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BLUE LETTER

January 2018
No. 3789



Gearing up for a successful 2018

January is here, the month of beginnings, and I reminded all of you that I would be “rarin’ to go” in 2018.

So here it is, and I am pretty excited about the year to come. I recognize that many were tired of 2017 and all the angst and chaos in the world, but it is also true that most things were actually better in 2017 than previous years. So in 2018, let’s all try to focus on the positive, that is – reality – more. We will all be happier and more productive that way.

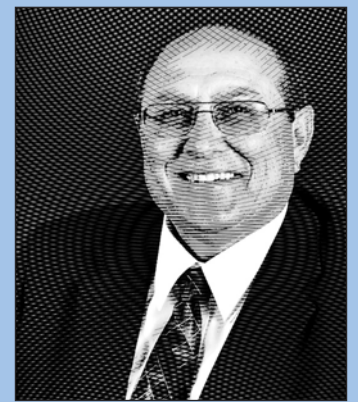
Before I go further, please pay attention to your Jan. 15 pay stub – **MAKE SURE ALL YOUR BENEFITS, TAXES AND DEDUCTIONS ARE CORRECT!** Let payroll know immediately if anything seems incorrect. Human resources and financial services continue to go above and beyond the call to inform and help you; please help them help you.

Speaking of financial services, we welcome Jessica Smith as our new Director. Jessica is the consummate professional and will help lead us forward into a new era of service and efficiency in financial management and accountability, working with Matt Brown, Sam Boyster and Rita Fleming. Please welcome Jessica in this new role.

Several of us participated in the Division of Agriculture Awards on Jan. 12 in Fayetteville, hosted by Dr. J.F. Meullenet, our new Interim Associate Vice President for Agriculture – Research (Director of the Experiment Station) at the Tyson Center for Agricultural Sciences. This new building has a LEED certified design and features very modern, open and less confined feeling work offices, meeting rooms and laboratories. It is a 21st century building for the 21st century Division of Agriculture, hosting the Experiment Station administration and cutting-edge laboratory research programs. If you have time to visit this facility, we encourage you to do so.

The awards ceremony was very well organized by Christina Miller and a host of others, and we recognized outstanding contributions to the land grant mission in extension, research and teaching during the past year. There will be other articles

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State 4-H officers attend American Farm Bureau Federation Convention



Arkansas 4-H officers at the Parthenon.

The state 4-H officer team had the opportunity attend the 99th AFBF annual convention in Nashville, Tennessee, on Jan. 5-10. This was the first year for the AFBF to offer a youth leadership component, and thanks to some help from the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation, our state officers were able to participate in this unique event. These young leaders were introduced and interacted with other 4-H'ers and FFA members from all over the United States.

Some highlights of the conference included sitting in on the Young Farmers & Ranchers discussion meeting, attending the New Ideas trade show, hearing from the Canadian Minister of Agriculture and learning about current U.S. agriculture issues from our own Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

On their last full day of the conference, the youth were entertained by former 4-H'er Reba McEntire as she talked about her experiences growing up on a cattle ranch and her appreciation for agriculture. Easily the most exciting event of the trip was the unique opportunity to see and hear President Donald Trump speak along with all of the security, media and extra commotion that an event like that brings to a meeting.

The kids had a great time, also getting to see some of the sights of Nashville, such as the Opryland Hotel and the Parthenon. All and all, this was a unique opportunity on many levels and had an obvious impact on the kids, helping to expand their world as they continue to grow into young adults. ■



Arkansas 4-H officers meet Lawrence MacAulay, Canadian Minister of Agriculture.

Meet Martha Sallee, DeAnn Sunshine EHC volunteer, Hempstead County

Martha Sallee became a member of the Sunshine EHC in 1991 upon her retirement. The club eventually merged with the DeAnn Club to become the DeAnn Sunshine Club.

After her sister was diagnosed with cancer, Sallee became involved in knitting caps for cancer patients. She uses soft yarn to knit three different sizes of caps, preemie, child and adult, for patients at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

Sallee brings the finished caps to the Hempstead Extension Office to catch a ride to the hospital. She keeps records of time spent knitting and turns them in to the county office for volunteer hours. According to Sallee, it takes four hours to knit an adult cap, three hours for a child's cap and two hours for the preemie caps.

Since she has been knitting caps, she has made and donated thousands. Her main source for yarn is donations. ■



Left to right, Martha Sallee and Glenda Burkham with new caps ready to be taken to Arkansas Children's Hospital.

Extension assists couple in establishing Christmas tree farm in Lafayette County

Lafayette County rings in the New Year with a new Christmas tree farm.

