

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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From the Director

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Associate Vice President
for Agriculture-Extension

UofA

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

From the Director

This year, I was honored to accept the top honor from the Spirit of 110 Council and Gov. Mike Beebe on behalf of the Cooperative Extension Service for our agency's work with volunteers.

Established in 1989, the Spirit of 110 Council was created to promote volunteerism in state agencies and also acknowledge the special relationships between volunteers and the state agencies that work with them.

The Spirit of 110 Council also acts as a clearinghouse for sharing information, solving problems and identifying information, trends and issues.

The Extension Service was recognized at a September 24, 2008, event at the Governor's Mansion for its long history of working with volunteers, whether through Master Gardeners, Extension Homemakers Clubs, adult 4-H Club leaders or other volunteer outlets.

Extension's volunteers have racked up some impressive figures in 2007, the year for which all organizations have totals:



Dr. Ivory W. Lyles receives top honor from the Spirit of 110 Council and Governor Mike Beebe for Extension's long history of working with volunteers.

- 11,876 4-H volunteers gave 993,111 hours of direct service, valued at \$18.64 million. In addition, more than 3,500 volunteers served on boards and advisory councils during the year, their services valued at \$100 an hour, bringing that total to more than \$1.76 million.
 - 14,608 EHC volunteers gave 127,520 hours of direct service, valued at \$2.39 million. In addition, 2,396 volunteers donated 7,137 hours to boards and advisory councils, worth \$713,700.
 - 2,818 Master Gardeners across the state donated 172,068 hours of direct service, worth \$3.23 million.
 - The 4,349 volunteers in other areas donated 45,573 hours, valued at \$855,405.
- The 2007 dollar value of an hour of a volunteer's work here in Arkansas is \$18.77 according to the Division of Volunteerism of the state Department of Human Services.
- We are grateful for the many volunteers who help make our programs effective and for those within Extension who share their talents with our volunteers and clientele.
- Ivory W. Lyles

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Honorary and Memorial Gifts

The following honorary and memorial gifts were recently received in support of programs and funds within the Cooperative Extension Service. This list covers gifts deposited August 1 – November 30, 2008.

Extension Service Retiree Scholarship

In honor of

Lorraine Hupp

Merritt Royal

In honor of Lois Lane

LaVerne Feaster

In memory of Jerry Moss

Agnes Moss

In honor of Lott Rolfe III

Merritt Royal

In memory of

Robert Vandivere

Cooperative Extension

Service Federal Credit Union

In honor of Mike Wright

Merritt Royal

Lynn R. Russell Endowed Award for Professional Excellence

In memory of

Lynn Russell

William Russell

Honorary or memorial donations may be forwarded to the Development Office, Cooperative Extension Service, P.O. Box 391, Little Rock, AR 72203. To ensure that proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification.

– Merritt Royal

First Year to Present Lynn R. Russell Endowed Award

Applications may be submitted for consideration of the Lynn R. Russell Endowed

Award for Professional Excellence. This is the first year that this award will be funded from the endowment established to honor the memory of Dr. Lynn Reese Russell, retired state leader of Family and Consumer Sciences.

The minimum award amount will be no less than \$500 per award. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2009. Interested employees must submit a two-page proposal to Dr. Ivory Lyles, associate vice president for agriculture - extension, that details the program in which he/she shall enroll or pursue and that defines the professional goals the applicant plans to achieve.

As set out in terms of the Resolution, below are additional criteria that must be followed:

- Applicant shall be a current employee and shall have more than three years of service with the Cooperative Extension Service.
- Applicant shall enroll in an accredited graduate program or pursue an educational program that will further develop applicant's professional skills.
- Participation in professional development opportunities available through or provided by Extension-specific professional organizations shall be excluded from consideration of this award.

– Merritt Royal



Santa's elves, a.k.a. extension administration, take time out of their busy holiday schedule to serve milk and cookies to faculty and staff prior to the Dec. 8 State Faculty Conference.

