

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Please join me in congratulating this year's award recipients who were recognized Jan. 6 during the annual Division of Agriculture Awards Luncheon in Little Rock. The recipients and their photographs taken during the luncheon are included in this month's Blue Letter.

Each recipient acknowledged success, not by their efforts alone, but through the support of their colleagues. They expressed a passion for their work and their drive to accomplish the best on behalf of our clientele. I believe Extension employees share many of these characteristics.

As further example of this kind of dedication, I was reminded that Linda Meeks works during our break to make certain every employee receives the final December paycheck. When you have the opportunity, please drop Linda a note of thanks or give her a pat on the back if you spot her at the state office.

As we look ahead to 2012, our successes will require our continued determination to make a difference in the lives of our constituents. Our mission is unique and so are our employees.

Thank you for a great 2011 and for continuing your good work throughout 2012 and beyond.

– Tony Windham

Deadline for CES retiree scholarship set

Begin preparing your application for the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship now. Two letters of reference must accompany the application due to Amy Hedges, assistant to associate vice president, no later than noon on Friday, Jan. 27, 2012.

The scholarship fund was created to improve the knowledge and skill sets of current Extension employees. Employees who are attending professional development conferences or are pursuing academic degrees are encouraged to apply for this scholarship. The application form and award criteria are available at http://www.uaex.edu/giving/endowments/retiree_scholarship.htm. ■



DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

University of Arkansas,
United States Department of
Agriculture, and County
Governments Cooperating

Inside:

- Arkansas 4-H Center a Winner in *Arkansas Business* "Best of Business" Issue
- Apply Now for Bumpers College Scholarships
- U of A Division of Agriculture Presents Faculty, Staff Awards
- Rural Life Conference Set for February 24
- U of A's Barber Named Extension Cotton Specialist of the Year
- Web Committee Update
- Skill-a-thon Team Wins Top Honors
- Ouachita County Senior Livestock Team Places at National Contest
- Brett Barham Memorial Steak and Raffle Ticket Sale a Success
- Thank You from Amber Barham
- National Epsilon Sigma Phi Conference Held
- Arkansas Flower and Garden Show Resets 2012 Schedule, Location
- Small Steps Lead to Big Change
- Ashley County Teams have 1-2 Finish in Walk Across Arkansas
- Davis' Grand Champion Hog Breaks Record, Fetches \$16,000
- Employees of the Quarter: July - September 2011
- Meet the New Employees
- Information Technology Update: *Computer Performance: Internet Connection Speed*
- Words of Wisdom From Your Purchasing Staff
- Benefits Corner
- Grants and Contracts
- Personnel Changes

DR. TONY WINDHAM
Associate Vice President
for Agriculture-Extension

Arkansas 4-H Center a winner in *Arkansas Business* “Best of Business” issue

The C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center in Ferndale was voted “Best Team-Building Center” by *Arkansas Business* readers in the magazine’s annual “Best of Business” issue.

The center was also voted a finalist in the “Best Place for a Company Retreat” and “Best Place for an Employee Outing” categories.

The 4-H center’s team-building powerhouse is the ExCEL, or Experience the Challenge Experience the Leadership, program. ExCEL is a University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture experiential team development program. Since 1986, ExCEL has used hands-on training methods to build teamwork for more than 75,000 people.

“This award demonstrates that what we’re doing works,” said Luke Nipper, ExCEL program director. “ExCEL has a long history of building trust and communication between thousands of people, and I can’t think of a better way to punctuate our 25th year.”

The ExCEL program is Arkansas’ largest and most experienced challenge course and includes a low ropes course, an artificial rock-climbing tower, a giant’s ladder and a high ropes course.

Arkansas Business releases its “Best of Business” issue each year, following two months of tallying subscribers’ votes in more than 75 categories. This year, the publication released its winners on Dec. 12. ■

Apply now for Bumpers College scholarships

Students interested in attending the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville are encouraged to apply for Bumpers College scholarships at <http://bumperscollege.uark.edu/39.htm>.

