



Another Step Taken for Disaster Response Training Center

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JONESBORO – The Regional Center for Disaster Preparedness Education at Arkansas State University Monday evening completed another step toward establishing a training center in Lawrence County for professional disaster response personnel.

The Walnut Ridge City Council adopted a resolution confirming support from the Council and Mayor Charles Snapp for construction of a disaster training center on 80 acres of land at the Walnut Ridge Regional Airport. The resolution noted the training center would be in the city's best interest because of the large number of visitors it would bring to the community, making a positive impact on economic development.

At earlier public meetings, the Center has secured support from the Walnut Ridge Airport Commission and the Imboden City Council.

Preliminary plans call for an 80-acre training facility on airport property and a 200-acre training zone at Imboden, according to Dr. Deborah Persell, director of the regional center.

At the time of the Airport Commission decision, Persell said, "We have always approached the education and training for disaster preparedness from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The type of facility being proposed elevates what is possible in education and training to parallel real-world events and provide an immersion-type environment of collaboration among multiple planning and response agencies."

The College of Nursing and Health Professions, where the disaster preparedness and emergency management (DPEM) program is based, prepares students for careers in a variety of health-related fields.

The Regional Center for Disaster Preparedness Education at Arkansas State University is an official regional training center recognized by the American Medical Association and National Disaster Life Support Foundation.

The Center was created in 2005 in response to an unmet need for disaster education within the health professions. It offers courses in basic and advanced disaster life support, homeland security, and emergency management.

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