Daulton and Samantha Brewer of May Hill Farms utilized the resources of the Cooperative Extension Service by working with Extension agent Amanda Greer and Southwest Research and Extension Center's Jon Barry, Extension forester, and John Trauger, program associate. Through discussions with Extension personnel, the couple added greatly to their knowledge of Christmas tree farming.

After performing a site visit in which many aspects of Christmas tree establishment and production were discussed, along with management of existing timber, the Brewers made the decision to dive into their new endeavor and ordered 250 Virginia pine and 250 Leyland cypress seedlings. They have visited other Christmas tree farms to see how they operate.

Plans have been made to have the trees as well as a gift shop and winter activities for families. On a very cold Jan. 1, they readied the planting area. On Jan. 4, Trauger, James Overton, SWREC agriculture lab technician, and Greer, along with Samantha Brewer, laid out two planting grids and will return for planting on Jan. 11. The newspaper will be there at planting, and there will be a ribbon cutting to celebrate the new business. We wish them the best in their new endeavor and look forward to working with the Brewers. ■



Laying out one of the planting grids are (left to right) James Overton, John Trauger and Samantha Brewer.

Sharp County recognizes Nancy Orr's 50 years as a 4-H leader

Sharp County 4-H recently honored Nancy Orr for a big milestone, as 2017 marked her 50th year as a 4-H leader.

Orr became the leader of the Sharp County Ruff Riders, a horse club, in 1967. She still leads the club, which is one of the most active in the county. She attends numerous horse shows, hosts clinics, visits local nursing homes and hosts a St. Jude Trail Ride and is also involved in other community service projects.

Extension staff surprised Orr with the award and invited 4-H alumni, along with her present club members, to be a part of the event. The Ruff Riders club has served generations of 4-H members in Sharp County; grandparents, parents, and now their children have all been a part of this club. When asked about her service as a leader, all her previous 4-H members will tell you that Nancy was one of the biggest impacts on their lives. If a child needed to borrow a horse to show or needed a ride to a show, she made sure no child went without.

Orr has impacted countless lives and has spent 50 years truly making the best better. ■



Nancy Orr (front row center) with numerous past and present Ruff Riders 4-H Club members who helped honor her for her 50 years of service as a 4-H leader in Sharp County at the annual 4-H Awards and Recognition.

Severe weather briefings by email

If you'd like to be added to the distribution list for severe weather briefings from the National Weather Service in Little Rock, please email Mary Hightower (mhightower@uaex.edu) to be included. ■

Cross County 4-H clubs donate to Church of Christ food pantry

Soaring Eagles, Cross Roads and the other 4-H clubs donated canned goods and other food items to the church food pantry. Giving back to the community is a part 4-H plays in teaching the youth community services. ■



Cross County 4-H'ers deliver donated food to Church of Christ food pantry.

Extension personnel honored with 2017 Excellence Awards

The following Extension personnel were recognized for outstanding achievements during 2017 with Extension Excellence Awards. The awards were presented during the annual faculty and staff conference at the Extension State Office in Little Rock on Dec. 4.

Rick Cartwright, Associate Vice President for Agriculture-Extension, updated those in attendance on accomplishments made within the service during 2017.

“As we continue to move forward into the 21st century, we will adapt, learn, and meet all challenges,” Cartwright said. “We will get better, faster, stronger. We will use technology appropriately and effectively. We will continue to carry out our mission. We will remain the best and most effective force for positive change in this world.”

Many members were recognized for their length of service with the CES, from those who have worked with the organization for five to 30 years. Additionally, individuals and teams were recognized with Excellence Awards in several categories:

Kerry Rodtnick, extension videographer, Communications, was named **2017 Employee of the Year**. “Kerry exemplifies the gold standard, the best of extension,” said Cartwright. “His work ethic, innovation and creativity. That’s what the employee of the year award represents to us: Going above and beyond expectations.”

- **Classified Employee Early Career Award:** Phalon Montgomery, administrative specialist III
- **County Extension Faculty Early Career Award:** Jennifer Caraway, Miller County agricultural agent
- **State Extension Faculty Early Career Award:** Heidi Ward, assistant professor and veterinarian
- **Project/Program Administrator Early Career Award:** Amy Cole, Digital Media program director for the Office of Information Technology
- **County Team Award:** Lawrence and Randolph counties. Team members include Heather Akins, Mike Andrews, Bryce Baldrige, Katrina Causey, Herb Ginn and Sandra McGinnis
- **State Team Award:** The Dicamba Research and Educational Effort. Team members include Tom Barber, Jason Davis, Mary Hightower, Jason Norsworthy, Julie Robinson, Jeremy Ross, Bob Scott and Ples Spradley ■



Kerry Rodtnick receives Employee of the Year Award from Dr. Cartwright.



