

**MINUTES**  
**RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS STUDY COMMITTEE**

May 19, 2015

The Rural Fire Departments Study Committee met at 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, May 19, 2015, in the Pope Room, Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Representative James Ratliff, Co-Chair; Senator Greg Standridge, Co-Chair; Representatives Charlene Fite, Ron McNair, John Vines; Senators Eddie Cheatham, Jane English, Scott Flippo, Larry Teague, and Jon Woods. Non-legislative members: Larry Atkinson, Joe Fox, Charles Gangluff, Alex Johnston, Kevin McMasters, Richard Sims, Jimmy Sullivant, and Lynn Zeno.

Other legislators present: Senators Linda Collins-Smith and Jonathan Dismang; Representatives Scott Baltz, Rick Beck, Camille Bennett, Mary Bentley, Charlotte Vining Douglas, Lance Eads, Lanny Fite, Bill Gossage, Kim Hammer, Douglas House, Sheilla Lampkin, Micah Neal, Betty Overbey, Matt Pitsch, James Sorvillo, Dan Sullivan, and Dwight Tosh.

Representative Ratliff called the meeting to order.

**Welcoming Remarks by Co-Chairs**

Representative Ratliff and Senator Standridge welcomed committee members and guests to the meeting.

Joe Fox, Director, Arkansas Forestry Commission, reported that Arkansas acquired \$42,482,504 in equipment issued by the Department of Defense. In March and April of this year, the Forestry Commission Rural Fire Protection Program (RFP) provided firefighting vehicles and/or generators to 29 fire departments across 22 counties; five interest-free loans, totaling \$80,551; and general firefighting equipment valued at over \$67,000. **(Handout 1)**

**Overview of Act 693 and Act 1032 of 2015 by Representative Kim Hammer (Exhibit C.1) (Handouts 2, 3, & 4)**

Representative Hammer presented a report on the federal excess tanker trucks available for fire departments. Currently, there are 4 tankers ready to be issued; 3 tankers at the prison; 4 tankers at AFC Greenbrier waiting for repairs; 26 tankers assigned and waiting to go through the AFC shop; and 60 additional fire department requests for tankers. Representative Hammer provided an overview of Act 693, which amends the law concerning the collection of dues for volunteer fire departments and referenced a report by the Association of Arkansas Counties that states Act 693 will give volunteer fire departments an alternative means of obtaining voter approval for the measure without the costs and uncertainty of an election. He also spoke on Act 1032 of 2015 which amends the membership and tasks of the Rural Fire Departments Study Committee.

Representative Hammer requested the committee draft a letter to the federal delegation asking that Arkansas be placed at the top of the list whenever freightliners become available.

Representative Hammer requested the committee help draft a list of recommendations/qualifications as to who should be considered or recognized as an ISO consultant in the state and present the list to the Department of Rural Services.

**Representative Ratliff advised the above requests will be further discussed by the committee at a future meeting.**

David Steele, Fire Supply & Consulting, spoke on the merits of Act 693 of 2015 and provided a list of qualifications for an ISO consultant. **(Handout 5)**

Ken Brown, Choctaw Fire Department, spoke on the savings incurred by hiring an ISO consultant to review department records. The ISO rating decreased from class 9 to class 5, resulting in a savings of 3 cents per dollar.

Dwayne Franklin, ISO consultant, briefed the committee on the certifications and responsibilities of a consultant and provided several examples of how fire departments benefit from these services.

Rachel Nix, Director, Arkansas Fire Training Academy, said the academy receives monthly run reports from fire departments and, if needed, she will be happy to provide statistics to the committee.

**Update on Act 833 Funding (Exhibit D)**

Richard Drilling, Fiscal Accounting Manager, Department of Finance and Administration; and Kendall Snyder, Office of Fire Services, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, provided an update on Act 833 funding for 2015. The report includes all funds received for the first and second quarters of calendar year 2015 and payments made through May 7, 2015.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.