Jasper County, South Carolina

June 7, 2023
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Jasper County Emergency Services to survey community on performance as part of five-year strategic planning effort

Jasper County residents soon will have the opportunity to share their perceptions about fire, rescue and emergency services offered across the county, including Hardeeville and Ridgeland.

The online survey is simple and takes less than five minutes to complete, said Russell Wells, director of emergency services for the county.

"This is an important first step in our process, but it's only a first step," Wells said. "We will be reaching out to various community groups this summer, and we'll conduct sessions in Spanish led by our bilingual firefighters."

Results of the survey will help guide the department's analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, (SWOT), said Deputy Chief Darran Vaughn of Jasper County Fire Rescue.

"A couple of the basic questions on the survey ask where people live and their age group," Vaugh said. "We want to see if perceptions of our services are different from community to community and from younger to older."

Results of the survey will help inform work on the Emergency Services department's strategic plan, a long-range planning document to help guide funding, staffing and equipment purchases over the coming five years.

"As we move forward," Vaughn said, "we plan to do this type of SWOT review every two years to see where we have improved our services and where we can improve."

Jasper County Administrator Andrew Fulghum said the work toward a department strategic plan is important work as the county continues to grow quickly. The 2020 Census showed Jasper County grew by 28 percent over the previous decade.

"We can look at Census data, we can examine calls for service, and we can go through the budget with a fine-tooth comb, but it's also important to ask the people receiving the services, 'what are we doing well and how can we improve?' That's really the foundation of this work," he said.

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