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## BLUE LETTER

March 2017  
No. 3779



# Making things better for Arkansans

March is going to be a great month. It is the month of new beginnings and hope that all things are possible.

Speaking of hope and possibilities, I was honored to be invited to America's Homestead – Real.Simple.Life a.k.a. Cleveland County, where Les Walz and Diane Clement and Mark Peterson and the county community have been working on Kickstart Cleveland County. This community-based effort, based on Mark's Breakthrough Solutions program, has been very successful and is still growing.

As part of the Celebrate Cleveland County event on Feb. 24, we toured the local Pioneer Village with *Cleveland County Herald* publisher Britt Talent and Rex Nelson, 2016 Rural Advocate of the Year, from Little Rock and Sharon Gray, former county clerk.

The tour also included a pocket park and restoration effort for downtown Rison, a town like so many others that lost population and businesses over recent decades. But this community refuses to let its way of life die. Thus, the cooperative effort known as Kickstart Cleveland County.

The celebration featured community leaders from all over the county, including Rison, Woodlawn, New Edinburg, Kingsland (birthplace of Johnny Cash) and "Y" or Staves. It really was like being at a family reunion in a way. Over and over I heard the refrain of making things better now and for the future. The "can-do" and positive atmosphere reminded me of the Cooperative Extension Service at its best. And then I realized that was because it was us, we are in and of these communities, in all 75 counties. It is where we live, where we work to make things better every day.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

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## U of A System Division of Agriculture and the Arkansas Plant Board team up to teach veterinarians honey bee medicine

Eighteen veterinarians from Arkansas and Louisiana attended a short course on honey bee veterinary medicine Feb. 18 at the state office in Little Rock taught by Extension veterinarians Heidi Ward and Dustan Clark and Extension entomology instructor Jon Zawislak partnering with Mark Stoll, Daniel Plyler and Danny Brewer from the Arkansas Plant Board. Arkansas Public Health veterinarian Susan Weinstein and the Arkansas Veterinary Board chairman Doug Parker were in attendance.

The course was designed to educate veterinarians on honey bee diseases and treatments, in response to the implementation of the Veterinary Feed Directive by the Food and Drug Administration. Clark started the morning with an explanation of the need for veterinarians in honey production. Zawislak made a presentation on honey bee diseases and pests. Later, apiary inspectors from the Plant Board covered honey bee colony inspections, which included manipulation of bee boxes and personal protection equipment. Lastly, Ward instructed the veterinarians on the changes to the Veterinary Feed Directive and conditions for compliance with the FDA as well as the Arkansas Veterinary Practice Act.

Attendees took home handbooks that included course information and important references. The program was a success with in-depth discussions that will guide future programs.



Jon Zawislak informs the group about honey bee diseases and pests.

## 2017 ASPB-Extension Soybean Science Challenge awards presented at regional science fairs

High school soybean-related science projects were judged at three Arkansas regional science fairs in February. Cash awards of \$300 were presented to students with the best projects supporting Arkansas soybean production and agriculture sustainability. For the first time, teachers of students received a \$200 Teacher Mentor Award for guiding, supporting and encouraging agricultural research.

Student and teacher winners included:

### **Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts, Hot Springs**

Student Winner: Madeline Leicht

Project Title: "GMO Crop Dilemma: Are Genetic Modifications Spreading to Weeds?"

Extension Judge: Chad Norton

### **Central Arkansas Regional Science and Engineering Fair, UALR**

Student Winner: Mohammed Abuelem, Pulaski Academy, Little Rock

Project Title: "The Effects of Ionizing Radiation on Glycine Max (soybean) Radicle Growth, Stem Growth and Dry Weight Biomass"

Teacher: Dr. Annice Steadman

Extension Judges: Brittany Singleton and Dr. Karen Ballard

### **Ouachita Mountains Regional Science and Engineering Fair, Mid-America Museum, Hot Springs**

Student Winner: Harli Simmons, Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander

Project Title: "Espresso"

Teacher: Michelle Vire

Extension Judges: Lee Riley and Cory Hallmark

These projects made it to the state science fair level and will be judged again for a \$1,000 award. ■



Extension judge Chad Norton with ASMSA Soybean Science Challenge winner Madeline Leicht discussing her project.

## Arkansas Extension agent and specialist Social Media Index

Ever wish there was a one stop shop for all of the social media pages extension employees manage? Look no further! Go to [www.uaex.edu/social-media-index](http://www.uaex.edu/social-media-index) and find the active social media accounts our social media team has been notified about in the past year.

What are the qualifications for listing?

1. The page/account/blog must be active and updated regularly (at minimum once per month, ideally more).
2. The page must be registered with our social media team (link to registration form is on the index page).
  - a. You MUST have a secondary Extension employee who has access to the account in the event the primary account owner is unable to update the page or leaves Extension.

If you note any pages that need to be removed or updated, please email Amy Cole [acole@uaex.edu](mailto:acole@uaex.edu) and Susan James at [sjames@uaex.edu](mailto:sjames@uaex.edu).

