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## Arkansas Forest Industry Has Many Opportunities for Military Veterans

**LITTLE ROCK, AR** – The second Veterans 4 Ag Summit recently took place at the University of Arkansas in Monticello and focused on opportunities for military veterans in the forest industry. Timber harvesting (also known as logging), forest product trucking, forestry fieldwork, and forest product manufacturing were identified among other career paths for military veterans who often have skill sets that align with these positions.

Larry Boccarossa, a retired United States Army Colonel and executive director of the Arkansas Timber Producers Association, served as the luncheon speaker. Colonel Boccarossa stated, “Veterans serve our nation selflessly and with a sense of purpose. They bring characteristics to the workforce that are desired of all employees such as discipline, resilience, agility, and loyalty. Every Veteran regardless of rank or length of service has experience in leading teams, managing multiple complex projects, and delivering the results expected of them.”

Beyond timber harvesting operations, attendees discussed opportunities at the Arkansas Agriculture Department’s Forestry Commission and the United States Forest Service, which actively seek individuals with skills in heavy equipment operation, mechanics, truck driving, firefighting, surveying, and radio communications. In addition to specialized skills, most military veterans are experienced leaders with proven management and team building skills.

Agriculture is our state’s largest industry and contributes over \$20 billion to our economy each year. Arkansas has a total population of approximately 3 million people and a veteran population of approximately 250,000, meaning that 1 out of every 12 people in our state are veterans. Veterans are an important part of our economy and will continue to play an important role in our state.

“If the timber and forest products industry is to continue as one of Arkansas’s leading economic contributors at over \$6.3 billion annually, it’s imperative that we attract talented, dedicated employees,” said Max Braswell, executive vice president of the Arkansas Forestry Association. “Having great people on your team is the key to success and the qualities veterans have certainly fits the bill.”

Military veterans looking for opportunities within the forestry industry should contact the [Arkansas Forestry Commission](#), [Arkansas Forestry Association](#), [Arkansas Timber Producers Association](#), [U.S. Forest Service](#), or the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#). Veterans interested in promoting agricultural products can benefit from the [Arkansas Homegrown by Heroes](#) program. Veterans 4 Ag Summit events are a partnership between the Arkansas Agriculture Department, the Arkansas Department of Veteran Affairs, and Arkansas Farm Bureau.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Learn more: [www.aad.arkansas.gov](http://www.aad.arkansas.gov).

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