Dr. Cartwright presents the Classified Employee Early Career Award to Phalon Montgomery.



Jennifer Caraway receives the County Extension Faculty Early Career Award from Dr. Cartwright.



Dr. Cartwright presents the State Extension Faculty Early Career Award to Heidi Ward.



Dr. Rick Cartwright presents the Project/Program Administrator Early Career Award to Amy Cole.



Dr. Cartwright with County Team Award recipients: (back row) Dr. Cartwright, Herb Ginn, Bryce Baldrige and Mike Andrews; (front row) Katrina Causey, Sandra McGinnis, Ally George and Heather Akins.



Dr. Cartwright with recipients of the State Team Award (front row): Mary Hightower, Tom Barber; (back row) Dr. Cartwright, Bob Scott, Jeremy Ross and Jason Davis. Not pictured: Jason Norsworthy, Julie Robinson and Ples Spradley.

St. Francis County works with youth at Colt Juvenile Center

On Jan. 10, St. Francis County 4-H began working with the boys of the juvenile center in Colt, Arkansas. This was the first of many educational experiences for this group of boys. The center houses 21 to 28 boys at one time, all of whom have enrolled in 4-H. We are now in the process of chartering a new 4-H club at the center.

For our first gathering, the boys participated in activities from the L.I.F.E. curriculum. We spent an hour developing their leadership skills and enhancing their ability to work as a team. They were able to complete Warp Speed in under 3 seconds and successfully participated in the raccoon circle.

The director of the center approached Extension last fall, and we expressed our ability to conduct several educational programs for the youth. After talking with her supervisor at the state level, we received the go ahead to begin conducting programs with the kids. As the partnership continues, the boys will be introduced to more 4-H programs and participate in various community service projects.

The Division of Youth Services is very pleased to be working with St. Francis County 4-H and plans to use this partnership to grow relationships with other local county 4-H offices to give this opportunity to other juvenile centers in the state. ■

Logan County Extension hosts forestry workshop

On Tuesday, Nov. 28, the Logan County Extension Service hosted a forestry workshop in Booneville featuring Extension foresters Jon Barry and Kyle Cunningham. The 30 land and timber owners in attendance were served a meal, which was followed by presentations from Blair Griffin, Johnson County Extension agent - staff chair, Cunningham and Barry.

Attendees learned information on calculating the value of timber, pitfalls of marketing timber and weed and brush control in timber. Following the presentations, participants asked many questions and reported that they learned much valuable information about marketing and valuing their trees.

The meeting was sponsored by the Arkansas Forestry Association and presented by the Arkansas Forest Resources Center and the Logan County Extension Service. ■



Dr. Kyle Cunningham speaks to producers at the forestry workshop in Booneville about estimating the value of standing timber.

Cartwright, cont.

listing the honorees (see the upcoming February 2018 Blue Letter for further details and photos of award winners), but for the Extension Mission, I applaud Dr. Tom Barber, recipient of the John W. White Outstanding State Faculty Award, and Cecilia Harberson from Howard County, recipient of the Division Classified Support Personnel Award. In addition, the Discovery Farms Team Award included a number of CES colleagues, and we certainly appreciate all of their hard work on this program the past several years. Please help me congratulate all of the awardees over the next few weeks, they exemplify the excellence of the organization and the impact of our mission. In addition, I hope you will remember and work toward nominating deserving colleagues for recognition during the upcoming year – it is a professional, and very satisfying, obligation we all have.

Last week, I also learned that Dr. Gus Lorenz was named Rice Researcher of the Year at the National Cotton and Rice No Tillage Conference, while Dr. Jason Kelly was named Corn Researcher of the Year and Chris Henry was named Irrigation Researcher of the Year at the same event. I also heard that our 4-H leaders represented us very well at the National Farm Bureau meeting in Tennessee, and I remain very much appreciative and impressed by these young leaders.

There will be many more items to share in the upcoming Blue Letters, and I really appreciate all of you that contribute to this newsletter. I know that you will make an even greater effort in 2018 to help us make the Blue Letter the best extension newsletter of its type in the nation – we have a lot to be proud of so please share.

Have a great January!

– Rick Cartwright ■

Farm Management Series planned by Clay and Greene County Extension offices

The Clay and Greene County Extension offices kicked off 2018 by teaming up to plan a Farm Management Series of meetings. Five sessions are being conducted during January and early February to provide local clientele information on making their farm businesses profitable in a time when margins of return are slim.