Happy posting! ■

## Felder Rushing speaks to Master Gardeners

Felder Rushing, noted author, gardener, humorist and former Mississippi State University horticulturist, joined Master Gardeners from across the state in Monticello on Saturday, Feb. 4, for a morning full of humor, gardening expertise, and fellowship. The event was more than six months in the making. Untold hours of planning and preparation came to fruition with more than 140 in attendance.

Volunteers with the Drew County Master Gardener group planned the event from its inception and saw that everything went off with no noticeable hiccups. All of the details from decorations, food, music, registration, and technology considerations were handled expertly by Master Gardeners who proved their knowledge of tilling soil and pruning shrubs was far surpassed by their hands of service.

Funds raised will be used by the newly formed Master Gardener group to enhance local sanctioned projects and provide cost share assistance to opportunities such as the Plant-Nurture-Grow leadership conference. ■



Felder Rushing shares his gardening experiences with Master Gardeners from across the state at Drew County event.

## Izard County 4-H'ers clean up city parks

Izard County 4-H'ers recently picked up tobacco litter at Oxford City Park, Melbourne City Parks and around the County Courthouse. The group designed posters about second- and third-hand smoke. Some of the 4-H'ers wrote short letters on why they should be protected from the harmful chemicals that come from tobacco and electronic nicotine devices. The posters were displayed around Izard County and presented to city and county leaders.

Through this collaboration, Izard County 4-H Youth Tobacco Coalition and Izard County Tobacco Prevention Cessation program coordinator was able to pass city ordinances in Oxford and Melbourne, making their parks, walking trails, ballfields and all community places a comprehensive tobacco policy. This policy included any plant-based tobacco and electronic nicotine devices impacting approximately 2,000 people, young and old, by protecting them from the harmful chemicals from second- and third-hand smoke. In addition to this, an ordinance was passed to include the Izard County Courthouse as well with a comprehensive policy. ■



4-H youth show off posters on second- and third-hand smoke.



## Arkansas Beef Quiz Bowl held in Fayetteville

The 2017 Arkansas Beef Quiz Bowl competition, sponsored by the Arkansas Beef Council, was held Friday, Feb. 24 at the Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Arena at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. This year 33 teams competed in the newly formatted contest. Phase One of the competition consisted of eight one-on-one questions. Phase Two consisted of each team being asked individual team questions. The third and final phase consisted of regular quiz bowl type questioning with toss up and bonus questions, for a possible total of 16 questions.

The top three teams received medallions and a trophy plaque. Washington County 4-H took top honors by winning the championship round and going undefeated. Coached by Washington County Extension Agent Josh Bergstrom, the team included Seth Horn, Dixie Miller, Nick Pohlman and River Robinson. ■



2017 Arkansas Beef Quiz Bowl Champions – Washington County 4-H. Pictured, left to right, Josh Bergstrom, coach, River Robinson, Dixie Miller, Nick Pohlman, Seth Horn, and Travis Justice, Arkansas Beef Council Executive Director.



2017 Arkansas Beef Quiz Bowl Second Place Team – Greene County 4-H: Pictured, left to right, Katie Head, Taylor Copeland, Debbie Copeland, coach, Baylee Mangrum, Jessica Griffin and Travis Justice.



2017 Arkansas Beef Quiz Bowl Third Place Team: Seth Jones, coach, Jenna Kutz, Lauren Lavery, Danyel Moore, Allyson Morlan and Travis Justice.

## BENEFITS CORNER

### Important Flexible Spending Account Information

You have until March 31, 2017, to incur expenses that will apply to your 2016 FSA plan.

### CEDAR offers you a wealth of information

You can review your HR Personnel Records through CEDAR by login with you Active Directory username and password. Log into the CEDAR Link at <http://cedar.uaex.edu>. Click on HR: Your Personnel Records. Click on Display Matches by Name.

### Track your minutes!

Are you participating in Walk Across Arkansas? If so, in addition to recording the number of minutes walked throughout the day at [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu) you may also track those same exercise minutes with The University's free health and wellness program, administered by OnLife Health, and reap the benefits both programs offer – a better you!

For regarding the \*UA Wellness Program, you may call Onlife customer service 1-877-369-0285 or log in to the Onlife Health website, <https://www.onlifehealth.com/>. Returning user, enter your username and password. New user, click GET STARTED and type in "UAS" as the key code. Follow the online instructions to create your username and password.

*\*You must be enrolled in the UMR Health Plan to participate in the UA Wellness Program.*

Please keep your home address updated in Banner Self Service.

## CREATES curriculum helps seniors put variety in their meals



Shannon Autrey teaches residents about food preparation.

Residents of St. Anthony's Senior Living Center in Morrilton have been getting creative with their food! Shannon Autrey, Conway County family and consumer sciences agent, just completed a series of SNAP-Ed lessons from the CREATES curriculum. Ramona Scott, director of the facility, noted that residents frequently receive commodities along with other foods and they are unsure how to put the items together into a healthy, delicious meal.

The CREATES curriculum perfectly addresses this need. Instead of providing simple recipes, participants were able to use a "formula" for creating tasty dishes to suit their preferences. During the last few months, residents have participated in creating new recipes for soups, casseroles, stir-

fries and pizzas. Everyone loved making pizza dough from scratch and was amazed that it could be done in a short amount of time. One participant said, "I have been able to use the foods already in my pantry to make supper. I've learned how to be creative when making dinner!" ■



St. Anthony's residents learn the formula for healthy, delicious meals.

