

## Valdosta Daily Times

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### Lake Park gets lower ISO Rating

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LAKE PARK — The City of Lake Park received a bit of much-anticipated good news recently when ISO gave the fire department a positive review. According to a letter dated



Pictured are members of the Lake Park Fire/Rescue department: Daniel Brown, Chief David Brown, Bob Elworthy, Kyle Meeks, and Joey Perkins. The ISO rating for Lake Park's fire department has been lowered after the city's first ISO review in 22 years. Photo by: Paul Leavy

Aug. 30 to Lake Park Mayor Walter Sandlin, the city's Public Protection Classification, commonly known as an ISO rating, was lowered from an 8 to a 6.

"It is a pretty big thing for us to be able to pull that off since we are such a small city," said Lake Park City Council Mayor Pro Tem Eric Schindler. "Our goal is to lower it more in the future." Lake Park Fire/Rescue Chief David Brown said it's been 22 years since the city

has had an ISO visit. The ISO Public Protection Classification Service gauges the capacity of the Lake Park Fire/Rescue to respond if flames engulf a property. The best rating is a 1, and it generally represents superior property fire protection. Brown said that only the City of Macon has earned that rating. The worst rating is a 10, which indicates that the area's fire-suppression program basically does not exist, he added. "ISO's rating shows that we are on the right track. It shows," Brown continued, "that we are making significant improvements." "Of course, we're not done yet," Schindler added. "We're not stopping there." It took about 14 months of hard work, countless hours testing fire hydrants and hoses for the city to earn the lower rating. Two fire trucks Lake Park Fire/Rescue recently obtained also helped. When Brown was named chief of the all-volunteer fire department, he said he told the city council to give him three years to turn things around. He was surprised by the ISO visit and was delighted with the end result. "I thought, 'There's no way we are ready for this,'" Brown added, giving credit to his firefighters, his wife, the mayor, the city council, and the citizens. He even thanked the Valdosta Fire Department for helping him stock his trucks until an Assistance to Firefighters Grant could be applied for. "It was quite a challenge," Schindler said. "The people of Lake Park told us they wanted a top class fire department and that's what we gave them." Both men hope the lower ISO rating will help city leaders attract new business into the area. "We have a great city, and we only want to make it even better," Schindler noted. "We are always striving for better," Brown said.

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The emblem for Lake Park Fire/Rescue is shown on the side of their new fire trucks.