



Keeping you connected

xtension cord

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Division of Agriculture to launch 'Shared Grounds' kitchen incubators at three Arkansas locations

Extension is working to make locally grown food more available in several towns throughout the state.

Amanda Philyaw Perez, assistant professor and food systems and safety extension specialist, and local foods program associate Angela Gardner are using funds from a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to help develop the Rural Kitchen Incubator and Aggregator Center Development Project, which will be known as "Shared Grounds."

The project, which represents an investment of more than \$650,000, offers an innovative approach for rural communities, using existing facilities and infrastructure at several available county fairgrounds.

The project will establish kitchen incubator and aggregation centers at Searcy, Cleveland and Woodruff county fairgrounds, located at Marshall, Rison and McCrory, respectively.

The project has five goals, Gardner said. The first is to put the kitchens found at fairgrounds – which often have sizeable capacities but are unused much of the year – to work as aggregation centers for local produce, as well as distribution centers and places where value-added products can be developed, all with the intent of increasing access to local foods.

In pursuing this goal, the project administrators hope to best serve their other goals: to support local farms, to develop and expand opportunities for value-added food businesses, to foster the growth of regional food economies, and to improve access to food in underserved communities and institutions.

"In the beginning stage of this project, we're working with the county agents and fairground site managers and organizing advisory committees for each of the sites," Gardner said. "In the spring of 2019, we will conduct a regional market and community interest assessment, which will help us better serve the clients who will use the shared kitchen incubator sites. We hope to start site modifications and install equipment by late summer of 2019."

By mid-2019, project administrators plan to advertise for, and hire, part-time site managers for each location, and plan to open the sites by 2020, Gardner said.

To learn about the Shared Grounds Kitchen Incubator Project, contact Gardner at agardner@uaex.edu.

Save the Date

The 2019 Extension Retiree Luncheon will be held April 10, 2019, at the C. A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center in Little Rock.

Retirees may to gather at 10:30 a.m. at the Center for a time of reconnecting and reminiscing. The luncheon will feature the presentation of the Extension Retiree Scholarships, and a short program will follow at 12 noon. We hope you will make plans to attend.

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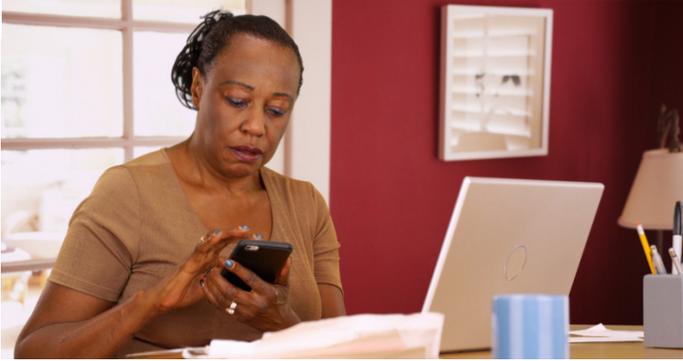
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Tips for the 2019 tax season



Taxes can be confusing for many Americans, but knowing your income, understanding state and local taxes, and getting ahead of the game can make tax season a breeze.

Laura Hendrix, associate professor of family and consumer science, has advice on when to worry and what to worry about this tax season.

When to Worry

When it comes to understanding your tax deductions, the earlier the better.

“It’s best to examine your tax situation at or before the first of the year before taxes are due for the next year,” Hendrix said.

“Filers who didn’t pay enough in 2018 may find it difficult to make up the difference now.”

Hendrix recommends using the IRS Withholding Calculator here: <https://apps.irs.gov/app/withholdingcalculator>

“Use the IRS Withholding Calculator to estimate the amount you need to withhold from each paycheck,” she said.

“Do this now and make changes to your W-4....It won’t make any difference in the amount of taxes owed in 2018 but it will help tax filers get a head start on paying next year’s taxes.”

For tax filers with more complex returns, Hendrix recommends an earlier start than for those who don’t anticipate having many itemized deductions.

Deduction Changes

There have been some changes to standard deductions for the 2019 tax season.