## 4-H'ers to explore site of World War II internment camp during Day of Archeology

Executive Order 9066, signed 75 years ago by Franklin D. Roosevelt, put the small town of Rohwer in Desha County onto the map in ways that Southeast Arkansas could not even begin to fathom as over 100,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast of the United States were forced into internment camps throughout America.

On Friday, March 24, Desha County 4-H and the Arkansas Archeological Survey are teaming up yet again to provide a Day of Archeology as 4-Her's are invited to explore Rohwer and the national monument at this site. 4-H youth will participate in mapping a cemetery at the internment camp and exploring the landscape to learn about what life in the Delta was like for these displaced families. They will also get to learn how to speak Japanese, write their name in Japanese and tour the Japanese Internment Museum in McGehee.

Open to all 4-H-aged youth, the event begins at 10 a.m. at St. Mary's Church in McGehee and finishes at 3 p.m. Lunch is provided, so space is limited. Contact Hope Bragg, Desha county extension agent - 4-H, for more information at [hbragg@uaex.edu](mailto:hbragg@uaex.edu). ■



Supplies arriving at Rohwer Relocation Camp. (National Archives)



Archeologist Jessica Howe explains the importance of archeological site prep to 4-H youth Lyndi M.

What's new in publications? Find out at:  
<http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx>

## 4-H'ers hold BBQ Bowl fundraiser for Howard County 4-H Foundation

Super Bowl weekend is also the weekend for Howard County's annual BBQ Bowl fundraiser for the Howard County 4-H Foundation. This is the seventh year Howard County 4-H has conducted the BBQ Bowl in which 4-H'ers pre-sell slabs of pork ribs and Cornish hens. Walk-up orders are usually accepted as well, but this year so many customers called in beforehand that the inventory was sold out before the day of the event. Needless to say, if they'd had more meat, they could have sold it!

"This being my first BBQ Bowl experience, I was overwhelmed with the support that our community and county gave for the cause," said Kaycee Davis, Howard County extension agent - agriculture.



Howard County volunteers assisting at the BBQ Bowl fundraiser.

"We had about 15 smokers that were donated for the day and about 12 volunteers who cooked and manned the smokers. We also had over 15 4-H'ers marinate the meat Friday evening and spend their Saturday running back and forth from our sales table to the cooking area carrying meat for our customers."

This year the Howard County 4-H Foundation raised just over \$3,000. Special recognition goes to the new 4-H club at Umpire, Arkansas; their club sold 35 slabs of ribs and 39 Cornish hens, a huge contribution to the total. ■



Howard County 4-H'ers braving the cold to assist customers at the BBQ Bowl fundraiser.



4-H'er Garrett L. checking the fire in the smoker

## Who gets the farm?

Estate planning is something many people either put off until it is too late or never think about at all. Many people don't know where to start.

Agents in Lee, Monroe, Phillips and St. Francis counties recognized the need and teamed together with Dr. Laura Hendrix, Assistant Professor - Family and Consumer Sciences, to host a two-night Estate Planning workshop in February.

Everyone who owns property has an estate that will have to be distributed at their death. The more than 40 participants who attended the two-night workshop learned that "property" means much more than just land.

Topics covered during the workshop included how to get started, who gets granny's pie plate, funeral preplanning, reverse mortgages, probate, trusts and land transfers.

Participants were sent home with homework after covering the basics of how to get started on an estate plan the first night. The homework allowed participants to think and prepare questions for the second night when attorney Dan Felton of Marianna would take center stage to address the legalities.

Participants had nothing but good things to say about the workshop and the topics covered. "I believe this is the best workshop that has been conducted here in the past year" was one participant's comment. More than 96 percent of participants surveyed reported they would definitely use the information learned.

Any individual who wants their property to be passed along to their heirs needs to have an estate plan. Knowing the importance of planning and how to plan is something most people don't understand. Estate planning workshops like this one empower participants with the knowledge of how and where to start with their plan. ■





## Cartwright, Nelson featured speakers at Cleveland County celebration

At the Cleveland County celebration on Feb. 24, Dr. Rick Cartwright, Interim Associate Vice President for Agri - Extension, and Rex Nelson, author and Senior Vice President of Simmons First National Corporation, spoke to the nearly 100 community leaders gathered together to celebrate their accomplishments under the umbrella of Kickstart Cleveland County. Dr. Cartwright spoke highly of Britt Talent and other community leaders, and of the work of county Extension agents Les Walz and Diane Clement, and how their work reflected Extension's commitment to make things better now and in the future.

Rex Nelson, who has served in key positions of the public and private sector in Arkansas for many years, expressed his admiration for the brand (Cleveland County – Real.Simple.Life.) and their many accomplishments. The latter includes attracting eight new businesses into Rison, the first in 25 years, forming three new farmers markets, five new organizations, a community play, and beginning to revitalize the Pioneer Village in Rison. Nelson stated that he will refer to Cleveland County as a real success story in his writing and speaking around the state. It has been a privilege to work with Cleveland County in our Breakthrough Solutions Program. ■



Dr. Rick Cartwright addresses crowd at Kickstart Cleveland County.

