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PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Kimberly Bruce

Strategic Communications Manager

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Phone: 779-348-7331

E-mail: Kimberly.Bruce@rockfordil.gov

ROCKFORD FIRE HOSTS STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION; GATHERS COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Rockford, IL - More than 120 members of the community gathered at Klehm Arboretum today to offer feedback as part of the Rockford Fire Department's strategic planning process. The session, facilitated by the Center for Public Safety Excellence, sought insights from the public that would help aide in the development of the department's roadmap for the next three to five years.

"It's important to gather information from the constituents we serve so that we are able to best meet the stated needs of the community," said Derek Bergsten, fire chief. "The information gathered today and in the next three days of internal planning will help us develop a comprehensive, community-driven strategic plan."

Chief Bergsten and other fire leadership welcomed attendees before exiting to ensure an open and candid facilitation. Participants engaged in a variety of individual exercises. Activities included a direct comparison and prioritization of key services such as fire suppression, emergency medical services, public fire/EMS safety education, rescue, domestic preparedness planning and response and addressed customer expectations, concerns, and strengths. Attendees submitted completed worksheets before leaving which will be used as the department continues the planning and development process internally for the next three days.

The community was well represented across a broad spectrum of areas and attendees were eager to share their thoughts. Michelle Mehren, assistant director of graduate programs at Rockford University stated, "I think the fire department is doing amazing things and I value the opportunity to be able to meaningfully contribute to the strategic plan so they can continue serving the community with the high caliber of service we've come to expect."

The strategic plan is anticipated to be available for public review by Fall 2015.

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