

256 River Valley Students Learn About Green Careers at AFAEF Expo

Over 250 students from the River Valley area gathered at Arkansas Tech University in late October to learn more about the potential job opportunities in the green sector at the third annual Green Careers Expo.

The morning of October 22 saw multiple school buses from various school districts pulling up to the expo hosted by the Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation in partnership with the Arkansas Environmental Education Association. This event, which first started in 2022 is designed to get students in front of green jobs professionals to learn more about their craft.

In all, 256 students from 18 schools attended the all-day event. Each had a chance to speak with 28 different exhibitors including Green Bay Packaging, Quail Forever, Arkansas State Parks, and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division.

“This is one of my favorite events of the year,” said Ericka Hincke with the USDA Forest Service. “It’s a great time to connect with students who are in that stage of thinking about potential careers. It is a special thing to see the wheels turning in their mind and watch their eyes light up when they see all the different opportunities that are out there.”

One of the school’s educators shared how events like the Green Careers Expo has made a direct impact on students. She shared that in October, her students focused on green careers. One of the students attended the River Valley Education Summit, a Green Careers talk hosted by AFAEF Director of Forestry Education Rob Beadel, and the Green Careers Expo. As a result of all these opportunities, that student recently applied to the University of Arkansas – Monticello to pursue a degree in natural resources with a focus on forestry.

In an after-event survey another educator said, “I’ve had several students tell me they thought this would be lame but it’s actually really cool. That’s probably the best feedback possible from that age group!”

The event is designed to travel to different parts of the state each year. This allows more students the chance to get exposed to new information regarding green careers. Planning is currently underway for 2025 with potential venues that include Arkadelphia or El Dorado.