## Arkansas 4-H'ers attend National Youth Summit for Healthy Living

Thanks to a special scholarship awarded by the National 4-H Council and Walmart Foundation, a team of five Arkansas 4-H teens attended the National Youth Summit for Healthy Living at the National 4-H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland. This is the first time Arkansas was represented at the Summit.

The team consisted of State 4-H President Mary Alice C., Alison C. and Isaac W. of Benton County and Destiny H. and Sydney W. of Clay County – chaperoned by Lauren Copeland, program associate – Health. At the Summit, the team met other 4-H'ers from 24 states, exchanged ideas and programs to make their states healthier and attended a variety of sessions about nutrition, physical activity, sleep health, mental health and social health. The team also taught Yoga for Kids breakout sessions for participants. The Summit afforded this group of Arkansas youth the opportunity to create an action plan to help improve the health of Arkansans, which was presented as a poster session to the entire Summit delegation. Attendees also had fun participating in healthy living breaks and games, a dance and a night tour of Washington D.C. ■



Arkansas delegates preparing to present their action plan during the poster session at the National Youth Summit for Healthy Living. Team members, pictured left to right, are Isaac W., Mary Alice C., Alison C., Sydney W., and Destiny H.

## Master Gardener program continues to grow great volunteers

Started in 1988 in four counties (Garland, Jefferson, Pulaski and Saline) with 40 members, the Arkansas Master Gardener Program now has over 3,400 volunteers. In 2016, these volunteers reported 163,876 hours of work given in their communities. Education hours totaled 89,810 hours.

Many county programs are currently training new volunteers for 2017. If you would like to become a Master Gardener volunteer and missed the opportunity to take the class in your county, a Saturday class is being held this summer in Hempstead County. Class dates are July 8, 15, 22 and 29 and August 5. The first session will be held at the Southwest Research and Extension Center, 362 Highway 174 in Hope, with the remaining sessions at Hempstead Hall at University of Arkansas Community College - Hope, 2500 South Main Street, Hope, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The cost of the training will be \$75, which covers your book, snacks and training supplies. Additional individual county fees may apply. For more information, see <https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/default.aspx>. ■

## Hogskin Forestry Contest draws record crowd

Calhoun County 4-H hosted its annual Hogskin Forestry Contest on Feb. 9. The contest has grown in competitiveness and popularity each year since its inception in 2011.

In 2016, the contest drew over 140 youth from 22 different schools, making it the largest forestry contest in Arkansas. This year's Hogskin Forestry Contest surpassed its previous record, bringing 157 youth from 23 schools across Arkansas to test their wits and knowledge in the areas of tree identification, volume determination, forest equipment identification, map interpretation and compass/pacing.



Students compete in the forestry equipment ID practicum.



Hermitage High School receives their first place award from Jaret Rushing. (Image courtesy Arkansas Forestry Association)



Calhoun County 4-H members (Hampton High School) receive their third place award from Jaret Rushing.

After the scores were tabulated, Hermitage High School was declared the winner, followed by a strong second placing by Taylor High School and a third placement by Hampton High School. Jesse Tompkins from Taylor was deemed the high point individual winner, followed by Cade Wilkerson (second) and Conner Wilkerson (third) from Hermitage. Sponsors for this event included the Arkansas Forestry Association, Farm Credit Services of Western Arkansas, Calhoun County Farm Bureau and many others. ■

## FINANCIAL SERVICES – PURCHASING DEPARTMENT UPDATES

As most of you probably know, Sam's Club will now take VISA. Therefore, your state issued P-Cards will now work at Sam's – for approved purchases.

Also, we have updated the Employee Link Page – under Purchasing. We have listed CDW-G as a possible vendor for contract pricing on available items.

If you have any questions concerning updates, please contact Jo Ann Fish (671-2296) or Mark Kiefer (671-2060). ■

The screenshot shows the CDW-G website interface. On the left, there is a 'Support Units' menu with categories: Affirmative Action, Communications, Development Office, Facilities Management, and Financial Services. Under Financial Services, items listed include: Accounts Payable & Travel, Accounts Receivable, Budgets & Reports, Capital Assets, Cash Management, Fair Labor Standards Act, FAQs, P-Cards, Payroll, Purchasing, Requisitions and POs, and State Contract Items. On the right, the 'CDW-G Contact Info' section features a search bar, a navigation menu (Hardware, Software, Solutions, Cloud, Brands, Blog, Deals), and a promotional banner for 'POSSIBILITIES' with the text 'EXPAND YOUR STUDENTS' POTENTIAL WITH TECH FROM THE WORLD'S LEADING TECHNOLOGIES'. Below the banner, it provides the website URL <https://www.cdwg.com/> and contact details for Matt Felvey, Account Manager, including his address, phone, and fax numbers. A CDW-G logo with the slogan 'PEOPLE WHO GET IT' is also visible.