Along with its general scholarships, Bumpers College also offers scholarships designated specifically for students who fit any one of the following:

- ▲ Are 4-H record book winners;
- ▲ Major in horticulture and are from Sebastian or Crawford counties in Arkansas, or Sequoyah or LeFlore counties in Oklahoma;
- ▲ Are from Bald Knob or White County, Arkansas, and have a 3.0+ gpa and 23+ ACT score;
- ▲ Are horticulture majors and graduated from a Benton County, Arkansas high school;
- ▲ Are upperclassmen (sophomore, junior, senior) from Lonoke County, Arkansas;
- ▲ Are upperclassmen (sophomore, junior, senior) and plan to become county Extension agents;
- ▲ Are from Washington, Benton or Franklin, counties in Arkansas and are majoring in human, environmental sciences;
- ▲ Are active FFA participants;
- ▲ Are junior or senior horticulture majors from Sebastian County or northwestern Arkansas;
- ▲ Are incoming freshmen and graduated from Berryville High School;
- ▲ Graduated from DeWitt or Gillett high schools and have at least a 2.5 grade point average;
- ▲ Graduated from Clinton High School or a high school in Van Buren County, Arkansas;
- ▲ Are Master’s students studying cotton research;
- ▲ Are a first-year Master’s student from Jefferson County, Arkansas;
- ▲ Are from Sebastian County, Arkansas, and whose parents are members of Sebastian County Farm Bureau

The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville has a separate application for University scholarships. The deadline to apply for Bumpers College scholarships is 4:30 p.m., Feb. 1, 2012. Students are also encouraged to complete the Federal Application for Free Student Aid (FASFA) before this deadline to be considered for financial need scholarships. ■

U of A Division of Agriculture presents faculty, staff awards

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture recognized outstanding performance by 18 faculty and staff members at an awards luncheon Friday, Jan. 6, in the Crowne Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Little Rock. Recipients included Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences faculty members at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Vice President for Agriculture Mark Cochran said, “The award recipients represent some 1,700 faculty and staff members on five university campuses, at research and extension centers and stations throughout Arkansas, and in all 75 counties.”

The Division of Agriculture includes the Cooperative Extension Service and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station. In addition to conducting research and delivering information and educational services on agriculture and forestry, it also promotes public health and nutrition, opportunities for youth, families and communities, safe and secure food systems and environmental sustainability.

Many research and extension faculty are also members of the teaching faculty on five university campuses.

The Robert G. F. and Hazel Taylor Spitze Land Grant University Faculty Award for Excellence

was presented to **Donna L. Graham**, professor of agricultural and extension education in Bumpers College on the Fayetteville campus. She joined the faculty in 1985 and led an initiative to develop the curriculum and gain approval for extension education as a major and minor for University of Arkansas students. She created six courses in the extension education curriculum and has taught 12 courses. She was Bumpers College associate dean from 2002 to 2010 and is a nationally recognized expert on higher education.



Casandra K. Cox, an instructor in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, received the **Jack C. Justus Endowment for Teaching Excellence Award**.

She teaches courses on microcomputer applications and leadership development. She developed the innovative leadership course and helped develop and teach a graphic design course. She also has developed and taught a web-based course for microcomputer applications.



The Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences Alumni Society Advising Award

was presented to **Mary C. Savin**, professor of crop, soil and environmental sciences with a focus on the environmental soil and water sciences major. She has been co-advisor of the multiple award-winning CSES Club, an honors program instructor and a mentor to undergraduate students as well as graduate students for research projects.



John W. White awards for outstanding teaching, research and extension service are named for the U of A System's first vice president for agriculture when the Division of Agriculture was made a statewide unit of the U of A System in 1959.

The John W. White Outstanding Teaching Award

jointly awarded by the Division of Agriculture and Bumpers College, went to **Michael R. Evans**, professor of horticulture. His course web site evolved into a regional online textbook project with several collaborators, funded by nationally competitive grants. The “Greenhouse Management Online” learning center is now widely used by instructors and industry professionals across the country.



The John W. White Outstanding Research Award

was presented to **Steven C. Ricke**, who holds the Donald “Buddy” Wray Endowed Chair for Food Safety in the Department of Food Science. He is an international authority on food safety with a focus on preventing *Salmonella* contamination during food production and processing. He is director of the Division of Agriculture's Center for Food Safety and is co-founder and president of the Arkansas Association for Food Protection.



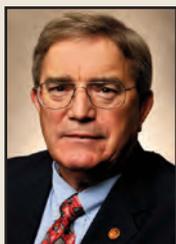
The John W. White Outstanding Extension State Faculty Award

went to **Robert C. “Bob” Scott**, a professor and Extension weed specialist in the department of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences with expertise in herbicide efficacy, weed resistance and new technology. Scott has been a leader in developing and helping producers implement practices to manage glyphosate-resistant pigweed in soybeans.



