First Emerging Leaders Program Class Graduates

The first class of the Arkansas Forestry Association Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) graduated this month after two years of learning from the program.

During that time, the class of 24 young professionals from various organizations, traveled all around the state to discuss different components that make up the forestry industry in Arkansas. Along with visiting mills, the class took time to learn about the economics of the industry during a session with Dr. Matt Pelkki with the UAM School of Forestry, Agriculture and Natural Resources and about how to teach forestry education through Project Learning Tree. Louisa Daniels and Chandler Barton were just two members of this inaugural class. Daniels, an employee of Green Bay Packaging, acted as a co-chair for the class along with Chris McQueen, an employee of Anthony Oak Flooring.

Daniels said everything the class participated in was great and that the program really gave them a chance to see things outside of the near focus of their job. Out of all the trips, Daniels' most memorable moments were the discussions between her and her classmates.

“Getting to talk with young people about our industry and issues that our industry is facing but then also with congressional staffers there too, I mean I found it hugely beneficial,” Daniels said. “They got to hear our perspective but it wasn’t just an informational session. It truly was an open discussion and I feel like for a lot of young people, they feel like their voices are not necessarily heard or they’re not involved in

2018 Filled with AFA Accomplishments

By: Max Braswell

2018 was another busy and successful year for the Arkansas Forestry Association. Here is a quick look at a sampling of at least one major accomplishment during each month of the year:

January – AFA heighted the profile of forestry within the greater Agriculture community by sharing the facts on forestry to both state and national leaders on topics ranging from the Farm Bill to Waters of the U.S. in meetings with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and Governor Asa Hutchinson.

February – The Association continued in its role as the Voice of Forestry in meetings with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and Arkansas Agriculture Department to help craft the state’s message to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the Waters of the U.S. issue.

March – The AFA Forest Practices Committee Best Management Practices (BMP) Task Group, working in partnership with the Arkansas Forestry Commission began an effort to evaluate and update the Arkansas BMP Guidelines for Water Quality. The process included meetings, tours and work with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Governor’s Office, which ultimately resulted in an updated BMP Manual in late 2018. In addition, AFA member Peggy Clark, who was the first female president of AFA in 2002, was inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame.

April – The Clinton Presidential Library was the site for the Arkansas Log A Load for Kids Program’s 25th Anniversary gala. Over 200 volunteers, supporters and special guests attended to celebrate the fundraising efforts and community events that have generated over $9 million to benefit Arkansas Children’s Hospital since the program began in 1993.
ELP Graduation, con’t.

all of those conversations because, again, you’re focus can be pretty limited based on what your job title is.”

She added that for some of the younger students in the class, having this opportunity was not only eye opening, but a meaningful experience. The engagement everyone had, she said, is what really made this program a great experience. Daniels said it wasn’t just going on some tours, it was having discussions like these to address and possibly solve various problems.

Barton, a forest health specialist and forest entomologist with the Arkansas Forestry Commission, said before the program, he was already involved with an AFA committee but wanted to do more. For him, seeing things he usually wouldn’t see in his position is what interested him. Those trips gave him a better understanding of what others in the industry do, so he can visualize it better when on the job.

“Just do it,” Daniels said. Each of these classmates advised others to simply join, even if you are just thinking about it. They said after these past two years, they have created strong bonds with the others in the class from all different parts of the forestry industry. Barton advised to attend every event with the program you can. He said the more you go to, the more you will get.

AFA is still receiving inquiries into the program and we have decided to keep registration open until January 15, 2019. If you are interested in becoming a member of the second class, you can contact Communications Coordinator Seth Stephenson at sstephenson@arkforests.org.

Arkansas Forestry Association Leadership for 2019

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Please Note:
For meetings that are held at the AFA Office, please park on the street or in one of the area lots -- do not park in the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce parking lot.
AFA Accomplishments, con’t.

**May** – The first class of the AFA Emerging Leaders Program was joined by Arkansas Congressional delegation staff members on a tour of the Central Arkansas Water Forest Legacy Property near Lake Maumelle. 2018 was the second year of the two-year program with the goal of providing leadership and professional development opportunities for the next generation of the forestry community in Arkansas.