## River Valley producers learn about drones

Last month, a production meeting centered on unmanned aerial systems or “drones” was held at the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton.

Dr. Terry Spurlock, extension plant pathologist and chair of the Division of Agriculture’s Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Taskforce, addressed a group of producers from throughout the River Valley. The meeting lasted about 2½ hours and was full of lively and thought-provoking discussion. Their interests in UAVs ranged from collecting aerial data on row crops and pecan orchards to monitoring beef cattle herds. Dr. Spurlock covered the regulations and requirements for pilot certification to operate UAVs as well as how different models perform and the equipment required for different types of data collection. He showed examples of alternative ways to collect aerial imagery data (satellites and airplane-mounted sensors) as well as how using aerial imagery along with soil textural and yield data can enable a producer to more accurately identify issues in a field and determine the economic impact these issues have on the farm.

Drone technology holds many possibilities for future use in agriculture and a newly released fact sheet *Pilot Certification and Aircraft Registration for Non-Hobby Users of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems* (Jim Robbins et al.), FSA6150, is a good place to get started.



Lucas Moore with 3 Brothers Farm and Jesse Bocksnick with Extension learning the new drone technology.

## Miller County 4-H’ers collect gift cards for Tennessee fire victims

Miller County 4-H Clubs have been busy raising awareness of the Sevier County, Tennessee, 4-H families that were affected by the fires in late 2016. They have collected over \$400 in gift cards that will be mailed to the Sevier County, Tennessee, 4-H Office in Gatlinburg.

When the need was brought to their attention, many of the 4-H clubs in our area jumped into action and began gathering donations of gift cards to nationally recognized businesses. These cards will directly benefit 4-H families that were affected when wildfires destroyed many homes and businesses in the Sevier County, Tennessee, area.

Taj, a 4-H’er with the School of Faith 4-H Club, when asked why she would take the time and effort required to benefit someone she doesn’t even know, replied that if she could help someone in need at a crucial time, then why not.

The gift cards will be mailed to the 4-H Office of the University of Tennessee 4-H Extension Office this week.

We are so proud of our 4-H members. They are always eagerly engaged in a good cause and always willing to help with any community service project they can. ■

### Making things better, cont.

Before visiting Rison, I read the *Cleveland County Herald*, as local papers are a great indicator of the character and health of a community. The Herald reminded me of what we do in our county programs and why we live and work in Arkansas, with salt of the earth people. I read where the county judge said they did things because they were the “right thing to do,” which says volumes about rural values. A local student won a state wrestling title despite being weakened from a recent illness, but he simply would not quit – an indication of character of the people. It was touching to be reminded that in some places there is still care and respect for the elderly. Visitation is still published in the local paper – I fear this is more remarkable than it should be in our society.

I noted that Cooperative Extension programs, directly or indirectly, seemed to be on every page: youth work, Extension Homemakers, Extension Get Fit, community gardens and sustainable agriculture, and food safety and community development, ad infinitum. Our county Extension agents are involved in everything in the county, which is their home too. After the visit, my hope, my pride was in realizing that while Cleveland County and our cooperative work there is fantastic, our county agents and their families live and work to improve their communities in all 75 counties in Arkansas.

My sincere thanks to Les and Stacy Walz, Diane and Mike Clement, Keith and Debbie Gresham from Dallas County, Britt Talent, Gary Spears, Mike Holcomb, Trent Garner, Jimmy Cummings, Joe and Annette Rawls, Sharon Gray and the other folks who invited us to their celebration. It was an unforgettable experience.

– Rick Cartwright

## Marathon over Mississippi River brings cross-county and cross-state Extension collaboration

In 2012, the idea of a marathon starting in Lake Village, Arkansas, and traversing over the Mississippi River into Greenville, Mississippi, was only a dream for two teachers in the Lakeside School District who happen to be runners.

In 2013, that dream became a reality with the launch of the Mississippi River Marathon (MRM). In 2015, the MRM teamed up with Dr. Jennifer Conner, regional program associate - Obesity Reduction, to create the Half Miles to a Half-Marathon (HM→HM) Program.

For six weeks, students walk/jog a half-mile or do the equivalent amount of exercise during their physical education classes. Students are also asked to walk/jog a half-mile twice a week at home. On race day, children complete the last 1.1 mile, which adds up to 13.1 miles (an actual half-marathon).



On Feb. 11, Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service, Washington County, also supported the Mississippi River Marathon. MSU Extension Service staff, Kesalyn Peoples, office associate (pictured far left), and Lionell Hinds, 4-H agent (pictured far right), along with the MSU - Washington County 4-H group handed out water and food to more than 720 runners/walkers along the course.



On Feb. 11, Chicot and Ashley County youth and adults participated in the Mississippi River Marathon Half Miles to a Half-Marathon Program led by Dr. Jennifer Conner (far left, front row), Extension; in collaboration with Brian Whitson and Chris Staudy (far left, back row), Lake Chicot State Park staff; and City of Lake Village Mayor JoAnne Bush (far right, second row). The program was sponsored by grant funds from the Southeast Arkansas Community Foundation.