The John W. White Outstanding County Extension Educator Award

winner was **Robert Seay**, Extension staff chair in Benton County. He and his staff serve a diverse agricultural sector and provide family, consumer and youth education for a diverse population. As an authority on forage management, Seay has helped make bermudagrass hay an important crop for Arkansas farmers, who frequently win national bermudagrass hay quality competitions.



The **John W. White Outstanding Team Award** went to a group that developed the Arkansas Phosphorus Index risk assessment tool and training program to guide environmentally appropriate animal manure applications on pastures. Team members are **Mike Daniels, Andrew Sharpley, Chuck West** and **Tommy Daniel**, all in the Department of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences; **Edward Gbur**, director of the Agricultural Statistics Laboratory; **Brian Haggard**, director of the Arkansas Water Resources Center; **Nathan Slaton**, director of Soil Testing and Research; and **Karl VanDevender**, Extension engineer, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering.



Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel Award

was presented to **Justin “J. J.” Pitman**, program director for the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center at Ferndale. He has helped organize programs ranging from 4-H youth camps to training workshops for corporations and public agencies. Programs promoting healthy living, citizenship and leadership include the ExCEL Leadership and Teambuilding Program, Arkansas Outdoor School, Science Enrichment Education for Kids, Summer Day Camp and State 4-H Camps.



Division of Agriculture Classified Support Personnel Award

for the Cooperative Extension Service went to **Jo Ann Fish**, a purchasing specialist in the Cooperative Extension Service Financial Services Department. She works with staff members across the organization to implement effective purchasing and accounting practices.



Division of Agriculture Classified Support Personnel Award

recipient for the Agricultural Experiment Station was **Trish Watkins**, fiscal support analyst for the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. She is active in Fayetteville campus governance, currently serving as chair of the Staff Senate Legislative Committee and staff representative on the Campus Council.



Rural Life Conference set for February 24

The 56th annual Rural Life Conference will be Friday, Feb. 24, at the Pine Bluff Convention Center. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. with the opening session at 8:45 a.m. The conference theme is “Building Resilience in Agriculture, Rural Communities and Families in a Challenging Economy.”

Sponsored by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences, the 2012 conference will feature several theme-related workshops. It will also offer a poster session highlighting UAPB research projects and exhibits by governmental and community agencies. Researchers and agency representatives will be at

their posters and exhibits before the opening session to answer questions.

Preregistration is requested of everyone even though the conference is free to farmers, ranchers, homemakers and retirees. Preregistration cost for professionals and agency personnel to attend is \$50; after Feb. 10, late registration will be \$75. To preregister or for more information, contact Margaret Taylor at (870) 575-7144 or 8532 or e-mail at taylorml@uapb.edu.

The convention center is located at 500 East 8th Avenue. ■

U of A's Barber named Extension Cotton Specialist of the Year

Tom Barber, extension cotton agronomist with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, was honored as the Extension Cotton Specialist of the Year during the 2012 annual Beltwide Cotton Conferences held Jan. 3-6 in Orlando, Fla.

The honor is voted upon by extension cotton specialists from across the Cotton Belt.

"You can call Tom 24 hours a day, any day of the week, and he's always accessible," Bayer CropScience U.S. Agronomic Manager Steve Nichols told *Cotton Grower* magazine. "He always makes himself available to his farmers, and that's why we're proud to present this award to him."

Nichols was on hand to help present the award, which is sponsored by Bayer CropScience.

2011 was an especially difficult year for growers in Barber's home state of Arkansas, where record floods were followed by drought, and crops were already facing pressure from resistant weeds, followed by an onslaught of insects.

"This honor means so much coming from the people I work with every day," Barber said. "It makes me feel like I'm doing the right thing."

Extension cotton specialists and industry representatives from across the U.S. attended the awards dinner. ■



Are you WebReady?edu – Web committee update

Dr. Tony Windham appointed a web committee representing a wide range of Extension programs and offices the summer of 2011. The committee was charged with the responsibility of seeking solutions to the challenge of improving the Extension web site.

The committee, chaired by Dr. Kyleen Whitehead, held its first meeting July 12, 2011, and its sixth meeting Jan. 12, 2012. Each meeting has been structured to gain as much knowledge and information as possible.

