



Centennial Job Corps Center Students Support Firefighting Through Camp Crew Assignments

In the back parking lot of the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) seven workers wear neon green shirts with "Camp Crew" logo written across the back. They stand out: they're younger and their bright T-shirts contrast with those of the other older personnel. As the crew works among large mounds of fire hose spread throughout the lot, it's obvious they have one thing on their mind: preparing with excellence the hose for the next fire.

As the camp crew works to support fire operations, military veteran Loren VanHorn supports them as the Camp Crew Boss.

Five years ago VanHorn was exploring retirement options after serving 20 years in the military when a former supervisor and friend mentioned the Centennial Job Corps in Nampa, Idaho. He's been with Centennial ever since.

"As a leader and mentor to these young adults, it is very satisfying when I see them begin to work as a team," VanHorn said. "You can see that moment when they learn it's easier to work together to achieve goals."

For the 2016 fire season, the Boise National Forest worked with the Center to hire four retired military veterans who oversee two Camp Crews consisting of ten students each. These veterans bring command presence, leadership, solid work ethic, making decisions under stress, and serve as excellent student mentors for future career ambitions.

The Centennial Job Corps program has several trade programs for all students such as carpentry, welding, and nursing. Any student interested in being involved with wildfire support can apply outside their trade as long as they have 30 percent accomplished in their trade with limited disciplinary infractions. Camp Crews also work at Incident Command Posts providing support to the logistic sections and have even helped radio technicians on incidents.

"My job and goal is to prepare and mentor these students for the challenges of fire support assignments, working in a stressful environment as a team, and supporting them in-part with the skill sets I learned in the military – leadership, honor and a work ethic," VanHorn said.

Forest Service Centennial Job Corps Assistant Fire Management Officer Mike Towers added that students in the Job Corps Fire Program are looked up to by the Centennial student body.

"They all know that their peers who volunteer for the program demonstrate integrity, solid work ethics, making decisions under stress, and serve as excellent mentors," said Towers. "Having retired veterans is an added bonus and we are very fortunate to have them as Camp Crew Bosses."

"I am extremely proud of all of these students and veterans and their contribution to the success of the Centennial Job Corps Camp Crews," Towers emphasized. Together they are a testament to hard work, determination, with a willingness to succeed and are the true back bone to the success of the Centennial Job Corps camp crews."

Photos—Centennial Job Corps Center Students Support Firefighting

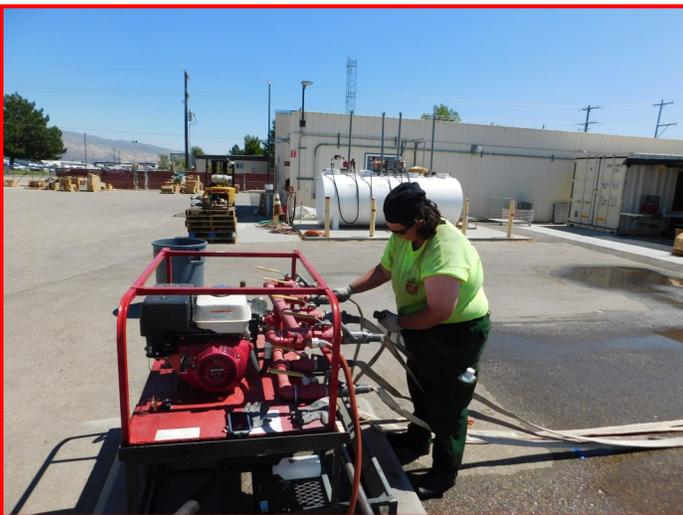
Photos by Erin Darboven



Loren VanHorn, Crewleader, supervising the Camp Crew at the National Interagency Fire Center.



Camp Crew member working on hoses to prepare for more fireline use.



Camp Crew members clean hose to return to the fireline.



Camp Crew members clean hose to return for drying and rolling.



Piles of used hoses from the fireline to clean and prepare for more use.

