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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 5/11/2021

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Foresters for the Future Scholarship Announced

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Forestry Division and the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) are pleased to announce a new scholarship opportunity, Foresters for the Future. The scholarship will provide \$4,000 per semester, for four years, to an incoming freshman pursuing a forestry degree at UAM’s College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources.

Applications will be accepted through June 15. Students interested in the scholarship can find more information on the UAM website at <https://www.uamont.edu/academics/CFANR/index.html>.

“Arkansas has nearly 19 million acres of forests with over 12 billion trees,” said State Forester Joe Fox. “This scholarship is a wonderful opportunity for a future forester to obtain a quality education and move into a dynamic and rewarding career field.”

The scholarship program was established by Act 399 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Arkansas General Assembly. The underlying legislation, House Bill 1389, was sponsored by Representative Ken Bragg and Senator Ben Gilmore and was signed into law by Governor Hutchinson on March 17, 2021.

“As the only professional forester in the Arkansas Legislature, I have had the privilege of representing several concerns that affect our forest industry. One of the current concerns is the shortage of students pursuing forestry degrees,” said Representative Bragg. “The goal of Act 399 is to provide a sustainable supply of foresters in Arkansas for an industry that is poised for growth.”

UAM and the Forestry Division hope the scholarship will entice students to pursue forestry as a career. UAM expects to graduate 13 students with forestry degrees this year, their largest class of foresters in several years. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics the average age of foresters in 2020 was 47.

“Foresters play a pivotal role in the state’s economy, and UAM is proud to have trained so many alumni who excel in the profession nationwide,” said Dr. Peggy Doss, UAM Chancellor. “The creation of this scholarship means it will be even more attractive and affordable for students to get connected to the forestry industry, particularly in Arkansas, where we hope to retain their vital skills to benefit the state.”

“For the last several years, retirements in the forestry profession have outpaced the recruitment and preparation of the next generation of forestry professionals. The Arkansas Foresters for the Future Scholarship provides more than just financial support for students pursuing their passion for a career that allows them to work outdoors and make a difference in how our future forests are managed,” said Dr. Robert Ficklin, Interim Dean and Director of UAM College of Forestry, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture 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 agriculture.arkansas.gov/. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The College of Forestry, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Arkansas Forest Resources Center, a University of Arkansas System Center of Excellence, brings together interdisciplinary expertise through a partnership between the University of Arkansas at Monticello and the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. The College and Center are headquartered at the University of Arkansas at Monticello campus, but their programs range statewide with the mission of developing and delivering teaching, research, and extension programs that enhance and ensure the sustainability and productivity of forest-based natural resources and agricultural systems. Academic programs are delivered by the College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources through the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Through the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, research is administered by the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, and extension and outreach activities are coordinated by the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

The University of Arkansas at Monticello offers all of their programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and are Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employers.