The committee has met with professionals from four different higher education institutions in and out of state that have recently redesigned their web sites. The committee also heard from a U of A System attorney who educated the committee about ADA issues regarding the web site.

The committee has approached the UALR Institute for Economic Advancement to design and administer surveys and conduct focus groups in seeking input from our constituents. The committee is also asking the institute to help develop and conduct usability testing once we have tentative designs.

In the meantime, the committee has been educating itself about different software and design options.

Members of the committee knew from the beginning that it would take some time, but the committee is committed to getting it right.

The committee intends to make sure the web site:

- Is as accessible as possible, intuitive and easy to navigate
- Has a robust search engine
- Supports the development of related local (county) and program sites
- Supports frequent and easy updates
- Integrates social media well
- Is formatted for mobile devices and
- Is as interactive as possible

To accomplish these goals, the committee wants to make sure everyone has a chance for input and is "web-ready" by the time the new site is launched. This means existing web pages are reviewed, and those writing for our web site are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to write effectively for the web.

In short, the web committee is working hard and making great progress! So, get (web) ready . . . it's coming! ■



Skill-a-thon team wins top honors

The Arkansas 4-H Skill-a-thon team won top honors at the National Western Round-up FCS Classic in Denver Colorado, Jan. 5-9, 2012.

Team Members, Sarah Mills from Benton County, Janee Shofner from Benton County and Carley Allen from Johnson County received High Point Team Overall. The team qualified for the national contest by placing in the top three of the Food and Cooking ID contest at the Arkansas-Oklahoma State Fair in October. The FCS Skill-a-thon contest is comprised of four components, Food/Cooking ID, Sewing/Clothing ID, Interior Design ID and Food/Nutrition Judging Classes.

Events are conducted as individuals and scores are calculated as a team. As individuals, Carley Allen placed 5th, Janee Shofner placed 3rd and Sarah Mills placed 2nd. The team was coached by Franklin County agent, Susan Holman and Benton County agent, Janice Shofner.

The Western National Roundup is held each January in conjunction with the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colorado, and provides a place for youth to compete nationally while encouraging teamwork and self-confidence, and on the 4-H Mission Mandates: Science, Engineering, Technology, Mathematics, Healthy Living and Citizenship.

Ouachita County senior livestock team places at national contest

The Ouachita County 4-H Senior Livestock Judging Team consisting of Andrew Tollefson, Tara Massey, Brent Rhodes and Michael Venable placed 15th at the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky, November 15, 2011. The team was led by 4-H livestock project leader and Camden-Fairview agriculture teacher Cody Martin.

“We are so proud of Cody and these 4-H members for showing the nation what Arkansas has to offer! They have all worked very hard; they deserved to do well.” ■

– Jerri Lephiew, Ouachita County CEA-Ag/4-H

Brett Barham memorial steak and raffle ticket sale a success

The Brett Barham Memorial steak and raffle ticket fund-raiser was a tremendous success. The steak sales raised \$13,415, and the raffle raised \$4,930, totaling \$18,345.

The Extension family also made direct contributions of \$2,928 to the Brett Barham Memorial through the Credit Union; \$21,273 was deposited Dec. 2 into the Brett Barham Memorial Fund at Arvest Bank for Brett's daughters, Adley and Adison's, college education. Thank You to everyone who supported Adley and Adison in Brett's memory.

Thank you from Amber Barham

To all:

As I reflect back over the past four months I see my strength, courage, faith and love grow by leaps and bounds. But that has only happened because we have been surrounded by loving people, an amazing community and a UAEX family that I barely knew.

You have surrounded us with love and support I never knew I needed or was possible. I have received letters, cards, flowers and donations to the memorial fund from people across the state – many of whom I have never met.

This is happily overwhelming and shows me how loved Brett was and how loved my two precious girls are. I can make do, get by, figure things out. It's Adley and Adison that I worry about. How will we manage as a 'family'? How will I pay for the future that lies ahead when raising children?

You have all stepped up and helped fill many of those voids and answered many prayers. Everyone has made us feel such a part of the extension family which helps us keep the spirit of Brett alive and stay connected to what he loved the most, next to us.

So thank you from the bottom of our heart for taking us under your wings and loving us and helping make strides towards the future care of Adley and Adison. No words can express our sincere appreciation besides THANK YOU! ■

– Amber Barham

National Epsilon Sigma Phi conference held

Our Future, Our Legacy, Moving Forward with Courage was the theme of the 2011 National Epsilon Sigma Phi conference held in Syracuse, New York. The Arkansas Alpha Iota Chapter was represented by Pia Woods, president-elect Becky Reynolds, past-president and members Robbie McKinnon and LaVetta Perkins.