“According to [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov), the standard deduction amount has nearly doubled for all filers,” Hendrix said. “This means that many filers who typically itemize deductions will take the standard deduction instead.”

“Additionally, there are new limits on deductions for state and local taxes and home mortgage interest,” she said. “Some expenses previously itemized have been eliminated including employee business expenses, tax preparation fees, investment management fees and moving expenses to name a few. Filing is easier for filers who don’t itemize.”

(See *Taxes*, page 4)

Six join the ranks of retirees in December and January

Mark Keaton. Mark began his career with Extension in June of 1985 in Jackson County, serving as a county extension agent. His last appointment was as county extension agent - staff chair in Baxter County until his retirement Dec. 21, 2018. Mark has 33 years of service to Extension.

Sherry Ream. Sherry worked as the 4-H program assistant in Carroll County throughout her career with Extension. She retired on Dec. 21, 2018, after 10 years of service.

Janet Carson. Janet began her career with Extension in July of 1980 in Pulaski County. After serving as a county extension agent, she served as extension horticulture specialist until her retirement on Jan. 2, 2019. Janet had 38 years of service to Extension.

Tamara Walkingstick. Tamara began her career with Extension in September of 1996. She was serving as the associate professor and assistant director of the Arkansas Forest Resources Center until her retirement on Jan. 7, 2019. Tamara had 22 years of service to Extension.

Nita Cooper. Nita began her career with Extension in June of 1988. She served in Faulkner and Boone counties. Her last appointment was as county extension agent - staff chair in Boone County until her retirement Jan. 4, 2019. Nita has 30 years of service.

Carla Vaught. Carla began her career with Extension in August of 1985. She served as a county extension agent in several counties in western Arkansas. Her last appointment was as county extension agent - staff chair in Polk County until her retirement Jan. 31, 2019. Carla has 33 years of service to Extension. (e)



Spring is around the corner, and the 2019 Arkansas Flower and Garden Show will be here before you know it.

The theme for the 2019 show, scheduled March 1-3 at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds, is “Living Color.” Single-day tickets are \$10 for adults; children 12 years of age and younger get in free.

“Spending time with loved ones enjoying the inspiring garden displays, train garden, and shopping our vendors makes a great way to spend a day making memories,” said Mary Beth Rogers, executive director for the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show.

2019 will be the show’s second consecutive year at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds. The location proved to be a great success during the 2018, with free, ample parking and several locations for speakers and how-to demonstrations.

2019 will also mark the third year for the Landscape Challenge, which allows local landscapers to compete in creating beautiful landscapes as they race the clock in front of show attendees.

While speakers are still being added to the 2019 line-up, the list already includes Janet Carson, long-time Master Gardener and author of the well-known “In the Garden” column, Chris Hiriyak of Little Rock Urban Farming and forester Caroll Guffey.

To learn more about the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, visit www.argardenshow.org. 

To our Extension retirees

The best thing about January 2019 is that 2018 is finally over. I don’t know about you, but last year was not the best for many of us, so I for one am glad to start a new year and try again.

January has started well, with the annual Division of Agriculture and Bumpers College Awards Luncheon held Jan. 11 at the 4-H Center. This event features the awarding of our highest recognitions – including the John W. White Awards – to deserving faculty and staff selected by their peers for outstanding teaching, research and extension in a number of categories.

For Extension, I would mention Dr. Karen Ballard, recipient of the John W. White Outstanding State Extension Faculty Award, while Blair Griffin received the Outstanding County Educator award. Kelley Cochran in the Delta District office received the division award for outstanding classified support and a team of research and extension faculty were recognized for the John W. White Team Award for its work on the dicamba herbicide controversy. The team included Ples Spradley, Tom Barber, Bob Scott, Jason Norsworthy, Julie Robinson, Jeremy Ross, Jason Davis and Mary Hightower. There were other excellent awardees in research and teaching, and more complete information can be found at this link: <http://bit.ly/2spkNSq>. With regard to the Extension recipients, I am simply humbled by their excellence. Well done!

