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**UAA houses hotshot fire crews**

For the 11th summer, a mobile command center has been established at the University of Alaska Anchorage to coordinate hotshot firefighting crews from the Lower 48. Unlike relatively short stays in previous years, hotshot crews are expected to remain at the university throughout the summer.

Officials with the Alaska Division of Forestry say despite the Sockeye fire containment, there is still significant fire danger. “On Monday alone there were 17,000 lightning strikes. We’ve seen nearly 300 new fires in the last three days,” said Martin Maricle, a state fire support forester who briefs the hotshot crews.

Maricle spoke highly of UAA Conference Services, which has been facilitating rooming assignments, meals and even technology support for the more than 490 firefighters who have arrived in Anchorage before being deployed to other areas of the state. “UAA is incredibly cooperative in making sure everything we need is taken care of, which lets us focus on the fires.”

The hotshot crews come during an already busy season for the Conference Services team, which will welcome nearly 100 events this summer. “Hosting these crews has been a large logistics undertaking,” said Tina Veldkamp, associate director of conference services. “We have adopted an everything-is-flexible mentality and have rearranged other plans when needed. We’ve needed to be strategic to make sure every detail—even the water and supply drops—fall into place.”

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