the Cane Bay area. The department currently operates from two fire stations located at 115 Sunview Ave., the Headquarters Fire Station and 368 Gants Rd., the station that responds to the Cane Bay area. The department has three part-time firefighters from 9am – 5pm Monday – Friday and is supplemented by volunteers during the daytime and these volunteers are the primary responders after 5pm. The department protects critical infrastructure identified in the South Carolina's Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CI/KR) analysis which includes the Cane Bay Elementary with 913 Students, Middle School with 750 Students, and Cane Bay High School with 1,500 Students. Additionally we protect several Elderly Communities within the Planned Development.

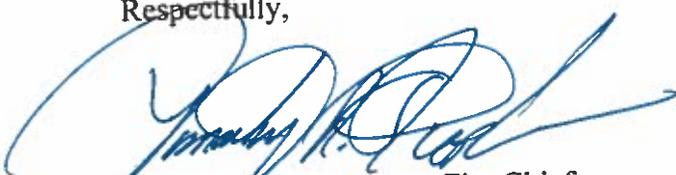
The department recently underwent a reclassification from the Insurance Service Office (ISO) that determined the current fire stations were outside the 5 mile drive distance required for this area. This caused insurance rates to skyrocket; doubling and in some cases, tripling the homeowner insurance costs for the residents and some insurance companies refusing to write policies because of distance required to travel from the current Fire Stations to the Cane Bay Area. The need for a fire station in this area to ensure immediate fire protection services are available to protect our residents and save lives as well as to reduce the burden on our residents is real and immediate and our small rural department cannot fiscally manage this daunting task alone.

The department's budget is capable of affording a loan for \$600,000 and the expected cost for a turnkey fire station to provide adequate fire protection services is \$900,000; a \$300,000 deficit. The community residents have established several fund raising projects but we do not expect these events to offset the anticipated deficiency of the total cost of the Fire Station.

We respectfully request your assistance in providing vital life saving services and reducing the insurance rates for the residents within the fastest growing community in South Carolina. We are in DIRE need of a Grant in the amount of \$200,000 to ensure our department can provide the necessary Fire and First Responder EMS services that our citizens have come to rely on in their time of desperate need.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully,



Timothy R. Stephenson, Fire Chief
Whitesville Rural Volunteer Fire Department

For further information please contact Chief Timothy Stephenson (843) 761-1628 or email at wrvfd@homesc.com.

cc: Honorable Senator Paul Campbell