What is RSS and How Do I Use It?

What is RSS?

RSS stands for “Really Simple Syndication” and it is an easy method to get information out to users. It is denoted by an orange RSS symbol.

As a familiar example, the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service uses RSS to display news articles on home page http://www.uaex.edu. The UAEX Calendar of Events also provides an RSS feed to display event information. Instructions for subscribing to each of these feeds will be shown below.

With the amount of information being dispensed by our county agents and state specialists each week, we have developed specific RSS feeds for each county so that our clientele can have information delivered directly to their browser without having to go to individual county web sites to see what is new. With RSS feeds and RSS subscriptions, the information is delivered automatically to the subscribed users’ web browsers when it is posted.

What is a News Feed Reader?

When information comes across in an RSS feed, it is not always in a format easily displayed by certain browsers. A feed reader is a piece of software that acts a transition between the RSS feed code and the browser to display and manage the feed correctly. Some browsers have Feed Readers built in; some have to be added to the browser.

How do I subscribe?

Each browser (Internet Explorer, Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox) has a different method of subscribing to an RSS fee. To begin, each RSS feed has a unique web address, also known as a URL. Here are three examples of RSS feeds that are currently used by Extension:


Miller County News Articles: http://uaex.edu/counties/miller/news/miller-news-all.xml

Extension Calendar of Events (all events):

http://calendar.uaex.edu/feeder/main/eventsFeed.gdo?f=y&sort=dtstart.utc:asc&fexpr=(categories.href=%22/public/bedework/categories/sys/Ongoing%22)%20and%20(entity_type=%22event%22%7Centity_type=%22todo%22)&format=text/calendar&count=200

Each type of browser has a unique method of subscription. Some browsers, such as Chrome, require that the user install an “add-on” to see the RSS feed correctly. Other browsers, such as IE, have the feed reader built in. Instructions for particular browsers are outlined below.

What does an RSS feed look like when using Internet Explorer (IE)?

Internet Explorer has a built in news reader, which make subscription fast and easy. Go to the URL of the feed. Using the example of the Extension News feed (http://www.uaex.edu/media-resources/news/feeds/extension-news.xml), the screen is shown below:
1. The feed is automatically formatted to display correctly. To subscribe to this feed, select the “Subscribe to this feed” link in the bottom of the yellow area. The subscription box will appear:
2. Check the “Add to Favorites Bar” (red arrow) to be able to see the link to the RSS feed within the browser. Subscribe by selecting the “subscribe” button.

3. Subscription is now complete from IE.

4. A message will now be displayed showing the successful subscription and a link to “Extension News” will now appear in the IE “Favorites Bar,” as shown by the red box. Selecting this area will show the titles of the articles found in the feed. If the Favorites bar is not displayed, select “View”, “Toolbars” and select “Favorites Bar.”
5. Selecting the link to Extension News will display the titles of the articles found in the feed.

![Extension News feed](image)

8. Selecting a title will direct the user to the web page where the article resides. As new articles are posted to the feed, the type for the feed title becomes **bold**.

9. All subscribed feeds can be viewed by selecting View > Explorer Bar > Favorites, and then selecting the “Feeds” tab. As new articles are posted to the feed, the type for the feed title becomes **bold** here also.
How do I subscribe to the calendar of events using Internet Explorer?

The same idea can be used to subscribe to the Extension Calendar of Events.

1. Using Internet Explorer, go to the calendar of events (http://calendar.uaex.edu).
2. If a subscription to all events is needed, select “upcoming” next to Start date and then select the Export/Subscribe link at the top of the calendar:
3. On the Export/Subscribe screen, select the following options:
4. A URL link will then be created at the bottom of the page. Copy and paste this link into the Internet Explorer browser address line, or just select the link and the RSS feed will open in the browser.
5. Select the “Subscribe to this feed” in the yellow box.
6. The subscription box will appear. Change the Name from “Bedework Events Calendar” to “UACES Events Calendar”. Check the “Add to Favorites Bar” box (red arrow).