Employees of the Quarter for the Quarter Ending December 31, 2008

LITTLE ROCK STATE OFFICE

Ron Rainey, Associate Professor - Economics, Ag. Economics and

Agribusiness: Ron has worked hard to develop expertise in horticulture, and his work with horticulture specialists has led to a funded statewide survey of the horticulture industry, a grant to provide speakers for the horticulture industry show and multiple successful workshops and short courses benefitting a broad segment of the horticulture industry. He has also worked with horticulture research faculty in providing economic expertise in developing projects and grants. Ron is an energetic and hard-working professional, as well as a team player and a great asset to Extension.

Sherrie Smith, Program Associate - Plant Pathology, Lonoke Ag. Center: Sherrie is very reliable and is extremely engaged in helping Extension clientele. During the 2008 growing season, she authored 27 timely newsletters about plant health and worked with web developers to create a new web page for the Plant Health Clinic. She did this while overseeing the diagnoses of more than 3,000 plant samples sent to the clinic and managing the growing DDDI database that includes physical and electronic sample information. She also discovered dogwood anthracnose in Arkansas and co-authored a fact sheet on the subject. Sherrie is also an innovator, always on the lookout for new ways to improve efficiency and recover costs.

Mona Norris, Administrative Office Supervisor, Family and Consumer Sciences: Mona has been an invaluable asset

to the Best Care child care provider program for the past several years, but this year she has gone above and beyond the call by taking on many additional responsibilities to make the Best Care program a success since the departure of the former Best Care program associate. In addition to her strong work ethic, Mona is a kind and caring person, who is very supportive of the FCS faculty and county staff.

DELTA DISTRICT

Branon Thiesse, CEA-Agriculture, Craighead County: Branon is a very capable agriculture agent with more than 24 years of experience and is quick to share his experience with others. Farmers appreciate Branon's timely newsletters and quick response to their needs. He is valued by the schools for his knowledge of athletic field maintenance, and garden and civic clubs vie for him as guest speaker at their meetings. Not only does he volunteer his evenings to grilling hamburgers at the fair concession stand, which is a fundraiser for the county Extension Homemakers organization, he is quick to assist in any way he can. Each year, Branon secures a donation of 50 pounds of rice, which increases EH profits from their sale of red beans and rice. He is an excellent team builder and quick to share credit with the other county staff.

OUACHITA DISTRICT

Ed Brown, County Extension Agent-Staff Chair, Perry County: Ed is an outstanding and innovative Extension agent, who is hard-working, is good at problem solving and conflict

management and has excellent technology skills. He developed a 4-H Wildlife Interactive game, which he used to train a 4-H Wildlife team. He assisted the Ouachita Mountain FCS multi-county team in making podcasts. He conducted all the county 4-H activities and also trained a 4-H Shooting Sports team. Ed conducted an Ag Expo at Heifer Project. He provided farm demonstrations and hay sampling, bred flora flies to kill fire ants and delivered the flies to local farms. Due to the FCS agent vacancy in Perry County, Ed has answered all FCS questions and done FCS programming with a smile and a positive attitude. He assisted county EHC leaders in conducting their fall and Christmas EHC Council meetings and worked with the FCS subcommittee and FCS leaders to plan programs for the next 5 years.

Patricia Garmany, EFNEP Program Assistant, Ouachita County: Patricia has enrolled the required number of program participants and continues to make contacts for the enrollment of additional program participants. She has graduated program participants in the allotted time frame based on the completion of the required number of lessons. She takes on any responsibility necessary to get the job done with a positive attitude. She works well with her supervisor, peers, other staff members and clientele. She excels at presenting the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program to the youth and adults of the county. Her positive and

cooperative attitude have made Patricia a real asset to the Ouachita County office.

