
ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION LOOKING AT AROUND 100 LAYOFFS



The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) in Montgomery is looking at a \$5 million budget deficit for the next fiscal year. Based on current estimates, they are looking at letting go one-third of their 309-member staff by October 1, approximately 100 employees. "We don't want to alarm people," State Forester Linda Casey explained, "however, a reduced number of firefighters will result in increased size and severity of wildfires, making suppression more difficult, as well as magnifying safety and fatigue issues for AFC firefighters. As fewer firefighters are required to cover a larger territory, response time will increase. This decrease in protection may particularly affect the homes and personal property of citizens living in rural areas, as well as the Wildland Urban Interface . . . the area where communities meet the forestland."

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