



ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION
ARKANSAS LIVESTOCK & POULTRY COMMISSION
ARKANSAS STATE PLANT BOARD

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Arkansas Partners Train 350 Firefighters at 2019 River Valley Wildland Fire Academy

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Firefighter trainees, totaling 350, from 13 states are participating in the 2019 Arkansas River Valley Fire Academy at Arkansas Tech University to gain valuable wildland fire training from experienced professionals. The annual two-week event is hosted by the Arkansas Agriculture Department’s Forestry Commission, U. S. Forest Service, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and the National Park Service.

We are pleased to be a part of this valuable training program that teaches an array of wildland firefighting skills,” said Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward. “Having five additional states and 100 additional trainees participate this year is a testament to the quality of the training and the relationships within the forestry community.”

The Arkansas Agriculture Department and its partners in wildfire suppression, prescribed fire, and conservation combine hands-on exercises and classroom material to teach basic fire suppression, advanced suppression strategy and tactics, engine operation, dozer operation, Incident Command procedures, and more. All courses at the River Valley Fire Academy are accredited by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), which allows firefighters to gain required skills for wildland firefighting positions in Arkansas, and those required to assist on out-of-state wildfire incidents.

“The courses offered at the River Valley Fire Academy give wildland fire professionals the knowledge and hands-on training from experienced instructors,” said State Forester Joe Fox. “This training is critical to the safety of wildfire crews in Arkansas and in the southern states.”

Attendees include participants from the following federal, state, and private entities: Arkansas Agriculture Department, U.S. Forest Service, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Corps of Engineers, Arkansas State Parks, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Oklahoma Forest Service, several Arkansas municipal fire departments, and individuals from Oklahoma, Missouri, Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama, Texas, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia.

Planning is underway for the 2020 River Valley Wildland Fire Academy that will continue to offer classes that are specific to the needs of Arkansas wildland firefighters, a well-rounded agenda of diverse NWCG courses, and professional instructors that meet standards of excellence in training. Enrollment for the 2020 academy will open in early spring of next year.

The AAD 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. Visit www.agriculture.arkansas.gov

