

Goals

Some notable goals that the Center of Excellence hopes to achieve within the next five years include:

- By the 2017 Fire Season, the CoE will have developed or created a product or procedure that is being used regularly in Colorado wildland firefighting.
- By 2019, the CoE will host an international conference on advanced technology aerial firefighting here in Colorado.
- By 2019, the CoE will have established statewide standards for determining the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of aerial firefighting.

Location

The Center of Excellence will be located at the Rifle-Garfield County Airport, positioning it for success. Rifle is home to the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management facility, which houses BLM, USFS, Colorado River Fire Rescue, and Division of Fire Prevention and Control resources. It offers close proximity to the Grand Junction Air Center, which provides tactical aircraft resources (air tankers, smokejumpers, lead planes, and air attack) for initial attack and large incident support. In addition, Rifle is close to open lands and uncontrolled airspace with a variety of terrain, close proximity to high-risk wildfire areas, high altitude locations, and nearby watersheds that source much of the drinking water for nearby states.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephany Richards, USAF



Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting



Our Mission

To protect the citizens, land, and resources in Colorado, the Center of Excellence will research, test, and evaluate existing and new technologies that support sustainable, effective, and efficient aerial firefighting techniques.

Our Vision

The Center of Excellence is the worldwide leader in collaboratively researching and developing innovative technologies and capabilities supporting or related to aerial firefighting.

COLORADO

Division of Fire Prevention & Control

Department of Public Safety

Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control
690 Kipling Street, Suite 2000
Lakewood, CO 80215
Phone: 303-239-4600
Fax: 303-239-5887

For more information, please visit
www.dfpc.state.co.us



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Photo by Senior Airman Kendra Alba, USAF

Background

Senate Bill 14-164, which also authorized the Division of Fire Prevention and Control to purchase or contract for aerial firefighting assets, created the Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting (CoE). During the legislative session, proponents of the CoE explained that there is currently no mechanism for determining the efficacy of aerial firefighting, and that the need exists for an innovative, science and data focused research entity. For this reason, the CoE will be an integral part of ensuring the successful implementation of Colorado's own aerial firefighting fleet.



Photo by Michael Rieger, FEMA

Example Project Types

The Center of Excellence will research, test, and evaluate existing and new technologies that support sustainable, effective, and efficient aerial firefighting technique. The Center will welcome project suggestions from everyone in Colorado's wildland firefighting community. Some projects that have already been proposed include night operations on fire, implementing more sustainable contract models, and identifying better ways to locate ground resources from the air.

Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting Project Timeline

