

Highland Industrial Park – A Critical Component of Our National Security

Congressman Bruce Westerman from Arkansas' Fourth Congressional District recently hosted the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Mike Rogers, on a tour of the Highland Industrial Park in East Camden, Arkansas.

The Highland Industrial Park is home to leading manufacturers of missile and rocket systems. The Park is integral to our national security and a leader in defense manufacturing in Arkansas and the Nation.

ORVA recognizes the strategic importance of the Highland Industrial Park. Likewise, they understand the strategic importance of the Ouachita River and the need to open the upper regions of the Project to shipping and industry.



U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) announced on March 26, 2026, that more than 10,000 military targets have been struck during OPERATION EPIC FURY. Some 70-80% of those missile and rocket systems components were designed, built, and delivered by the defense industries at Highland Industrial Park.

ORVA believes the movement of these critical missile and rocket systems and components have the great potential to move from the defense industries at Highland Industrial Park, through Camden on the Ouachita River, to the Gulf of America. From there, these critical strategic assets can be directly offloaded to naval and maritime assets or moved to other ports on the east and west coast.

But here is the issue: funding for dredging on the Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project, i.e., the Ouachita River, has been reduced in half by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This reduction effectively kills dredging north of the state line. In fact, this 334-mile-long waterway system will receive only 17 days of dredging this fiscal year, hardly enough to maintain the required 9 ft deep, 100 ft wide navigation channel!

It gets worse! To compound this funding issue, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has effectively stalled any effort to dredge the Ouachita River in Arkansas (for close to five years now) due to the discovery of threatened and endangered species of mussels that have taken up residence in the northern reaches.

Until these two critical issues are resolved, the Ouachita River will never reach its full potential. Economic growth within the Ouachita River Basin is stymied and our national security is affected as well. The Ouachita River is not only a regional and national asset, but it is of strategic importance.