7. Select “Subscribe.”

8. Subscription is confirmed.
9. The UACES Events Calendar will now appear in the Favorites bar of Internet Explorer. Selecting the link to “UACES Events Calendar” will display the titles of the articles found in the feed.
10. Selecting an event title will direct the user to the calendar page with event details. As new events are posted to the feed, the typeface for the feed title becomes **bold**.

11. All subscribed feeds can be viewed by selecting View > Explorer Bar > Favorites, and then selecting the “Feeds” tab. As new events are posted to the calendar and the feed, the typeface for the feed title becomes **bold** here also.

12. To filter calendar events so that events for a particular county can be viewed in a feed, select the filter on the calendar before selecting the “Export/Subscribe” option.

   a. To filter events for Pulaski County, go to the calendar (select Event Calendar from [http://www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu)) and select “upcoming” link next to **Start date**. This displays upcoming current events rather than just events for the current week.
b. Select Pulaski from the list of locations on the left-hand menu of the calendar. To do this, select the “+” sign beside the “Counties P to Y” link. A list of all counties which begin with the letters P to Y will be displayed. Select the link for Pulaski, and all events will be filtered to include only events that have been tagged for Pulaski County. If there are no events for this county in the calendar, no events will be displayed.

13. This causes only events from Pulaski County to be displayed on the calendar.
14. Select the Export/Subscribe link at the top. Notice that the current filter on the Export/Subscribe page now shows Location: Pulaski (red arrow).
15. Copy or select the URL link at the bottom of the page to open the page with the events from Pulaski County being shown.

16. Select the “Subscribe to this feed” link in the yellow box.
17. Change the name from “Bedework Events Calendar” to “Pulaski County CES Events Calendar”, and check the “Add to Favorites Bar” box.

18. Select “Subscribe.”

19. The subscription is confirmed, and a link to “Pulaski County CES Events” is added to the tool bar. When a new event is added to the calendar for Pulaski County, the typeface for this link will be **bold**. Selecting the title of the event will display the details of the event in the calendar.
You’ve successfully subscribed to this feed!
Updated content can be viewed in Internet Explorer and other programs that use the Common Feed List.

View my foods

Bedework Events Calendar
Today, July 24, 2015, 3 minutes ago

2015 Pulaski County Master Gardener Fall Class
Tuesday, September 29, 2015, 11:00:00 PM
Wednesday, September 30, 2015 (all day)
Where: TBA
Cost: 100.00
Description: The Master Gardener volunteer program provides an opportunity for individuals interested in gardening from a wildflower demonstration garden at Pinnacle Mountain State Park, to a vegetable garden at Historic Arkansas.
Contact: Pulaski County Extension Office

2015 Pulaski County Master Gardener Fall Class
Tuesday, September 22, 2015, 11:00:00 PM
Wednesday, September 23, 2015 (all day)
Where: TBA
Cost: 100.00
Description: The Master Gardener volunteer program provides an opportunity for individuals interested in gardening from a wildflower demonstration garden at Pinnacle Mountain State Park, to a vegetable garden at Historic Arkansas.
Contact: Pulaski County Extension Office

2015 Pulaski County Master Gardener Fall Class
Tuesday, September 15, 2015, 11:00:00 PM
Wednesday, September 16, 2015 (all day)
Where: TBA
Cost: 100.00
Description: The Master Gardener volunteer program provides an opportunity for individuals interested in gardening from a wildflower demonstration garden at Pinnacle Mountain State Park, to a vegetable garden at Historic Arkansas.
Contact: Pulaski County Extension Office

2015 Pulaski County Master Gardener Fall Class
Tuesday, September 08, 2015, 11:00:00 PM
Wednesday, September 09, 2015 (all day)
Where: TBA
Cost: 100.00
20. This same process to be used to select events from a particular county or counties (multiple filters) or, a category within the calendar, such as Pest Management. Simply filter the calendar first (from the calendar home page) to the desired events, then select the “Export/Subscribe” button, use the newly created URL at the bottom of the screen to display the RSS feed, and subscribe to the feed.