The conference began with regional meetings. Each chapter shared events from their state and gained ideas from other states. Concurrent sessions, held throughout the three day conference, gave participants opportunities for professional development to enhance their own county programs. Becky Reynolds presented Strike a Pose – Be a Flamingo, a concurrent session which used the Arkansas Extension Fit in 10 video to teach participants ways to increase exercise daily.

During the recognition banquet, over 50 members received awards for work done in their county or state. The Visionary Leadership Award, Southern Region, was presented to Becky Reynolds. The Distinguished Ruby Award, ESP's highest honor, was presented to Dr. Edward Smith, Texas AgriLife Extension Director.

Pia Woods attended the ESP Board meeting. She will update the state chapter at the annual meeting during Galaxy Conference in March. ■



Alpha Iota ESP Chapter, Arkansas, was represented at the national Epsilon Sigma Phi Conference by LaVetta Perkins, CEA-Staff Chair, Hempstead County; Becky Reynolds, CEA-Family and Consumer Sciences, Little River County; Betty Johnston, guest and mother of Becky Reynolds; Robbie McKinnon, CEA-Family and Consumer Sciences, Pike County; and Pia Woods, CEA-4-H and FCS, Jefferson County.

Arkansas Flower and Garden Show resets 2012 schedule, location

The Arkansas Flower and Garden show has hit the reset button, changing both the date and location for its 2012 show, themed “Floral Notes.”

“Due to a scheduling conflict, we are moving the show from Verizon Arena to the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock,” said Krista Quinn, executive director of the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show.

The venue change also prompted a date change. The show will now be held Feb. 24-26.

Show times are:

- ▲ Friday, Feb. 24 – 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- ▲ Saturday, Feb. 25 – 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- ▲ Sunday, Feb. 26 – 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors 60 and older and free for children under 12.

The show is once again supported by platinum sponsor Twin City Tractor and Fiser Kubota in Alexander, Sherwood and Russellville.

The show was originally set to be held in March at Verizon Arena in North Little Rock.

For more information about the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, visit www.arflowerandgardenshow.org. ■

Small Steps lead to big change

Small Steps to Health and Wealth™, a national Cooperative Extension program developed to motivate Americans to take action to improve their health and personal finances, is being made available to Extension employees at no cost. Small Steps was built around 25 research-based behavior change strategies.

The challenge is based on the performance of 10 recommended practices on a daily basis: five that involve health and nutrition and five that involve financial management.

“The challenge is a great way to convert New Year’s resolutions, such as losing weight and saving money, into daily action steps,” says Dr. Laura Connerly, associate professor.

The five daily health and nutrition steps are eat at least four cups of fruits and vegetables, get at least 30 minutes of physical activity, drink water or unsweetened beverages instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, eat at least two

servings of whole grain foods and learn something new about health and nutrition.

The five daily financial management practices are save a \$1 bill or pocket change (or more), invest \$5 or more per day, such as in automated retirement savings plans, track money spent throughout the day, eat lunch prepared at home and learn something new about personal finance.

As you enter your personal data, you will see your point totals for each day of the week and for each of the ten activities. You'll also see a bar graph that compares your personal progress to the average scores of everyone else participating in the challenge. Your information is kept confidential. Paper tracking forms can be downloaded to keep track of daily activities until they are entered online.

Doing even one of the ten recommended daily practices is a great way to get started. To sign up, visit the Small Steps to Health and Wealth web site at <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/>. Look for the Small Steps tips in each month's Blue Letter.

Ashley County teams have 1-2 finish in Walk Across Arkansas

Ladies on a Mission, one of the 21 teams fielded in Ashley County, topped the fall 2011 edition of Walk Across Arkansas with 45,436 minutes, or 757 hours.

If one assumes the team members walked an average of 3 mph, the 10-member team walked 2,271 miles, roughly the distance between Hamburg and Calgary, Alberta, in Canada.

Ashley County had a one-two finish, with its Extension Travelers team logging 28,777 minutes for second place. Cleburne County's Strong Walkers had 24,682 minutes logged.

