



E. "BEN" ZAHN III
MAYOR

CITY OF KENNER

News Release

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CITY OF KENNER FIRE DEPARTMENT ACHIEVES ELITE CLASS 1 STATUS

Kenner, LA. – For the first time in the history of the city, the City of Kenner Fire Department (KFD) has earned the Class 1 status from the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL), which is the highest ranking possible in the state, and joins only seven other departments to achieve this elite recognition.

Mayor Ben Zahn is pleased that his administration has been able to give this level of service thereby earning this prestigious achievement. "Kenner is only the eighth city in the state to reach this elite status, putting us in the top 1% of all fire departments in Louisiana. We are reportedly the 358th Class 1 in the country with our nation operating more than 45,000 fire departments. This makes the Kenner Fire Department in the top 0.4 percent of all fire departments in the United States."

This means there is an insurance premium reduction that now applies to the business community and residents of the city of Kenner. According to the Louisiana Department of Insurance in its bulletin 08-03, state law R.S. 22:1415.I.(1)(a) grants "that an insurer reduce an insured's premium whenever a public classification is changed by PIAL to reflect an improvement in the fire protection grade two to a fire protection grade one, the percentage of the amount of the premium reduction shall be uniform for all property in the area, regardless of whether the property is classified as commercial or residential."

Mayor Zahn selected Heather Hilliard, Assistant Director of Emergency Management, to lead efforts for Kenner in this PIAL achievement. She has used her extensive experience in fire compliance and emergency operations, audit as well as her corporate experience to help the city better prepare for and respond to events, both planned reviews like PIAL as well as unforeseen emergency incidents. Ms. Hilliard also led Kenner's SAFER grant application and successful award, which was a significant contribution for improving city safety and this Class 1 achievement.

Also contributing to these efforts for Class 1 status were Kenner's Interim Fire Chief Terence Morris, who began with improvements in suppression operations at KFD before appointed to being the city's fire chief. Also assisting were the two Chiefs of Administration, Charles Hudson and Ryan Bergeron. Keith

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Crimen, Jr., Chief of the Fire Prevention Bureau, who has served in prevention and inspection for KFD for more than a decade, was also an integral part of the SAFER grant achievements.

Identification of improvements in city processes and specifically steps needed in the fire department has led to Kenner achieving this elite status, gaining more than 13 points for the efforts focused on five categories of improvement that are rated by PIAL: communications, water supply and distribution, fire department equipment, operations, and community risk reduction. Within these major sections there are subsections reviewed, with hundreds of areas analyzed and improved for sustainable quality continuance.

PIAL Municipal Division Manager Blaine Rabe' conducted the review of KFD operations. "This is a community effort given all of the variables in operations. The team, led by Ms. Hilliard, ensured the fire department and supporting operations reached the highest benchmark led the city to have earned the Class 1 status."

"Though some members of the community have instigated misinformation or listened to rumors, they do not understand the work it takes to be top-of-class," shares Mayor Zahn. "There are 110 members of the Kenner Fire Department who not only have welcomed the change, but have helped in making improvements. Less than ten firefighters out of the 118 on staff are complaining or spreading misinformation. Our leadership has delivered improved service to the city. I want to recognize that we have many firefighters helping the city achieve this goal by going above and beyond for their community to show not only pride in their department, but also leadership in their guidance to get tasks completed. I want to personally thank all the men and women of the department who understood the importance of everything from testing hydrants, improving fire report details, improving dispatch techniques, increasing training hours, and much more – all improving quality of safety protection and response to the community."

"Our leadership team made sure that when the on-site occurred in May with PIAL, we exceeded the expectations of many in the community. We are focused on being a team, and this proves what team work brings to Kenner. We are Kenner Proud."

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