21. To unsubscribe from a feed in Internet Explorer, view the feed in the Explorer Bar (by selecting View > Explorer Bar > Favorites). Right-click the feed to be unsubscribed, and select the “Delete” option.

What does an RSS feed look like when using Safari?

1. Select the link or URL for the RSS feed needed. In Safari, the Miller county feed will display automatically:
This screen lists the most recent articles published by Miller County Extension through their RSS feed.

2. In Safari, selecting the RSS feed URL or entering it manually into the web address box will display the items in the RSS feed. At the right-hand section of the screen, in a gray bar, is a link for “Actions” (circled in red above). Select “Add Bookmark”. Another box is displayed to “Add this page to”. Select “reading list”, and select the ADD button. This adds the RSS feed to the bookmarks in Safari. Now, when Safari is opened, select the bookmark icon (like an open book - circled in blue above), select All RSS Feeds, and on the main screen, a list of all subscribed feeds will be shown.
Selecting the “Miller County News Article” bookmark will take the user to the list of titles.

**What does an RSS Feed look like using Google Chrome?**

1. Google Chrome does not come with a built in feed reader; it will require an “add-on”. If the browser displays text that looks like “code” (as seen below), then the browser is not configured to display the RSS feed properly and needs the add-on.
2. To find the correct add-on for Chrome, Google “chrome RSS”.
The two links displayed is to a free “add-on” available to add to the Chrome browser to make the RSS feeds display properly. Selecting the first link (https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/rss-feed-reader/pnjaodmkngahkoiejejehlcdlnohgmp?hl=en) will take the user to the “store” to download the “add-on”. Select the blue button to “Add to Chrome” (highlighted by red box below).
The user will be asked to confirm the new extension. Select “Add”.
The extension is now added, and the orange RSS symbol is now at the end of the address line on Chrome.

Go back to the Chrome page with the Miller County News feed.
Select the orange RSS symbol (shown in red block above).
Select the + sign to add feeds.

Since the browser is currently on a page with a news feed, it will automatically add this URL to the box. Click on the green “FOLLOW” button.
Add new feed or folder

Feeds on current page

http://www.uaex.edu/counties...
news-all.xml

+ Follow

Add feed

Enter a site or feed url to search for feeds

Search

Add folder

Enter folder name

Add
Selecting the “Miller County News Articles” link above shows the titles of all the articles:
Selecting the first title displays the article on the web:
Once the feed reader is installed and a website is visited which has an active RSS feed, a green plus symbol will appear in the orange RSS symbol. In this example, http://www.arkansasonline.com was visited.

Selecting the RSS icon will start the process to subscribe to the feed.

When new, unread items are detected on a feed, the orange RSS icon will show the number of unread items in red:

This lets the user know there are items waiting to be read by selecting the RSS symbol, selecting the title of the feed to be read, and then selecting the title of the article.

What does an RSS Feed look like using Mozilla Firefox?

1. Open Firefox and enter the URL for the Miller County News RSS feed.
2. A subscription box will automatically appear

3. Select subscribe.
4. To see available RSS feeds, select the bookmark icon to the right of the URL, shown with the blue box around it.

5. Select “View Bookmarks Sidebar”.
All subscribed RSS feeds are listed, including the Miller County News Articles, as shown by the blue arrow.

How to access the Extension News RSS feed in IE

The RSS feed for our “Extension News” column is found at this link: www.uaex.edu/media-resources/news/feeds/extension-news.xml. Selecting this link, when paired with a news reader, will display a link to the most recent news articles that Extension has published.

In IE 11, this is how a browser appears when the user has subscribed to our Extension News feed. The name of the feed appears in the browser below the URL, as shown in the red box.

The “Extension News” item on the tool bar is a link to all news articles on the UACES web site. Clicking once on “Extension News” will list the articles by title as shown below;

The user can then click on a title to an article and be taken directly to that article on Extension’s page. This allows a user to keep up with Extension news regardless of what page they are visiting at the time.