

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Celebrating success

With two major awards ceremonies, we ended the one year on a high note and started off another the same way. In December, through our annual Extension Excellence awards, we recognized the innovation, resourcefulness and hard work that Extension staff and faculty invest in their work. This month, we celebrated the successes of teams and individuals across the Division of Agriculture through the John White awards. Both these events give us the opportunity to stop and reflect on the big picture; to see and appreciate those moments that get lost in the day-to-day details.

These are important moments not only for the individuals and teams, but also our organization as a whole. These awards are a way for each of us to see something about our mission that we might not have seen before; to be inspired by our colleagues and to come back to our own work renewed.

For me, it's an honor to see our faculty and staff with fresh eyes and a new appreciation for all that you do.

I hope that 2015 sees each of us moving our mission forward with new energy and new perspectives.

– Tony Windham

Communities recognized for obesity prevention programs

Fifty-three Arkansas communities and 17 Extension employees were recognized for their obesity prevention efforts at the 2014 Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP) Celebration at the Clinton Library on Dec. 5. ArCOP's Growing Healthy Communities program helps communities build capacity to reduce obesity by aiming to increase access to physical activity and healthy foods and implementing environmental and policy changes that support healthy living.

Thirty-three communities received recognition as Emerging Communities for poising themselves to make healthy changes by laying a strong, team-based foundation. Renee Myers, Julie Blair, Keith Gresham, Kathy May, Candace Carrié, Linda Sims, Jo Ann Vann, Les Walz, Diane Clement and Melissa Beck were recognized with their emerging communities.

Fifteen communities were recognized as Blossoming Communities for building upon their strong foundations by strategizing plans for change and documenting success stories and lessons learned. Jessica Vincent, Terrie James, Ruth Cook, Mary Ann Kizer and Lisa Collins were recognized with their blossoming communities.

Five communities were recognized as Thriving Communities for demonstrating their efforts through data collection, environmental changes and policy changes. Julian Carpenter and Jennifer Connor were recognized with their thriving communities.

These communities will receive priority access to training and funding opportunities provided by ArCOP through November 2015. ■



**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System

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

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DR. TONY WINDHAM
Associate Vice President for
Agriculture - Extension and
Director, Cooperative Extension Service

Extension honors its own with Excellence Awards

Five individuals and five teams were honored with Extension Excellence awards for innovation in education and service to the organization and fellow Arkansans.

The awards for staff and faculty were given on Dec. 8 during the Cooperative Extension Service's annual faculty meeting at Little Rock.

County Team Award – Conway County Extension Office: Staff Chair **Alicia Hugen**; **Sherry Kaufman**, administrative assistant; **Ashley Terry**, family and consumer science agent; and **Kevin Van Pelt**, agriculture agent.



County Team Award winners Kevin Van Pelt, Sherry Kaufman and Ashley Terry with Dr. Windham.

Diversity Award – Financial Management Southeast Arkansas team: **Michelle Carter**, Bradley County FCS agent; **Diane Clement**, Cleveland County FCS agent; **Laura Connerly**, assistant professor, state office; **Mary Ann Kizer**, Jefferson County FCS agent; and **Jane Newton**, Lincoln County FCS agent.



Diversity Award winners Michelle Carter, Diane Clement, Laura Connerly, Jane Newton and Mary Ann Kizer with Dr. Windham.

Early Career - Classified Award – **Aly Signorelli**, administrative assistant, Community and Economic Development.

Early Career - County Agent Award – **Sara Beth Waller**, Lonoke County.

Early Career - Faculty Award – **Jarrold Hardke**, rice agronomist.

Early Career - Non-Classified Award – **Krishna Ellington**, LeadAR Program.



Early Career - Classified Award winner Aly Signorelli with Dr. Windham.



Early Career - County Agent Award winner Sara Beth Waller with Dr. Windham.



Early Career - Faculty Award winner Jarrod Hardke with Dr. Windham.



Early Career - Non-Classified Award winner Krishna Ellington with Dr. Windham.

Innovation Award – Upstream Art for Storm Water: **Jane Maginot**, program associate - Urban Stormwater Education, Washington County; **Joyce Mendenhall**, administrative assistant, Washington County; **Trish Ouei**, agriculture agent - Urban Stormwater Education, Benton County; **Linda Simpson**, program assistant - Urban Stormwater, Benton County; **Katie Teague**, agriculture agent, Washington County.



