

Fire Contracts
Frequently Asked Questions
November 6, 2018

1. Why has the County previously contracted out Fire Protection services?

The County previously contracted out fire protection in the Hardeeville Rural and Cherry Point Fire Districts as, at that time, the County was not in a position to provide fire protection services to those areas effectively. The policy decision at that time was that it was more cost effective to contract out those services.

2. What is the Cherry Point Fire District?

The Cherry Point tax district is a special tax district formed in the southeastern portion of Jasper County. It is roughly bordered by Rt. 278, Argent Blvd., Rt. 170 and it also extends along Rt. 170 to the Jasper County/Beaufort County line and up Rt. 462 near Marsh Cove Road. **See the attached map – Pink Area**

3. What is the Hardeeville Rural Fire District?

The Hardeeville Rural Fire District is primarily the area west of the City of Hardeeville that encompasses Church Road, Stiney Road, Purrysburg Road, SC321, as well as some areas southeast of the City along Plantation Drive. **See the attached map – Blue Area**

4. When and why was the Cherry Point tax district formed?

The district was formed in 2005 by ordinance of Jasper County to fund fire protection services to the growing commercial and residential development of the County that needed those services beyond the rural portions of the County. However, in 2006, the County began to contract out fire protection services to the area of the tax district to the City of Hardeeville. As part of contract with the City of Hardeeville, all revenue collected through the special millage of the tax district was transferred to the City as a pass through for providing the fire protection.

5. How large is the Cherry Point tax district?

Currently, the district encompasses approximately 22 square miles along the borders described in Question #1. Originally, the district was much larger, encompassing approximately 36 square miles of unincorporated Jasper County. The area of the tax district has continued to decrease in size, since formed, as the City of Hardeeville has annexed in properties originally contained in the district.

6. Why is the County resuming providing fire protection in these districts?

The Jasper County Council has made the policy decision to begin upgrading its fire protection services in the Southern end of the County as part of a long-term plan to improve fire protection and emergency medical services for the entire County. The first

step in this process was the cancellation of the fire contracts with the City of Hardeeville for coverage in the Cherry Point and Hardeeville Rural Fire District areas. The County feels that it is now in a better position to provide fire and EMS services to its own residents outside of the municipal boundaries. With the continued growth of the City of Hardeeville, the County Council also feels it is appropriate to allow the City of Hardeeville to concentrate its resources on the provision of fire protection services to its residents. The County currently provides Emergency Medical Services to the entire County population and feels that it can provide more flexibility in its fire protection service delivery to these areas. In addition, the County is currently in the process of designing and will be building an additional fire rescue station in the Marsh Cove area to improve services to those communities along SC462.

7. When will the changes occur and what differences will we notice?

The changeover in the provision of fire protection services to the Cherry Point and Hardeeville Rural Fire Districts will occur at midnight, June 30, 2019. As residents and business owners, you should not notice any difference in the level of fire protection services provided by Jasper County Fire Rescue, except for the color and lettering on the fire apparatus as all fire protection resources in the County are dispatched from one central location. In order to provide coverage to both the Cherry Point and Hardeeville Rural Fire Districts, the County will be building and/or buying and staffing two additional fire rescue facilities. One will be constructed and located on Stiney Road near the funeral home and the other fire rescue facility that the County will operate from is an existing commercial property on Mead Road in the New River Commerce Park.

8. Are there staffing and operational differences that we will notice?

Jasper County Fire Rescue intends to staff its fire apparatus providing services to the Cherry Point tax district and the Hardeeville Rural District with two full time firefighters, 24 hours a day. These firefighters will be assisted by the staffing of the existing Paramedic ambulance that is currently housed at the City of Hardeeville Cherry Point Fire Station and an existing Paramedic ambulance currently housed at Sgt. Jasper Park. The fire unit and ambulance will respond together to fire incidents within the respective districts. In addition, the County will be developing an automatic aid response agreement with the Bluffton Township Fire District to provide immediate additional assistance on structure fires that may occur in the area.

9. Will this change affect my fire insurance ratings?

The current Jasper County Fire Rescue Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating for fire protection is one number higher than that of the City of Hardeeville. For ISO ratings, the lower the rating number, the better. Prior to July 1, 2019, there should be no change in your ratings. After July 1, the insurance rating may change to that of Jasper County Fire Rescue or the ISO may come in to re-evaluate the County. At that time, the

rating may change, but it is estimated to be a minimal change since the resources we will be placing in the contract areas are similar to what is currently in place and might not result in any change to the insurance premiums charged. Insurance company's homeowners and business insurance policies may use the ISO ratings for insurance rates, or they may choose not to. The ratings serve as a guide, and other factors, such as fire suppression systems and proximity to fire hydrants may be used to influence the actual policy cost for individual properties.

10. What if I have additional questions?

If you should have additional questions, you may contact the Jasper County Emergency Services office at 843-726-7607.

Fire Districts