## Russellville Mayor Randy Horton kicks off Walk Across Arkansas

In celebration of Mayor Randy Horton's birthday, he kicked off the Walk Across Arkansas program on Monday afternoon, Feb. 27, in Russellville to encourage people to walk more and improve their health. Another reason he is pushing this program is that the city is close to being bumped up a rate class from health insurance claims.

Teams from City Hall, police department, water department, parks and recreation and public works have accepted the challenge to Walk Across Arkansas. Other teams of 4-H cubs, EHC, Extension staff and friends have also joined the program.



Russellville city employees and others gather to celebrate mayor's birthday and launch of the Walk Across Arkansas program.

In 2016, Ashley County CES was added to the partnership and the HM→HM Program was expanded to Portland Elementary School. In 2017, the Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSUES), Washington County, joined the MRM partnership. This year, their Family and Consumer Sciences staff ensured food safety in the finishers' tent, and their 4-H group manned an aid station along the course. We look forward to growing this cross-county, cross-state Extension collaboration with the MRM. ■

Those attending the kick off walked a 3.5-mile path around the city of Russellville. Julie Paladino, the mayor's assistant has been working with Jeri Vangilder, Pope County family and consumer sciences agent, to promote and organize this event.

Pope County Extension staff is very excited to be partnering with the city of Russellville to enjoy better health outcomes. ■

## Community and Economic Development launches new blog

Quick, bookmark this blog page: [uaex.edu/cedblog](http://uaex.edu/cedblog).

Community and Economic Development launched a new blog in February as a way to feature our unit's programs and events (LeadAR goes to Argentina!).

The Strengthening Arkansas Communities blog is an easy way to discover our newest publications (Rural Profile of Arkansas) and keep up on the latest ballot issue news. We'll also post pictures and event registration information (Breakthrough Solutions anyone?) on there.

Feel free to share our blog posts on your Facebook and Twitter pages. ■

## "Get Real, Here's The Deal" successful in training Huntsville middle-schoolers in personal finance

Elizabeth McGinley, the Madison County family and consumer sciences agent, recently concluded the three-day program "Get Real, Here's The Deal" that was conducted over two semesters of Career Orientation for 172 eighth grade students at Huntsville Middle School.

With 65 percent of Arkansans unable to correctly answer three out of five personal finance questions, 15 percent of Arkansas households spending more than their income and 45 percent living month to month (FINRA Financial Capability Study), there is a need for personal finance programs.

More than 20 volunteers served as station facilitators. The students were given a career, a family situation and then the task of keeping a balanced monthly budget after making purchases at the 12 stations.

Results showed, 124 students (96 percent) reported learning about financial management out of 129 students who completed the evaluations. The number of students who intended to change their behavior included: 124 students (96 percent) "may" or "definitely will" create and use a monthly spending plan or budget, 111 students (86 percent) "may" or "definitely will" record transactions on an expense/account record, 117 students (91 percent) "may" or "definitely will" pay off credit card charges every month or keep balances low.

Student comments include the following:

"I learned that you need to balance your money and that you can't have everything you want. Don't live paycheck to paycheck."

"I learned that every penny counts and my mom must be stressed."

"You have to think about what you buy and how it relates to your pay."

"Being an adult is not fun, there is a lot more to worry about than I thought."

"Learn how to keep your money and not wasting your money."

Some volunteer comments:

"I love this activity! It is so good for showing kids the choices adults have to make."

"It was a very eye opening experience for me as well."

"I think this is a great program for kids – wish we would have had something like this when I was in school!"

Get Real, Here's the Deal and other personal finance educational programs are available through Extension across the state. For more personal finance tips, visit our website at [www.uaex.edu/money](http://www.uaex.edu/money). Follow uaexMoney on Facebook and Twitter.

Connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices, we are a catalyst of prosperity. ■





## Meet the *new* employees!



**Melanie Berman**  
APAC Program Manager  
Little Rock State Office

- **What's your background?**

I have been in the field of public service since my career began. I have volunteered all over the world, as well as here in Arkansas, through Peace Corps

and AmeriCorps. I have most recently come from an international nonprofit where I was project manager of four multi-year agricultural education grants in West Africa. I remain an active volunteer in my community of Little Rock, serving on the Little Rock Sister Cities Commission, focusing on both cultural understanding and economic development between Little Rock and our sister cities around the world.

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

For the last six years, I have been working in the field of project management and awards management, with a strong focus on U.S. government-funded grants and contracts.

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

I love to travel, and family is very important to me.

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

As the Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center (APAC) program manager, I would like to expand our presence across the state, getting the message out about our great program. APAC was created over 20 years ago to help Arkansas businesses navigate the government contracting world. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone across Extension in the next year so I can share with them existing trainings and opportunities that APAC provides across the state.

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

Extension has always been appealing to me as an organization to work for. I have had former co-workers who have come here and are extremely happy with the Extension community and work we provide to members of the community. I have come across trainings Extension provides as well as resources available in my daily life as a private citizen and couldn't be more excited to have the opportunity to serve the state of Arkansas in my new role as APAC program manager at Extension.

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

When not working, I spend time with my two rescue animals, friends and family. I enjoy attending shows at the Repertory Theater and the Arkansas Symphony, as well as exploring new locally-owned restaurants.