Tammy Farnam, Administrative Office Supervisor, Perry County: Tammy has dedicated herself to helping develop the Perry County Extension Program into a top-notch program. Tammy continually maintains high standards in her character and represents the Cooperative Extension Service in a positive light. She brings her years of experience to the table in order to contribute to the discussion of how best to tackle issues that face the office. Because of her many years of dedicated experience, Tammy is able predict the needs of both agents and clients. She takes on projects and develops documents without needing to be asked. She seeks the advice of her supervisor in order to ensure that the highest quality material is produced. Tammy is a well-rounded and valuable employee to both Perry County and Extension.

OZARK DISTRICT

Tanya Yates, CEA-Family and Consumer Sciences, Baxter County: Tanya is very dedicated, hard-working and a team player who willingly helps out in any area. She works with other county agents and government organizations in programs such as Best Care, Ready/Set/Graduate, ServSafe, Financial Journey and Camp Fit-n-Fun. In 2008, she implemented Camp Fit-n-Fun in Baxter County. Tanya received the Epsilon Sigma Phi Team Award for the Navigating the Financial

Journey program. She was recognized from the state Extension office on her Body Walk Program in the county. Tanya is a very kind and considerate person and a great asset to the Baxter County Office.

Barbara Tompkins, 4-H Program Assistant, Franklin County: Barbara has a very cooperative attitude and is always ready to assist agents with any youth program or project. During this quarter she assisted the FCS agent in conducting Camp Fit-n-Fun at the Ozark Elementary School. Barbara was also instrumental in the success of the annual Franklin County 4-H Banquet. She routinely attends many of the various 4-H club meetings and is always ready to lend assistance to any 4-H club member or 4-H leader. Barbara is also a great help with the 4-H fund raising activities.

Judy Drewrey, Secretary II, Sebastian County: Judy has been very helpful and instrumental in the 4-H program rebuilding process in Sebastian County. She is a hard-working, honest professional who takes pride in her work and treats others as she wants to be treated. She exhibits teamwork by helping the other staff when they are overloaded with work, such as newsletters and other deadlines. She takes initiative and goes above and beyond the call in organizing and putting together materials for meetings. Judy makes the job easier for the county staff and is a great asset to the county's clientele.

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Miller Receives NACDEP Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Wayne P. Miller recently won the Distinguished Service Award for Arkansas from the National Association of Community Development Extension Practitioners (NACDEP).

With nearly 20 years of service to the University of Arkansas, Dr. Miller conducts research, economic analyses and educational programming in the areas of rural development, public policy and local government. His dedication to research and education has gained him respect from colleagues, peers and community leaders throughout Arkansas.

– Stacey McCullough

eXtension “Entrepreneurship and Their Communities” Team Receives NACDEP Award

Dr. Deborah Tootle serves on an eXtension team of more than 20 Extension educators from across the nation. Coordinated by the Southern Region Development Center in partnership with its sister Regional Rural Development Centers, the eXtension team was recently honored by the Southern region of the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) at its recent meeting in Indianapolis for the team’s innovative work delivering information and educational programs through the use of technology.

In hopes of expanding the economic development

strategies available to local communities, this team has played a vital role in developing programs that build on the economic assets of local places. They have been addressing entrepreneurship and the complementary activities that are crucial for seeding the growth of entrepreneurial activities in local areas.

To access the work of the eXtension entrepreneurship group, check out <http://www.extension.org/entrepreneurship>.

– Deborah Tootle

Mark Your Calendar! Rural Life Conference Set for Feb. 13

The 53rd annual Rural Life Conference is scheduled for Feb. 13, 2009, at the Isaac S. Hathaway-John M. Howard Fine Arts Center on the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff campus. The conference theme is “Economic Challenges: Impact on the Health of Agriculture, Communities and Families.” The 2009 program features eight workshops, posters and exhibits.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. in the lobby of the Fine Arts Center, with the opening session at 8:45 a.m.

Preregistration is requested of everyone, even though the conference is free to farmers, homemakers and retirees. The cost to professionals and agency personnel is \$50; after Jan. 30, it will be \$75. To preregister or for more information, contact Margaret Taylor, (870) 575-8535 or e-mail taylorml@uapb.edu, or Tonya Gray, (870) 575-8532 or e-mail grayt@uapb.edu.

