10 things
AFA has done
for its members lately...

1 Advocating for Fuel Price Relief – Skyrocketing fuel prices have severely impacted everyone, particularly logging professionals. AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell, ATPA Executive Director Larry Boccarossa, and State Representatives Ken Bragg and Lane Jean recently met with Governor Asa Hutchinson to clarify the impact and request that the Governor re-implement an emergency declaration that would allow log trucks to carry up to 90,000 pounds, similar to what was allowed during the early stages of the COVID pandemic. Members of the Legislative Forestry Caucus are now being asked to sign on to a letter of support that will be delivered to the Governor.

2 Celebrating 75 Years! – The Arkansas Forestry Association is celebrating its Diamond Anniversary in 2022, and plans are nearly complete for our October 11-13 annual meeting at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Little Rock. The AFA Program Committee has been at work for months to make our celebration memorable, educational, and fun. The meeting will include recreation, education, communication, celebration, libation, and much, much, more – so makes plans to attend!

3 Building Long-Range Value – The AFA Executive Committee and Board of Directors recently approved a Long-Range Plan to take the association to the next level in delivering value to its members. There are five key results areas – advocacy and recognition, workforce development, membership growth, and services, leveraging the AFA Education Foundation and AFA Building Maintenance and Sustainability. Work is well underway in implementing some of the plan’s top priorities in advocacy and workforce development.

4 Workforce Development is a Priority – AFA and AFAEF formally partnered with Be Pro Be Proud, a workforce development program coordinated by the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce. Be Pro Be Proud delivers a groundbreaking set of tools and resources designed to help students explore, plan and launch careers in today’s technical roles. We look forward to expanding the program’s timber and forest product opportunities.

5 AFA reaches out to County Judges – Having recently revitalized the AFA Loggers Committee, one of the group’s first priorities is to improve relationships and communication with the state’s 75 County Judges. AFA EVP Max Braswell and committee members have so far met with Judges in Ashley, Clark, Grant, and Saline counties to learn about important issues, what’s working and what’s not, and to find new ways to collaborate.

6 Telling our story – AFA emphasizes telling the forestry story – it’s a part of everything we do. In 2022 AFA published its first true annual report, which captured a multitude of accomplishments; AFA Executive Vice President Max Braswell was the keynote speaker at the Monticello Chamber of Commerce banquet, and our monthly “Voices of Forestry” podcasts, Women Owning Woodlands, and general landowner virtual workshops, and have appeared twice this year on KATV’s Good Morning Arkansas to showcase the value of private working forests and forestry’s impact on water quality.

7 Special Events Abound – Special events and partnerships are another way AFA tells its story. So far in 2022, AFA participated in the groundbreaking for a Habitat for Humanity home in Saline County, spearheaded by Resource Management Service, presented information on the Association and Tree Farm Program at the Registered Foresters training day, and hosted AFA Night with the Arkansas Travelers; facilitated the late Russ Reynolds’ induction into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame and traveled to Fairfield Bay to host the annual Spring Board of Directors meeting – just to name a few.

8 Arkansas Forestry Sector on Display – The Arkansas Forestry sector is drawing appreciation both inside and outside the state. In 2022, AFA has partnered with the National Alliance of Forest Owners to host its Spring Operating Committee meeting, which included a tour of the Structurlam CLT plant in Conway; coordinated a Tree Farm stop as part of Congressman Bruce Westerman’s tour with fellow members of the House of Representatives Western Caucus; and garnered financial support from multiple AFA members to help produce two episodes of the acclaimed series “America’sForests with Chuck Leavell” which aired on PBS across the United States, touting the positive impact Arkansas forests have on the state.

9 Teacher Conservation Tour (TCT) Sizzles this Summer – The Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation completed three successful sessions of the annual TCT, hosting 60 formal and non-formal educators this summer. Participants braved the heat to learn about pollinators, the benefits of prescribed fire, and the relationship between healthy, working forests and water quality. The TCT helps educators integrate environmental education into their classrooms using tools such as Project Learning Tree, an internationally recognized curriculum that meets the Arkansas State Teaching Standards.

10 Emerging Leaders Next in Line – AFA continues to provide opportunities for the next generation of forestry leaders through its Emerging Leaders Program. The two-year program includes tours, informational presentations, and active participation in AFA events. In 2022, the group visited the Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division Baucom Nursery and Domtar’s Ashdown Mill. Future tours will include Structurlam in Conway and opportunities to see the 2022 AR Tree Farm of the Year.

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