



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Urban Forest Strike Team to assess damage in Fayetteville

An Urban Forest Strike Team will begin work February 27 through March 6 in Fayetteville. The strike team, requested by Mayor Lioneld Jordan, will evaluate publicly-owned trees damaged by the recent ice storm and collect data to be used in applying for FEMA reimbursement. The Urban Forest Strike Team is a project of the Southern Group of State Foresters.

The strike team consists of five crews of certified arborists trained for post-disaster assessment of trees for public risk. Assisting with this effort is Greg Howe, Fayetteville City Urban Forester. Crews and vehicles will be marked Urban Forest Strike Team (UFST). Trees assessed will be marked with a small paint "dot" that indicates eligibility for FEMA debris reimbursement. Orange indicates a tree removal (i.e. extensive damage), and white indicates tree pruning (i.e. broken limb removal). The areas to be assessed include some street trees and trees located in city parks.

Communities receiving this support benefit by having trained professionals provide tree management information in a timely manner for response and recovery.

"I can't think of a better example of where citizen tax monies are spent more effectively for the greater good for the greater number than through this program" said Robert Epperson, Director of Parks Operations for the City of Baton Rouge. The strike team provided support after Hurricane Gustav quickly overwhelmed their local resources.

Strike team arborists assisting with this effort represent the following states and/or organizations: Arkansas Forestry Commission, Texas Forest Service, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, Virginia Department of Forestry, Fairfax County, Virginia and the USDA Forest Service.

For homeowners concerned about damaged trees on their property, AFC recommends hiring a certified arborist with proof of insurance, and warns homeowners to be wary of drive-by tree services. For more information on finding a certified arborist, ice storm cleanup and tree health, visit the Arkansas Forestry Commission web site at www.arkansasforestry.org, or call (501) 296-1940. Greg Howe, Fayetteville City Urban Forester can be reached at (479) 447-3470.

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The Arkansas Forestry Commission offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Southern Group of State Foresters is a non-profit organization consisting of State Foresters from across the South working together to promote the benefits of southern forests and For more information about the Southern Group of State Foresters, visit <http://www.southernforests.org>