"We would also like to recognize and thank Ashley County agent Iris Phifer for all of her hard work organizing the county with the greatest number of Walk Across Arkansas participants statewide," said Cheryl L. Gibbins, administrative assistant who works with LaVona Traywick, assistant professor-gerontology, on the Walk Across Arkansas project.

The fall edition of Walk Across Arkansas featured 52 teams with 355 walkers from 16 counties. Part of the fun of Walk Across Arkansas is the creative team names. A sampling of outstanding names from the latest edition: Leggs Miserables, Moanin' for Motrin and Circus Clerks – a group from the Ashley County Circuit Clerk's office.

The Walk Across Arkansas spring 2012 edition begins on Feb. 13!

Davis' grand champion hog breaks record, fetches \$16,000

Paragould resident Katie Davis' grand champion barrow hog brought home the bacon, a record-breaking \$16,000, at the North American International Livestock Exposition held in Louisville, Ky., in November.

The 280-pound crossbred market barrow, Final Drive, brought the top bid at the exposition's Sale of Champions, according to the *Paragould Daily Press*.



Davis, daughter of Greene County Staff Chair Allen Davis, has been here before. As a sixth grader in 2004, she took a reserve champion hog to the sale. She is currently a freshman at Henderson State University.

Three weeks before the exposition, the hog won Arkansas State Fair champion.

"In addition to being so massive, if you look, he has lots of body, and he is really balanced and complete," said the elder Davis. "Part of a show hog is having them look their best and having them at their peak on the day of the show."

Several businesses often work together to buy a champion hog. They are essentially buying the right to use the hog's image in advertising and promotion, Davis said. Portions of the sale price go to sales cost and charity and 80 percent to the contestant.

Employees of the Quarter

July - September 2011

DELTA DISTRICT

Kay Stokes, administrative support supervisor, Prairie County. Kay is an excellent team player with a strong work ethic. She has developed Excel spreadsheets for each program area to assist agents in managing their direct and indirect program contacts, which has made AIMS reporting much easier and more effective. She has great computer skills and is quick to assist in designing newsletter templates, brochures, programs, etc. Kay is dependable, competent and very deserving of this recognition. She is a tremendous asset to Prairie County Extension.



Jan Yingling, county Extension agent - 4-H - agriculture, Lonoke County. Jan teaches youth the meaning of excellence – commitment, selflessness, competence and vision, which are deeply engrained in her character. She is an enthusiastic member of the Lonoke County team and is always thinking of novel ways to accomplish our mission. Jan has taken a stagnant 4-H program and renewed it. The number of 4-H'ers participating in county events has doubled. She started a Junior Master Gardener program in schools and has added more community clubs as well.



OUACHITA DISTRICT

Candace Carrie, county Extension agent - staff chair, Ouachita County. Candace handled the meeting and publicity arrangements for a week-long visit by Dr. Miriam Nelson, co-creator of the StrongWomen initiative, scheduled in October. Candace led the effort for an EHC 100-year celebration event, "Autumn Market" which included a seasonal lunch as well as different booths ranging from homemade sweets to holiday crafts to historical items. The event brought in more than 200 individuals. Many were non-traditional clientele interested in participating in future Extension activities as well as joining an EHC club. Both activities required coordinating with volunteers as well as the southwest team from Tufts University. Candace is not only a team player, she is a team leader.



STATE OFFICE

Jim Dickson, weed science associate, Crop, Soil and Environmental Science. Part of Jim's degree program involves testing ryegrass samples for herbicide resistance. He has screened 200 samples for resistance to four herbicide families. While this is a time-consuming process, his quick response in providing reports has helped agents get results to producers and consultants, who need to make timely management decisions. Jim is always willing to work and help the overall weed program stay on track with whatever is needed. He is a leader and mentor to those around him.



Brenda Duggins, administrative support supervisor, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. Words used to describe Brenda in her nomination were trustworthy, consistent, responsible, fair and caring. She has been recognized for her technical and management expertise and willingness to mentor and share information and resources with others. This quarter, she developed an Access database to track all departmental inventory regardless of value. She also created a fund tracking system using Quicken to account for department spending by category, faculty and funding source. Brenda is a team player who wants the best for the department as well as Extension as a whole.



Stacey McCullough, instructor, community and economic development. Stacey leads the CED team that provides direct assistance to district directors as they guide county agents in Community and Economic Development program efforts. She is well respected within the unit and with several state organizations. She is the creative force behind such programs as the agritourism initiative, "Take a Back Road" and recently led the effort to conduct the state's first agritourism conference held in July. Stacey is an exemplary professional who does excellent work and is regularly involved in teaching other professionals important skills related to program delivery and reporting.