Key themes addressed in the series include business plans and budgeting, government programs and insurance, marketing, agricultural technology and legal issues, and farm succession planning. Several Extension specialists were involved in the planning process and are presenters at the meetings. They include Dr. Bobby Coats, Dr. Mike Daniels, Dr. Laura Hendrix, Dr. Terry Spurlock, Scott Stiles and Breana Watkins. Beth Rumley, senior staff attorney for the National Agricultural Law Center in Fayetteville, is also scheduled to speak.

Other key partners who have stepped up to help plan, sponsor and provide speakers for the series include Cleveland Crop Insurance, Delaplaine Seed Company, Farm Bureau, Farm Credit MidSouth, the Clay County Farm Service Agency and Legacy Equipment Company. ■



The Farm Management Series planning team discusses plans for an upcoming meeting.

BENEFITS CORNER

After Jan. 15, please take a few minutes to review your 2018 benefits, deductions and taxes on your Jan. 15 pay stub.

Log into the Banner Self Service Link, <http://uaex.edu/links>, and click on Banner Self Service (SSB). Use your Banner User ID and Password to log in. Click Employee Services, then Pay Information, then Pay Stub, then Select Pay Stub Year, click Display and select Jan 15, 2018.

If you have questions regarding your benefit enrollments, contact yourbenefits@uaex.edu. For deductions questions, please contact Payroll at payroll@uaex.edu. It is your responsibility to confirm your benefit elections and deductions are accurate.

All employees enrolled with the new dental carrier, Arkansas BCBS, should have received an ID card by Jan. 15 and have access to the Member Customer Service Number, 1-844-662-2281. In addition, you may go to the microsite at www.uasdental.blueadvantagearkansas.com to find information regarding dental benefits, to find a dentist, FAQs and to enroll in Dental Xtra. If you have not received an ID Card, please call the Member Number listed above.

- **UMR Medical Customer Service:** 1-888-438-6105
- **MedImpact Prescription Drugs:** 1-800-788-2949
- **Flexible Spending Account (FSA):** UMR Benny Card / 1-866-868-0145
- **Superior Vision:** 1-800-507-3800 or www.superiorvision.com

Update your address in Banner.

Grants and contracts for Month Ending December 31, 2017

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Arkansas Cotton Research Verification/Sustainability Program	\$ 50,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Cereal Rye Termination Timing	15,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Cotton Incorporated-Cotton Specialists Partnership: Large-Plot, Replicated Variety Evaluations - AR	10,500	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Cotton Research Irrigation Verification and Sustainability Program: AR	25,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Soil Health - No Till	12,074	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Target Leaf Spot IPM	15,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Master Youth and Adult Health Volunteer Training-Culture of Health Initiative	40,000	Lisa Washburn	National 4-H Council
ADS-Designation of Program/Technical Contract	74,984	Michael Daniels	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Demonstrating, Documenting and Extending the Holistic Benefits of Soil and Water Conservation	870,693	Michael Daniels	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Stevens Farm Edge of Field Water Quality Monitoring Data Collection and Evaluation	28,289	Michael Daniels	C. B. Stevens Farms, Inc.
Southern Plant Diagnostic Network	30,000	Sherrie Smith	University of Florida
Enhanced Pest Control System for Mid-South Soybean Production	19,324	Terry Spurlock	Louisiana State University
Evaluation and Implementation of New Herbicide Technology Systems in Arkansas Cotton	25,000	Tom Barber	Cotton Incorporated
Total Awards for December 2017	\$1,215,864		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Lisa Barnes, Administrative Specialist, Community and Economic Development, effective November 16, 2017.

Lori Canada, 4-H Development Coordinator, 4-H and Youth Development, effective November 16, 2017.

Emily Hawkins, County Extension Agent - 4-H - Agriculture, Pope County, effective November 27, 2017.

Shaunta Hudson, Accountant, Financial Services, effective November 16, 2017.

Nicole McRaven, 4-H Program Assistant, Hempstead County, effective November 16, 2017.

Nicole Nichols, County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Pulaski County, effective December 4, 2017.

Eric Simon, Program Assistant, Bio and Agricultural Engineering, effective November 27, 2017.

Sarah Stone, County Extension Agent - 4-H, Crittenden County, effective November 16, 2017.

Extension says goodbye to:

Alan Beach, Program Associate, Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences, effective December 8, 2017.

Rethalee Morrow, Program Assistant - SNAP-Ed, Clay County - Corning, effective December 8, 2017.

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

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