### **Nancy Clark**

Administrative Specialist  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
Little Rock State Office

- **What's your background?**

I have served as senior executive assistant to the president, COO and CMO – Transamerica Employee Benefits.

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

I bring professionalism and much knowledge in the administrative field.

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

First of all, I love being a grandmother to three of the greatest granddaughters ever, and I love to garden and work in my yard (it's my passion).

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

Just to know my responsibilities inside and out and continue to learn and help others when needed.

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

To be honest, I knew Janet Carson worked here. What I didn't know was all the other things that the employees do here to help others with their health education, etc.

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

Gardening and trying to raise a new boxer puppy.



**Brandi Davis**  
4-H Program Assistant  
Crawford County

- **What's your background?**

I have been the Cedarville 4-H Club leader for the past two and a half years. I have lived in

Crawford County for three years with my family: Jeff, Hayden and Clay. We are current residents of Cedarville. We are small town cattle farmers with lots of extra livestock to boot. I graduated from Arkansas State University in 2003 with a Bachelor's degree in science.

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

The knowledge and skills that I bring to Extension are many. I have lots of interests. One is my love and passion for children. I am inspired by the chance to get to help shape and mold today's youth into our nation's next leaders. As I previously stated, we run a small cattle farm with lots of extra livestock (chickens, goats, rabbits, ducks and dogs), which is not something you can do with little to no knowledge.

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

I am a go getter! I love a challenge and like to learn about new things, so bring on the challenges.

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

I would like to raise membership in Crawford County 4-H. I also want Crawford County 4-H to be more involved in the schools.

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

My love for 4-H and what it has done for me and my family is what brought me to Extension. I value the core beliefs, the structure and ALL the opportunities.

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

My interest outside of work is anything that my children are involved in. If I am keeping the roads hot traveling to basketball and baseball games or helping them in their 4-H projects, I get lots of joy from it. My family time is beyond precious to me. I love four-wheeler rides and almost anything outdoors.



**Debie Head**  
Associate Professor -  
EFNEP/Nutrition Specialist  
Little Rock State Office

- **What's your background?**

I am a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator.

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

I have worked as a clinical dietitian, diabetes educator, taught at three different universities and coordinated diabetes, dietetic internship and WIC programs.

I have worked as a clinical dietitian, diabetes educator, taught at three different universities and coordinated diabetes, dietetic internship and WIC programs.

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

I live in Rose Bud; my husband (we were high school sweethearts) and I have been married almost 38 years.

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

I hope to gain a working knowledge of the EFNEP program, incorporate prediabetes education into our programming and establish relationships with all county agents and staff.

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

As a former member of both 4-H and EHC, I have personally benefited from Extension. Being a part of

the Extension community and helping serve others throughout our great state has been one of my professional goals.

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

I enjoy gardening (and the canning/freezing that goes with it) camping, sports and playing music.



**Kim Huffman**  
EFNEP Program Assistant  
Craighead County

- **What's your background?**

My background consists of being a stay-at-home mom until my youngest started school, being a parent volunteer, a 4-H mom and an advocate for children. My

working career has mostly been aiding individuals with learning differences and helping them successfully navigate their schools and communities. I was also a substitute teacher and enjoy meeting new faces and teaching them.

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

I am a people person and love to be out in my community making a difference. I love to meet new people and learn new things. I have strong leadership skills which I thought would be beneficial to the position I now serve in.

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

We live in rural small town USA, Bono, Arkansas. I am married to my accountant husband, Mark Huffman, and together we are parents to four children ages 11 to 22, two boys (Zach and Colbie) and two girls between them (Makenzie and Gabriella), and a three-year-old granddaughter, Zoey. We recently moved out of the city limits of Bono after 10 years and bought a tiny three-acre farm in the country, lovingly called the Huffman Homestead. We have two goats (my youngest daughter shows them), chickens, three horses, two cats and a dog.

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

I would like to bring awareness to my community of the EFNEP program and the other services Extension offers in my county. I hope to positively impact those I will serve and inspire them to make positive lifestyle changes. I am eager to serve my community and make new friends across Arkansas along the way.

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

I read about the EFNEP program assistant position opening and thought it sounded like an interesting new career path. I have been a 4-H mom for a few years and felt like I would be a good fit in Extension.

Extension has become a big part of my family's life in the past few years, especially through 4-H. I value the endless resources and services it provides as well as the family atmosphere.

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

I enjoy spending time with my family. I also enjoy cooking, traveling, home canning, gardening, couponing and photography.



**Caitlin Palenske**  
Program Technician –  
Obesity Reduction  
Northeast Arkansas Region

- **What's your background?**

I grew up on a cattle farm in Cleburne County on the Little Red River. I spent my summers in the outdoors – camping, hiking and kayaking. After high school, I

attended Arkansas Tech University and graduated with degrees in marketing and public relations. Before working with Extension, I worked for a marketing agency as an account executive and project coordinator, helping companies develop branding and marketing campaigns.

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

I've had the opportunity to work for companies to build and execute comprehensive marketing and



branding campaigns, as well as manage social media accounts and write articles and press releases.