Meet the *new* employees!



David Carwell
County Extension Agent -
Agriculture
St. Francis County

- **What's your background?**

I was raised on a row crop and Boer goat farm in northeast Arkansas in the small town of

Cherry Valley. I obtained my B.S.A. from Arkansas State University in animal science in 2005. In 2010, I completed my requirement for my M.S. degree in reproductive physiology from Louisiana State University.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

Growing up on farm, I understand what goes on in the field. By advancing my education, I also understand what goes on at the university level. I feel comfortable being the go-to guy in the middle for both.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am originally from Georgia. I am an avid fantasy football player.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

My goal in this first year is to help the livestock producers in my area take advantage of the current market. I would also like to implement different management programs to help improve herd efficiency.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I enjoyed doing research in college. What I really enjoyed was being able to take the information I obtained or from other studies and relating it to farmers and ranchers.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I enjoy hunting, fishing, riding horses, being with Brittany and working cattle. ■

Kenneth Dunn
Economist
Agricultural Economics and
Agribusiness - LRSO



- **What's your background?**

I obtained a B.S.A. in agribusiness in 2005 and an M.S. in agricultural economics in 2008 from the University of Georgia.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I offer an expertise in Microsoft Office. I also have solid working knowledge of SAS statistical software as well as the ArcGis program.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am a huge Georgia Bulldogs fan. The Razorbacks are my adoptive second team. I also have a two-year-old Brittany spaniel named Bandit.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would really love to get out and meet many Arkansas producers. I would like to attend county meetings and hear their perspectives on Arkansas agriculture.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I worked closely with UGA Extension employees while working on my M.S. thesis and found it to be a desirable field of work. As an U of A Extension employee, I value Arkansas producers and their profitability the most.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I am an avid fly fisherman. I also tie my own flies as a hobby. ■



Travis Faske

Assistant Professor and Extension Plant Pathologist
Lonoke

• **What is your background?**

For the past four years, I instructed genetics, basic biotechnology, agronomy and crop pathology to undergraduate and graduate students at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas. I received my Ph.D. in 2006 and M.S. in 2000 from Texas A&M University and Oklahoma State University, respectively. For each degree I studied soilborne disease of agronomic crops.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I have a diverse background in disease management of various plant pathogens on agronomic and vegetable crops. I have a record of working with producers to improve disease management tactics and a history of obtaining grant funding and maintaining an active research program in plant disease management.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am from Texas, near Austin where I spent most of my childhood. My wife and I celebrated our 10-year wedding anniversary this past December.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would like to identify the main disease issues that affect Arkansas producers and begin to establish both basic and applied research approach to identifying the best management practices.

• **What brought you to Extension? What is it about Extension that you value?**

I have always enjoyed working with producers and conducting applied/basic research in disease management of fungal and nematode diseases. Thus, extension allows me to join these two areas of interest.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside work?**

I enjoy photography, fishing and hiking with my wife, Jenn. ■

Robyn Hambrick

Administrative Specialist
Prairie County - Des Arc



• **What's your background?**

I am a Des Arc High School graduate of 2006 and an ASU-Beebe graduate of 2010 with an Associates degree in applied science – veterinary technology. I come from a farm family and have always lived in Prairie County.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I worked in a veterinary clinic for six years prior to this job so that gave me the skills to multi-task, deal with high stress situations and the ability to problem solve.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I'm very friendly, so I would love to get to know more people in Extension. And I'm always happy to help when someone asks.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

To provide excellent customer service and introduce more clientele to Extension resources, become more acquainted with 4-H and all it has to offer to our community and overall be a positive fixture with the U of A Division of Agriculture.

• **What brought you to Extension? What is it about Extension that you value?**

Being from a farm family, I know that Extension is a very important asset to farmers and the community as well. This job provided me a way to be closer to home and my family while also being a positive part of my community.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside work?**

I enjoy spending time with my family, my husband and my kids, fishing, deer hunting and reading. ■

Computer performance – internet connection speed

Computer performance can vary based on a number of factors. Depending on the type and number of tasks running on your computer at any given time, the responsiveness can vary from instantaneous to much longer delays.

One of the major culprits can be network speed across the Internet. Network speed can be tested quickly and easily using free Internet sites designed to measure the speed of your Internet connection. One of the more popular sites is SpeedTest.net (speedtest.net).

