

## 2018 JMGBL Awards Application

<b>Submission Date</b>	2018-06-22 10:33:41
<b>This application is for:</b>	J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award
<b>Project Title</b>	Improving Fire Service
<b>County/Countries</b>	Marlboro
<b>Staff Contact</b>	Ron Munnerlyn
<b>Job Title</b>	County Administrator
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<b>Please provide a summary of your entry (no more than 100 words) to be used in a handout for the awards competition and included in press releases/publications. You may either type the summary in the text box or upload it as an attachment below.</b>	<p>In 2009, Marlboro County Council faced a number of serious issues related to fire service in the County. These issues included: a decline in the recruitment/retention of volunteer firemen, fire stations and equipment in desperate need of replacement, fire departments operating each in their own unique manner and large geographic areas of the county with a Class 9 insurance ratings, the worst possible rating. Recognizing these problems, Marlboro County Council along with the leaders of the county fire districts undertook an initiative to rectify these issues and improve upon the safety of its citizens and reduce fire insurance premiums.</p>
<b>Presentations may include more than one speaker; however, each speaker should be aware that the 10-minute time limit is strictly enforced. Please list the name, title, and e-mail address of each speaker:</b>	<p>Ron Munnerlyn Marlboro County Administrator Email: jrmunnerlyn@marlborocounty.sc.gov</p>
<b>Will any of the speakers need accommodations (wheelchair accessibility, etc.) during the competition?</b>	No

From their inception until the early part of 2000, Marlboro County's rural fire service was comprised of five fire districts, each funded by a dedicated fire tax millage collected by the County, then dispersed to each department annually. These districts were governed by a chief and set of officers and operated independently of each other with the exception of mutual aid agreements.

The system had worked well for thirty or more years, however in the late 2000's it became clear that there was a need to reevaluate this operating structure. In 2009, Marlboro County Council found itself facing a number of serious issues related to fire service in the County. These issues included: 1) A steep decline in the recruitment/retention of volunteer firemen, 2) fire stations and key equipment in desperate need of replacement, 3) fire departments operating each in their own unique manner and 4) large geographic areas of the county with Class 9 insurance ratings, the worst possible rating.

Recognizing these problems, Marlboro County Council, along with the leaders of the various fire districts in the county, undertook an initiative to rectify these issues and improve upon the safety of its citizens and reduce fire insurance premiums.

The first step taken was to hire a professional Fire Coordinator who, as a staff member of the County Administrator, would ensure that future improvement efforts were properly managed and synchronized county-wide.

The County then commissioned a comprehensive ISO study of the existing fire program. This plan created a "road map" from which all other elements of the improvement strategy would be drafted. A committee of fire officials, county council and the Fire Coordinator reviewed the plan and provided input in its final draft. The plan was then adopted by County and additional tax millage was added to fund the changes outlined in the plan.

In the five years since the plan was adopted, the fire service has made great strides in improving the issues identified in 2009. In the last eighteen months alone, three fire stations have been constructed. Additionally three new pumper trucks and three new engines have been purchased for departments.

Fire districts now coordinate their purchases of equipment or supplies with the county Fire Coordinator. This Coordinator also assist departments by scheduling and organizing training programs thereby ensuring proper training at the best possible cost.

Council also addressed the issue of declining number of volunteer firefighters by adopting a pay-per-call policy which compensates volunteers on a per call basis each year. Council approved the employment of full time paid staff during the daylight hours to provide the base of firefighters necessary to insure quick response.

All of these changes have resulted in faster response times with better equipment and drastically decreased insurance premium for some citizens as no area of the county has less than a Class 5 ISO rating.

The ISO plan and subsequent strategy developed in 2009 continues to be the guideline for all fire department activities and operations. Continuing with this plan, another new station will be constructed in the next eighteen months as well as continued capital purchases to upgrade and replace aging equipment.











Brownsville New Fire Station – Construction Completed 11/8/2017



Old Clio Fire Station





Clio's New Fire Station – Constructed Completed December 5, 2017



Old Brownsville Fire Station



Brightsville Fire Station – Constructed Completed May 22, 2018