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

I'm always looking to learn new things and like to think I'm easy to get along with!

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

In my first year, I want to utilize my marketing background in the work I'm doing with Arkansas Healthy LIFE.

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

I recently relocated to Jonesboro while my husband attends medical school and took the position with Extension. What I love about Extension is that the work you do directly benefits the people in your community.

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

I spend most of my weekends camping and hiking with my husband, Ryan, and our two dogs, Harper and Lady. There are so many beautiful places to explore in Arkansas, so I like to look at every weekend as an opportunity for a new adventure. I also love to read, and can often be found in my hammock with a good book!



**Jessica Smith**  
Budget and Position  
Control Manager  
Financial Services  
Little Rock State Office

- **What's your background?**

I am originally from Dover, Arkansas, where I graduated high school in 2004. I attended Arkansas Tech University until

2008, earning a B.S. in business administration. I received my MBA from Southern Arkansas University in 2015.

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

I have worked in the higher education finance area for almost 12 years. My varying roles have offered me experience in fund accounting, budgeting, position control and travel and grants management. My previous institution was also a Banner school, so I come to Extension with a broad knowledge of the finance system.

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

I am here to serve, so always feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

My favorite saying is, "It's all good."

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

In my first year, I want to focus on learning as much as possible about the people, the organization, the processes and the goals of Extension.

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

My husband, Chris, and I decided to relocate our careers to the central Arkansas area. When I saw this position available, I reviewed the promise, values, vision and mission of the U of A Division of Agriculture, and I knew Extension would be a perfect fit for me. Extension is such a unique entity within higher education, and I look forward to contributing to the success of the institution.

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

Outside of work, I am busy being mommy to two of the sweetest little boys, Declan, 3, and Lincoln, 11 months. When I'm not busy learning and singing lyrics to cartoon theme songs or role playing with Transformer or dinosaur figurines, I like to garden, fish, travel, cook/try new foods and go kayaking on Big Piney Creek.

## Grants and Contracts

for Month Ending February 28, 2017

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Bi-Lingual Demonstration Videos for Strawberry and Blackberry Production in the Southeastern United States	5,000	Amanda McWhirt	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Nutrient Use Efficiency Assessments of Recently Released Strawberry Cultivars in Both Field and High-Tunnel Production	5,000	Amanda McWhirt	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Determination of Optimum Fertilization Rates for Recently Released Strawberry Cultivars in Both Field and High-Tunnel Production	10,487	Amanda McWhirt	North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation, Inc.
Arkansas Cotton Research Verification/Sustainability Program	50,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Soil Health - No Till	12,074	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Over the Top Herbicide Trials in Strawberry	5,000	Jackie Lee	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Blackberry School: Blackberry Establishment and Beyond	10,000	Jackie Lee	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Pre-Emergent Herbicide Efficacy and New Use Patterns in Plasticulture Strawberry Production	9,544	Jackie Lee	North American Strawberry Growers Research Foundation, Inc.
TRQ Rice Demonstration Program Coordinator and Equipment	766,000	Jarrod Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
TRQ Rice Weather Stations and Data Loggers	35,000	Jarrod Hardke	Rice Research Promotion Board
Best Practices and Compliance for Web Content and Digital Media Delivered by State and Local Extension Services	29,307	Julie Robinson	Memorial Hermann Health System
An Evaluation of Performance and Health Responses of Coccidiosis Vaccinated Broiler Chickens Given Water-Soluble Tannin Extracts	28,875	Susan Watkins	Kemin Industries, Inc.
<b>Total Awards for February 2017</b>	<b>\$966,287</b>		

## Personnel changes

### Please welcome the following:

**Melanie Berman**

APAC Program Manager, Community and Economic Development, effective January 17, 2017.

**Nancy Clark**, Administrative Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective January 17, 2017.

**Brandi Davis**, 4-H Program Assistant, Crawford County, effective February 1, 2017.

**Katie Frizzell**, County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Stone County, effective February 1, 2017.

**Kim Huffman**, EFNEP Program Assistant, Craighead County, effective February 1, 2017.

**Resha Jackson**, Program Assistant - EFNEP, Phillips County, effective February 1, 2017.

**Kim Summerford**, Administrative Specialist, 4-H and Youth Development, effective January 17, 2017.

### Extension says goodbye to:

**Julie Brogan**, Administrative Specialist, Benton County, effective February 17, 2017.

**Mark Brown**, County Extension Agent - Water Conservation, Pulaski County, effective February 14, 2017.

**Ricky Corder**, Program Assistant - Plant Health, Plant Pathology, effective February 1, 2017.

**Leila Davis**, County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Chicot County, effective February 14, 2017.

**Reba Hawkins**, Administrative Supervisor, Office of County Operations, effective February 15, 2017.

**Janice Lewis**, Fiscal Support Specialist, Financial Services, effective February 20, 2017.

**Rich Poling**, Director - Program and Staff Development, Program and Staff Development, effective February 28, 2017.

**Whitney Rook**, 4-H Program Assistant, Hempstead County, effective February 24, 2017.

**Authur Smith**, Administrative Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective February 20, 2017.