

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

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Oklahoma Forestry Services earns finalist recognition for State Transformation in Action Recognition (STAR) award

Wildfire planning and safety occurs every day.

Whether it's raining, snowing or clear, the Oklahoma Forestry Services (OFS) is working today and every day to ensure that when wildfires occur, the response is both safe and efficient.

Take for example Oklahoma Forestry Services' use of ESRI's Collector App, a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based mapping application used on mobile devices. The app was among six finalists this summer for the State Transformation in Action Recognition (STAR) award.

The Collector App provides near real-time wildfire information to incident personnel in an effort to build a common operating picture on things such as safety, tactics and hazards.

Andy James, OFS Community Wildfire Preparedness Forester, said in a word, this program serves Oklahomans by providing "safety."

This app helps firefighters develop and communicate situational awareness. It also helps them organize rapidly, deploy fire suppression resources, and employ tactics.

"What typically took fire managers hours or even days to assemble and communicate, can now be accomplished nearly real-time by simply pushing a few buttons on a mobile device," James said. "Incident stabilization can be achieved much quicker and in return, firefighter safety enhanced."

The STAR is a regional award presented at the Southern Legislative Conference for innovative state policies and initiatives. Each project submitted was evaluated on creativity, impact, transferability and effectiveness. The 69th Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments was held this July in Savannah, Ga.

Mark Goeller, Assistant Director/Fire Management Chief for the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry, spent countless hours working on grant applications to find funding for the mobile devices and licenses necessary to get the product in the hands of Oklahoma firefighters, according to James.

“I believe the Collector App was nominated (as a finalist) because there is no other tool in the wildfire management arena that offers the data collection abilities associated with Collector,” James said. “It is very user friendly, can be used by any brand of smartphone/tablet, visually communicates strategy/tactics, and mobile devices can be linked together providing that ‘common operating picture’ that is critical in wildland fire suppression.”

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Photo caption:

Shown is the Oklahoma Forestry Services use of Esri’s Collector App -- a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based mapping application used on mobile devices -- while fighting a wildfire in March near Woodward.