– Carol Sanders

Record Attendance for Arkansas Soybean Research Conference

Over 120 growers, university and industry personnel attended the 2008 Arkansas Soybean Research Conference sponsored by the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and held in Brinkley, Ark. on Dec. 9. “The conference is organized to share the latest information obtained from research, extension and educational efforts in Arkansas,” said Jeremy Ross, soybean agronomist and conference coordinator. Arkansas farmers, through the National Soybean Check-Off program, fund much of the current and ongoing research presented at the conference.

Several Division of Agriculture faculty members were featured at the conference, including Jason Norsworthy, associate professor in Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences, and Professor Terry Kirkpatrick, Associate Professor Scott Monfort and Professor and Interim Department Head Rick Cartwright, all with the Department of Plant Pathology.

New to the conference this year were presentations from graduate students conducting research funded by the Soybean Promotion Board. Amanda Greer, master’s student and program technician in the Department of Plant Pathology, presented information on a new soybean disease, *Neocosmospora vasinfecta*, identified this year. Brad Davis presented information on LibertyLink soybeans and Ignite herbicide and the potential of these new tools for Arkansas soybean production. Bobby Golden

offered information on soybean response to phosphorus potassium and the use poultry litter as a nutrient source.

Attendees had positive comments at the conclusion of the half-day program. “The information in the presentations was very useful,” said Drew Oliver, chairman for the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board. “We were also excited to include the graduate student presentations this year. Our growers received a lot of helpful information from the event.”

The 2009 Arkansas Soybean Research Conference is set for Dec. 8, 2009, at the Brinkley Convention Center.

– Debby Monfort

E-Verify Implementation

All new hires in the U.S. are required to complete the Form I-9, which relies on appropriate documentation to establish identity and employment eligibility. Effective January 15, 2009, Executive Order 12989, as amended, requires that all federal contractors, including colleges and universities, begin using the new E-Verify online verification system.

E-Verify represents a partnership between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). The program is overseen by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture will soon be moving to this fast, free, internet-based system to electronically verify employment eligibility for newly hired employees.

E-Verify does not replace the requirement of employers to complete a Form I-9 for all new employees within three days of hire. E-Verify electronically compares information from the Form I-9 with records in the DHS and SSA databases. E-Verify will not be used to verify information on current employees. More details will follow as we move forward with this important transition.

– Donna Rothberg

Emergency Phone Saves the Day

On the evening of Dec. 9, one of the outside lights located under the drive-thru canopy at the rear of the Little Rock State Office building began giving off sparks and flashing fire.

The custodian rushed to the nearest emergency phone located in the parking lot and called for assistance, and the Fire Department quickly responded by sending a fire truck to the scene. Meanwhile, the physical plant director turned off the electrical power to the light and no serious damage occurred.

We commend Gil Jones and Sterling Boston for their quick thinking and response to the incident. We would like to thank Bernadette Hinkle, associate director for finance and administration, for suggesting that emergency phones be installed at the Little Rock State Office

– Bobby Johnson

Personnel Changes

Please help me welcome the following:

Noelle K. Hayes,
Secretary, Animal Science, LRSO, effective November 26, 2008.

Christopher I. Vincent,
Program Tech-Horticulture, LRSO, effective November 25, 2008.

Extension says good-bye to:

Sherry J. Wentz, Howard County Program Assistant - 4-H, effective December 1, 2008.

Amanda L. Rogers, Nevada County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Sciences, effective December 5, 2008.

Grants and Contracts

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
My Pyramid Journey	7,500.00	Graffie Eldridge	Internal Innovative Grants Program
Strong Women Expansion and Volunteer Training (SWEVT)	6,344.00	LaVona Traywick	Internal Innovative Grants Program
Business of Birding Course	1,000.00	Rebecca McPeake	UA Phillips Community College
Major Issues in Arkansas Seminar for LeadAR Classes	10,000.00	Joseph Waldrum	Farm Credit System Foundation, Inc.
TOTAL	24,844.00		