Innovation Award winners Trish Ouei, Katie Teague, Jane Maginot, Joyce Mendenhall and Linda Simpson with Dr. Windham.

Issue Team Award – 4-H Yoga for Kids: **Debbie Baker**, FCS agent, Clay County; **Lauren Copeland**, program technician - health, state office; **Carla Haley Hadley**, FCS agent - Miller County; **Iris Phifer**, Ashley County staff chair; **Kerry Rodtnick**, videographer, state office; **Jessica Vincent**, FCS agent, Garland County; **Lisa Washburn**, assistant professor - health, state office; **Shea Wilson** FCS agent, Prairie County.

Quinn, video specialist; **Kerry Rodtnick**, extension videographer; **Julie Thompson**, design specialist; **Martha Thorpe**, administrative specialist; **Cheryl Williams**, associate designer/editor.



Issue Team Award winners: (front) Debbie Baker, Jessica Vincent, Lisa Washburn and Lauren Copeland; (back) Iris Phifer, Shea Wilson, Kerry Rodtnick and Carla Haley Hadley with Dr. Windham.



Unit Team Award winners (front) Gloria Mayhugh, Cheryl Williams, Mary Hightower, Tamiela Daniels, (back) Kevin Quinn, Laura Goforth, Kerry Rodtnick, Chris Meux and Martha Thorpe with Dr. Windham.

Unit Team Award. Communications Department: Tamiela Daniels, administrative support supervisor; Laura Goforth, associate designer/editor; Mary Hightower, director; Gloria Mayhugh, publications coordinator; Chris Meux, design specialist; Kevin

Employee of the Year. Chris Meux, design specialist, Communications Department.



Employee of the Year Chris Meux with Dr. Windham.

Arkansas delegates attend National 4-H Congress



Thirty-six Arkansas 4-H'ers were among nearly 800 delegates from across the country and Puerto Rico attending the 2014 National 4-H Congress November 28 – December 2 in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme this year was “Passport to Excellence.”

The National 4-H Congress experience allows the best and brightest 4-H members from across the country to learn new skills through workshops, hear from nationally recognized speakers and experience Southern culture by touring some of Atlanta’s premier landmarks.

Arkansas 4-H'ers selected to attend Congress are state Record Book winners. Our delegation was honored to have Travis C. of Faulkner County and Ashton Y. of Benton County serve as two of the twelve members of the National Congress Leadership Team to preside over Congress sessions. Tyra S. of

Ashley County served as Arkansas’ state youth delegate advisor and Mitchell B. of Benton County served as our state flag bearer at the Inspirational assembly.

Delegates participated in a wide range of educational workshops and heard from speakers such as Mohamed Massaquoi, spokesperson for Fuel to Play. They also were a part of an Atlanta Day of Service, working in classrooms, cleaning up parks and much more. Arkansas delegates donated more than \$700 to the national service project. ■

Faculty, staff accomplishments recognized by U of A System Division of Agriculture, Bumpers College

World-renowned work in soybean breeding and genetics as well as the development of nitrogen soil testing for rice are among the accomplishments by faculty and staff who were honored Jan. 9 by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in partnership with the UA Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences. Ceremonies were held during a luncheon at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Rogers.

The award recipients represent some 1,500 faculty and staff members on five university campuses, at research and extension centers and stations throughout Arkansas and in Cooperative Extension Service offices in all 75 counties.

The **Robert G.F. and Hazel Taylor Spitze Land Grant University Faculty Award for Excellence** was presented to **Pengyin Chen**, professor of crop, soil and environmental sciences. Chen's work in soybean breeding and genetics has combined traditional plant breeding with cutting edge molecular methods. This has shortened the time required to release new varieties. His program has identified 12 new genes resistant to diseases that impact Arkansas soybean production. He is a Fellow of the Crop Science Society of America and the American Society of Agronomy. He has also received the John W. White Outstanding Research Award and the Gamma Sigma Delta Research Award.



Dr. Robert Bacon receives the Spitze Land Grant University Faculty Award for Excellence on behalf of Dr. Pengyin Chen from Dr. Mark Cochran and Dr. Lona Robertson.