**June** – Public education and outreach was the focus in June. Thirty-five teachers from across the state participated in the Teacher Conservation Tour. There were two sessions – Technology in the Forest and Woods and Wildlife. In addition, the annual Tree Farm Conference took place Arkadelphia with a focus on feral hog education and demonstrations on how to trap this invasive species. All-in-all, AFA and its partners doubled the number of Landowner workshops offered in 2018.

**July** – Another AFA member was honored when J.D. Neeley, president of Neeley Forestry Services in Camden, was appointed to the AR Game and Fish Commission by Governor Asa Hutchinson. Neeley is also the catalyst behind the creation of the “Give to Grow” program that raises money for Arkansas Children’s Hospital and the AFA Education Foundation through donations from Neeley Forestry hunting lease clients.

**August** – Speaking of both the Governor and Neeley, AFA was pleased to join them and other forestry partners on a tour of the Rogers Lumber facility in Camden as part of the Governor’s Ag Tour. Neeley coordinated the stop, hosted by Joe Rogers Jr., his father, Joe Rogers Sr., and members of the Rogers family. AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell and State Forester Joe Fox provided an overview of the Arkansas timber and forest products industry as part of the tour of the hardwood lumber mill.

**September** – In partnership with the American Forest Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Drax Biomass, the LA Forestry Association, AR Forestry Commission and other partners, AFA was proud to kick off its participation in the Morehouse Family Forest Initiative. AFA’s role will be to provide public education and outreach to landowners to encourage more sustainable forestry practices in four south-Arkansas counties – Ashley, Bradley, Cleveland and Drew, specifically targeted toward as-risk species protection.

**October** – The 73rd AFA Annual Meeting once again attracted more than 280 attendees from all sectors of the timber and forest products community October 2-4 at the Hotel Hot Springs/Hot Springs Convention Center. The meeting included recreational and social events, a forest management workshop and a day-long general session featuring topics on sustainability, the new PotlatchDeltic, AR Department of Agriculture programs and a history of forestry.

**November** – AFA, through its Forest Express Political Action Committee, supported 34 candidates for state office during the 2018 Primary and General elections. Thirty-one of those candidates won their races and will serve as a Constitutional Officer or member of the State Legislature when the 93rd General Assembly convenes January 14, 2019.

**December** – The ever-popular AR House and Senate Legislative Maps made their debut for 2019-2020 when AFA co-hosted an Orientation Breakfast for new members of the House of Representatives with the Arkansas Timber Producers Association and the Arkansas Forest and Paper Council. AFA coordinates the production of 1,500 sets of posters that are distributed free of charge.

Tree Farm Awards, con’t.

“I hope it keeps going the way it is now where we have a lot more participation,” Murphy said. “We grew our participation and I hope we can continue to grow our committee participation and continue to grow Tree Farm in Arkansas.”

Along with discussing the goals and ideas for the future, the committee recognized 10 volunteers for their outstanding work. Sam Denison with Silvicraft won the Gold Hard Hat Award, presented to tree farm inspectors who inspect 100 new tree farms over the course of their career. It is one of the highest awards given during the event. In addition, Denison won the Inspector of the Year Award.

Denison said he is in awe of the generosity of the Tree Farm system. His motivation to go out and do what he does is simply to provide good management for both the forester and landowner.

“A friend of mine said you racked up today,” Denison said. “Well, I don’t know that I racked up but it does show some significant appreciation on the part of the Tree Farm Program for some fairly hard work that I’ve done to try to be a part of something I believe in.”

The entire list of deserving award winners is below:

- **Outstanding District**
  - District 1

- **Inspector of the Year**
  - Sam Denison, Silvicraft

- **District Chair Award**
  - Trey Franks, Arkansas Forestry Commission

- **Agency Award**
  - Arkansas Forestry Commission

- **Corporate Award**
  - Anthony Timberlands

- **Gold Hard Hat Award**
  - Sam Denison

- **Bronze Hard Hat Award**
  - Mike Bailey, Jeff Berry and Andrew Hilton

- **Outgoing Chair**
  - Robert Murphy

Other notable accomplishments not included in the month-by-month summary include an overwhelming response to the new and improved Arkansas Tree Farm Program, which grew by 25% in 2018, continued collaboration with the Arkansas Forestry and Drinking Water community – including a tour of the Molpus Timberlands Group property near Arkadelphia, strong financial performance for AFA for the year, and plans for a successful advocacy effort during the upcoming 2019 General Session.
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