In this issue, please note the list of retirees, all incredible examples of our highest ideals and all deserving of the utmost respect. I would also mention that Iris Phifer, a 44-year veteran of Extension, has announced her retirement, and we all hold Iris in the highest regard. I hope you join me in wishing
(See *Cartwright*, page 4)



Scholarship donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship Fund

Janet Carson

Mark Keaton

In honor of Margaret Alexander

Portia Short 

2019 field days and production meetings

Hear what’s new at our field days and production meetings from agronomists, economists and other specialists with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. The link below is a complete list throughout the year. Check back for updates and changes. <https://www.uaex.edu/farm-ranch/crops-commercial-horticulture/ag-tech-calendar.aspx> 

Taxes (Cont.)

For those wishing to itemize, now is a great time to get started.

“Now is the time to determine what records will be needed if you do decide to itemize,” Hendrix said. “This may include receipts, tuition statements and bank statements. Check out the new rules to see what may qualify this year.”

“You may be able to deduct unreimbursed medical and dental expenses, mortgage interest and some other miscellaneous expenses,” she said. “Charitable contributions to qualified organizations may be deductible if you itemize deductions.”

Help Available From the IRS

Remember, the IRS provides free publications, forms and tools to help all taxpayers, as well as the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program to provide tax help to low-income, disabled and elderly taxpayers as well as those with limited English. IRS-certified volunteers will provide information about tax credits and prepare a basic tax return with electronic filing.

The IRS also offers the Tax Counseling for the Elderly program which offers free tax help to all taxpayers and specialized help to those who are 60 years and older and have pension or retirement questions (<http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Free-Tax-Return-Preparation-for-You-by-Volunteers>).

For more help on understanding taxes, visit www.uaex.edu/Money and follow @uaexMoney on Facebook and Twitter. 

Cartwright (Cont.)

all of our recent retirees the best in the coming months and years, as they try to adjust to being in control of their own schedules for a change as well as start to work on the things put off for many years. Good luck, all!

Please note that the annual retiree meeting at the 4-H Center has been moved to April 10 and I hope to see all of you there. Please invite and remind any and all of your extension retiree friends – I promise it will be worth your while.

Have a great January and 2019.

Rick Cartwright 



NEARLY COMPLETE – Dr. Rick Cartwright surveys the bank stabilization project at the Little Rock State Extension Office on Dec. 21, 2018. The project is nearing completion.

February Birthdays

Brenda Waldrum, Feb. 2	Nora Tomerlin, Feb. 5	Joy Buffalo, Feb. 10	George Davis Jr., Feb. 22
Charlotte Chitwood, Feb. 2	Sheila Brandt, Feb. 5	Jimmie Gooch, Feb. 10	Gerald Van Brunt, Feb. 23
Bobby Huey, Feb. 2	Mark Phillips, Feb. 5	Yvonne McCool, Feb. 11	Robert Felsman, Feb. 24
Booker Clemons Jr., Feb. 2	Belinda Miller, Feb. 6	Steve Rodery, Feb. 11	Doayne Potts, Feb. 24
Gene Woodall, Feb. 3	Dora Dinnan, Feb. 7	Ann Ward, Feb. 12	Charles Johnston, Feb. 26
Lamar James, Feb. 3	Beverly Hines, Feb. 7	Sharon Lillard, Feb. 15	Clara Garrett, Feb. 26
Larry Sandage, Feb. 3	Wanda House, Feb. 8	Lynda Lee, Feb. 20	Mary Warren, Feb. 27
Larry Reynolds, Feb. 3	Allan Beurman, Feb. 9	Delores Sowerbrower, Feb. 21	James Geisler, Feb. 27
Beverly Henderson-Vincent, Feb. 4	Catherine Koch, Feb. 9	Denise Murdoch, Feb. 22	Larry Keaton, Feb. 27
Ed Rhodes Jr., Feb. 4	Gertrude Henderson, Feb. 9	Larry Holeman, Feb. 22	Carole Scaramuzza, Feb. 28
Carol Patterson, Feb. 4	Ella Geisler, Feb. 10		

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Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$_____. My gift is in honor / in memory of _____.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts: _____

Please make check payable to the **UA Foundation** and mail to Brian Helms, Development Office, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204-4940.