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NEWS RELEASE

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Beaufort County Becomes First South Carolina Inspection and Code Enforcement Agency to Earn IAS Building Department Accreditation

The Beaufort County Inspection and Code Enforcement Department is the first building department in South Carolina to earn Building Department Accreditation from the International Accreditation Service (IAS). The accreditation is based on the IAS Accreditation Criteria for Building Departments/Code Enforcement Agencies (AC251). The accreditation verifies that the Beaufort County Inspection and Code Enforcement Department is operating at the highest legal, ethical and technical standards.

Located in the southeastern corner of South Carolina, Beaufort County is the state's fastest growing community based on population and building permits issued. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county grew over 24 percent from 2000 to 2008. It issued 1,375 building permits in 2008 and 1,424 in 2009 with a small but highly efficient staff of eighteen people. Added to this rapid growth, the county is in the midst of adopting the 2009 *International Building Codes*.

Arthur Cummings, Building Codes Director for Beaufort County, says, "We are especially proud to be the first South Carolina building inspection department to earn this achievement. Accreditation is the benchmark of excellence and provides our residents and builders a high level of confidence in our ability to carry out our mission at the highest level of public service. The process has helped us become more efficient, demand more of ourselves and to always seek new ways to improve the delivery of our service."

AC251, modeled on the international peer review process, begins with the completion of a comprehensive information questionnaire followed by an on-site evaluation. The questionnaire requires full disclosure in a report by the department on details about the size of the jurisdiction as well as its internal practices for everything from plan reviews and permits to inspections and implementation of its adopted construction codes. The report outlines basic jurisdictional information and assesses processes related to permitting, budget, construction codes, plan reviews, professional credentials, licenses, inspections, certificates of occupancy, on-site evaluations, annual reports, service goals, complaints and appeals.

Beaufort County submitted the report to the IAS Building Department Accreditation (BDA) peer evaluation team for review and consideration prior to an on-site evaluation. IAS BDA teams comprise expert peer evaluators who have worked for and studied building departments across the country using IAS's compilation of best practices. Subsequently, the IAS evaluation team conducted a visit to assess the department's compliance with industry best practices related to building department operations.

The County Inspection and Code Enforcement Department received IAS Building Department Accreditation on March 19, 2010.

Beaufort County Inspection and Code Enforcement Department serves a population of approximately 150,000 according to the 2008 U.S. Census report. The U.S. Marine Corps and Navy, tourism, golfing, shrimp/seafood are Beaufort County's major economic contributors.

IAS accredits special inspection agencies, product certification agencies, inspection programs for metal building manufacturers, fabricator inspection programs, testing and calibration laboratories, inspection agencies, training agencies, curriculum developers, field evaluation bodies, building departments and building department service providers. A recognized accreditation body since 1975, IAS is a nonprofit, public benefit corporation and a subsidiary of the International Code Council (ICC). IAS is one of the leading accreditation bodies in the United States and a signatory to several international mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs).

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