To test your connection speed, first open your browser (IE, Chrome, Safari) and type in 'speedtest.net' as the web address or URL at the top of your browser. Click on 'Begin Test' which should appear in the center of your screen. The test will take approximately 30 seconds.

The download speed (how fast data is downloaded from the Internet to your computer) should be at least 1.3 Mbps (Megabits per second). The upload speed (how fast data is sent to the Internet from your computer) speed is often half the speed of the download or approximately 0.6 Mbps.

If your connection speed is slower than these numbers, recheck after five or ten minutes to determine if the slowness was a temporary condition or a sign of a situation that should be addressed by your Internet service provider. ■

Questions or assistance? Contact the IT Call Center:

Local Call: 501-671-2255

Toll Free: 866-779-3375

E-mail: callcenter@uaex.edu

Words of wisdom from your purchasing staff

- ▲ Please remember that a purchase order cannot be processed by the purchasing department until it has cleared all approvals in the Banner system. The purchasing department has no way to override the system.
- ▲ If a designated approver is out of office, especially during the holiday season, this may cause delays in processing your order.
- ▲ Purchase orders cannot be processed without the supporting backup documentation.
- ▲ Purchases from \$0 to \$5,000 do not require bids.
- ▲ Purchases of \$5,000 to \$25,000 require three quote bids.
- ▲ Purchases over \$25,000 require sealed bids.
- ▲ All items over \$5,000 purchased from one source must have sole source justification and have prior approval before a purchase order is issued.
- ▲ All printing requires bids to be quoted by authorized personnel in the purchasing department; printing jobs less than \$4,000 can be bid in-house by purchasing staff.
- ▲ Printing jobs over \$4,000 must be sent to the Office of State Purchasing for bidding.

Any questions pertaining to purchasing procedures should be directed to Burl Scifres at 501-671-2328, Jo Ann Fish at 501-671-2296 or Karen Clark at 501-671-2060.

We are here to provide a service to you, so let us help! ■

BENEFITS CORNER

Dental Benefits – for those of you with dental coverage, you may get your teeth cleaned twice a year with no deductible, no co-pay, 100% coverage for in-network providers. Don't miss out on this excellent benefit!

Qualchoice Flexible Spending Account (FSA) – for those of you who enrolled in the FSA, you should have received your new debit benefit card. If not, please let HR know. Remember it is a Mastercard loaded with your annual election amount.

The Qualchoice "UA Customer Service Team" direct number is 501-219-5133 or 866-724-3570 for any health or FSA questions.

Grants and contracts

for Month Ending November 30, 2011

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Wildlife Enterprises/Agritourism	\$5,000.00	Becky McPeake	Mississippi State University Extension Service
Feed Additive Research	30,272.00	Susan Watkins	PHIBRO Animal Health Corp (PAHC)
Services Provided to Willow Bend Farm for Monitoring, Evaluation and Nutrient Management	37,233.00	Michael Daniels	Willow Bend Farm
Ag Spectrum Company	14,125.00	Leo Espinoza	Ag Spectrum Company
Wheat Verification	72,000.00	Jason Kelley	Wheat Promotion Board
Agronomic Practices to Improve Profitability	20,000.00	Jason Kelley	Wheat Promotion Board
Team Approach to Weed Management in Wheat	24,000.00	Bob Scott	Wheat Promotion Board
TOTAL	\$ 202,630.00		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

David B. Carwell

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, St. Francis County, effective November 28, 2011.

Travis R. Faske

Extension Plant Pathologist, Plant Pathology, effective December 30, 2011.

Robyn L. Hambrick

Administrative Specialist, Prairie County-Des Arc, effective November 30, 2011.

Monica M. Betts

Administrative Specialist, Southern Regional Risk Management Education, effective December 1, 2011.

Jill D. Pennington

Administrative Specialist, Southeast Research and Extension Center, effective January 12, 2012.

Barbara A. Rolax

Institutional Service Assistant, Facility Maintenance, effective January 3, 2012.

Extension says goodbye to:

Reyna Alvarez

AMH Family Program Assistant, Sevier County, effective December 30, 2011.

Todd D. Atwood

Payroll Services Specialist, Financial Services, effective January 9, 2012.

Stephanie M. Schindler

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Independence County, effective December 16, 2011.

Easter H. Tucker

Associate Professor - Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective January 3, 2012.