Don Edgar, associate professor of agricultural education, communications and technology, received the **Bumpers College Alumni Society Outstanding Advising Award**. He works with students to decide with them not only a sequence of courses to fulfill degree requirements but also how best to get them where they want to be in life. Edgar has also received the Outstanding Early Career Award for the American Association of Agricultural Education and the Gamma Sigma Delta teaching award.

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



Dr. Don Edgar, Bumpers College Alumni Society Outstanding Advising Award recipient.



Dr. Jennie Popp, John W. White Outstanding Teaching Award recipient.

The **John W. White Outstanding Teaching Award**, jointly awarded by the Division of Agriculture and Bumpers College, was presented to **Jennie Popp**, professor of agricultural economics and agribusiness. Popp integrates research topics into teaching wherever possible. She works with students in class, on independent projects, special problems and activities. For several years she led the university's service learning class in Belize to help establish a school, community garden and market. She has received the campus Faculty Gold Medal, the Bumpers College Jack G. Justus Award

for Teaching Excellence, the International Education Award and the Honors College Distinguished Faculty Award.

The **John W. White Outstanding Research Award** went to **Gisela Erf**, the Tyson Professor in Avian Immunology in the Department of Poultry Science. She has built a strong research program addressing both basic and applied aspects of innate and adaptive immune system development and function in poultry. Erf's research has addressed a great need for development of vaccines and other effective preventative and therapeutic approaches to poultry diseases. Her research has been recognized with a Young Investigator Research Award from the Pan American Society for Pigment Cell Research and the University of Arkansas Alumni Association's Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award for Research and Teaching.

Shane Gadberry, associate professor of animal science, received the **John W. White Outstanding Extension State Faculty Award**. He has developed one of the nation's most progressive and respected ruminant nutrition educational programs. His program includes working with youth and county agents for in-service trainings, research, publications, grants and electronic communications. Gadberry has conducted numerous meetings to assist cattle producers to



Dr. Gisela Erf, John W. White Outstanding Research Award winner.



Dr. Shane Gadberry, John W. White Outstanding Extension State Faculty Award recipient.

aid in selecting the correct types and amounts of supplemental feed to ensure cattle performance at the least cost. He has also received the Extension Excellence Innovation Award and the Extension Excellence Issue Team Award.

The **John W. White Outstanding County Extension Educator Award** winner was **Robert Goodson**, a Phillips County extension agent. He has been active in row crop verification and began publishing results of demonstrations he oversaw. His demonstration book has become a much sought publication for area producers that also includes yearly crop reports, weather records, each crop's economic aspects and Phillips County's state rankings.



Robert Goodson receives the John W. White Outstanding County Extension Educator Award from Dr. Mark Cochran, left, and Dr. Tony Windham.

Participation in extension education programs for producers has increased markedly under Goodson's supervision.

The **John W. White Outstanding Team Award** was presented to a group of faculty who comprise the N-STaR (Nitrogen Soil Test for Rice) Research and Extension Team. N-STaR is a scientific method that allows the measurement of the soil's ability to apply nitrogen to plants. The method has been refined and tested and consistently proven to enable the calculation of the proper fertilization rate. The proper fertilization rate from use of N-STaR has a large impact with multiple benefits – higher yields, reduced input costs and less environmental concerns. The rice verification program, which presents growers with

real-world examples of proper crop management techniques, was first used in the implementation strategy. Team members, all in the Department of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences, are **Trent Roberts**, assistant professor; **Jeremy Ross**, associate professor; **Rick Norman**, professor; **Nathan Slaton**, professor; **Charles Wilson**, professor and Rice Research and Extension Center director; **Jarrold Hardke**, extension rice agronomist, and **Ralph Mazzanti**, rice verification coordinator.



Drs. Chuck Wilson (from left), Jeremy Ross, Trent Roberts, Ralph Mazzanti and Rick Norman receive the John W. White Outstanding Team Award. Not present were Drs. Nathan Slaton and Jarrold Hardke.

The **Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel Award** went to **Alan Beach**, a program technician at the Northeast Research and Extension Center in Keiser. Beach has been the primary contact person for all cotton research at the center since 2008. He has also helped to coordinate much of the cotton research at the Judd Hill Cooperative Research Station and has assisted with cotton research at the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station. Beach also assists in organizing and coordinating the Arkansas Cotton Variety Test and works closely with the cotton breeding program.

