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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The City of Port St. Lucie's Building Department One of Best in the World

PORT ST. LUCIE (Dec. 22, 2016) – The City of Port St. Lucie's Building Department has earned the distinguished honor of being among only 25 similar departments to be fully accredited by the International Accreditation Service.

After an 18-month process, Port St. Lucie's Building Department learned Tuesday it had achieved full accreditation by the IAS, which is a subsidiary of the International Code Council. Accreditation sets the standard of excellence for the profession. This accomplishment puts the City's Building Department among the best across the globe for timeliness, quality assurance and customer service.

"Only 25 building departments in the entire world have ever achieved accreditation," said Port St. Lucie Building Code Administrator Joel A. Dramis. "We are now considered to be one of the best in the world."

The IAS conducted an intense pre-evaluation of the City's operations on Feb. 24 and 25, 2016. The pre-evaluation included personal observation of all department activities, interviews with stakeholders, elected officials, trade association leaders and staff. It conducted a full evaluation on Sept. 28 to Sept. 30, 2016 and a final hearing on Dec. 20, 2016. The three main areas for review were timeliness, quality assurance and customer service.

Five of Port St. Lucie's department-created initiatives, including the "Construction Advantage Program" will be considered for inclusion in the Building Department Best Practices Manual, and one of its employees has served on the evaluation team to review another building department.

The advantages to contractors and residents who utilize a fully accredited building department, such as Port St. Lucie's, are: All activities are subject to established and posted timelines, accuracy is validated by a quality assurance process and they receive the highest level of customer service.

IAS also will send notification to the Insurance Services Office-ISO, for possible reduction in property insurance premiums for those who own property in the City of Port St. Lucie. The ISO evaluates every building department in the United States every five years. The results of the last evaluation ranked the City of Port St. Lucie highest in St. Lucie County, the State of Florida and the entire nation.

This distinguished accreditation will allow Port St. Lucie's Building Department to attract more qualified candidates for employment in this highly competitive job market. Accreditation is a key tool to attracting new business. Staff will continue to develop initiatives to reduce timelines for all activities, improve customer service to the highest level and ensure quality and consistent performance of all work activities.

The policies and procedures the Port St. Lucie developed and put in place to ensure quality customer service include:

- Feedback surveys sent to each contractor following the completion of each permit, an in-depth survey sent to contractors when they complete large commercial permits.
- Discussion of customer service feedback at each of the 16 stakeholder meetings held annually.
- The City received 135 written compliments from our customers this calendar year on the level of service provided.
- A customer service topic is added to the agenda of each weekly Administration Staff meeting.
 - Supervisors are required to share this info and generate a discussion at each of their weekly staff meeting.
 - Each supervisor and manager is required to provide agenda and comments for review and add to the file.
- Each supervisor is also required to conduct "quality assurance reviews" of staff performance.

The entire quality assurance process for customer service is 100 percent paperless. IAS will conduct a follow-up review of the Port St. Lucie Building Department sometime within the next 12 months. The department will be subject to a re-accreditation every three years.

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The City of Port St. Lucie is proud to be a hometown where people live, learn, work and play, and celebrate all of life's opportunities. With over 179,000 residents, Port St. Lucie is Florida's eighth largest city by population (South Florida's 3rd largest city). The City occupies an area of 120 square miles in St. Lucie County on Florida's east coast, about 50 miles north of West Palm Beach, half way between Miami and Orlando. The City provides most traditional municipal services including law enforcement, water and sewer, and public works. For more information, please visit: www.cityofpsl.com