The **Agricultural Experiment Station Classified Support Personnel**

Award was presented to **Melinda Dunlap**, an administrative specialist in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. Her primary responsibility is to support the

department's undergraduate program by maintaining its records in addition to supporting the Agribusiness Club. She also coordinates freshman summer orientation during which she advises more than 40 students. Dunlap assists students with degree planning, troubleshoots registration problems, helps develop class schedules and annually updates the undergraduate catalog, among other responsibilities. She has worked for the university for 20 years and completed her B.S. degree in education on campus in May.

The **Cooperative Extension Service Classified Support Personnel Award** went to

Burnita Hearne, an administrative specialist in the Crittenden County extension office. She began her career in the office in 1976 as a temporary clerical assistant and worked her way to administrative support specialist before retiring in 2005. She returned in 2011 to serve in her present position. She has been responsible for leading clerical staff, providing program support to five extension agents and managing day-to-day operations. She was honored as the Delta District employee of the quarter in 2011 and received the District and State Support Staff of the Year awards for 2014. ■



Melinda Dunlap, winner of the Professional Support Award for Division of Agriculture Classified Support Personnel (AES).



Burnita Hearne, recipient of the Cooperative Extension Service Classified Support Personnel Award.



Alan Beach, recipient of the Professional Support Award for Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel.

CES to host annual Farmers Market Conference

The Cooperative Extension Service will partner with the Arkansas Farmers' Market Association (AFMA) to host its annual conference Feb. 6, 2015, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Little Rock State Office. The conference will provide Arkansas farmers' market managers and direct marketing farmers with diverse resources to both expand their markets and serve their customers more effectively.

Attendees will hear about the latest programs and activities enhancing markets. Speakers will address such topics as newer, cheaper and more user-friendly ways of accepting SNAP benefits from customers. Attendees will learn more about farm-to-school partnerships, food safety and how to use social media more effectively. Updates will be given regarding grants supporting market development, including an expansion in Arkansas Parks and Tourism grant programs to include farmers' markets. Also highlighted will be the rollout of training to assist grant applicants in submitting grant applications.

Online registration for the conference will soon be available at www.uaex.edu. Lunch will be provided at no cost. New and existing farmers' market managers will be able to join AFMA and learn of the association's planned activities for 2015 at the conference. ■

BENEFITS CORNER

Benefits Quick Reference Chart

- UMR Medical Customer Service: 1-888-438-6105
- List of providers: www.umar.com. Click on "Find a provider," "Medical," type in "University Arkansas System." Scroll down to "Find a Provider/Getting Care."

Before accessing any provider information, please note the following providers are not included in the University of Arkansas System provider network. These providers may appear in the UMR directory but are not part of the University of Arkansas System provider network.

Excluded facilities

- Arkansas Heart Hospital
- Baptist, Little Rock
- Baptist, North Little Rock
- Baptist, Breast Center
- Baptist, Extended Care Hospital
- Baptist, Imaging Center

- MedImpact Prescription Drugs: 1-800-788-2949
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA): Participants can continue to use any remaining funds on their UMR flex debit card for 2014 qualified expenses through March 15, 2015.
- Delta Dental: 1-800-462-5410 or www.deltadental.com
- Superior Vision: 1-800-507-3800 or www.superiorvision.com
- Onlife Health: 1-877-369-0285 Health Coach: www.OnlifeHealth.com
- Retirement Issues:
 - Fidelity – 1-800-343-0860
 - TIAA-CREF – 1-800-842-2776
 - APERS – 1-800-682-7377

UA employees eligible for retirement should provide Extension with a minimum of ninety (90) days advanced notice and are urged to retire on the last working day of the month.

- CES Human Resources: 501-671-2219

Please keep your home address updated in Banner Self Service

Walkingstick appointed to Forest Resource Coordinating Committee post



Dr. Tamara Walkingstick, Arkansas Forest Resources Center, has been appointed to the Forest Resource Coordinating Committee as a Land-Grant University Representative. The FRCC was established to provide direction and coordination of actions within the Department of Agriculture and coordination with state agencies and the private sector to effectively address national priorities for private forest conservation, with specific focus on owners of nonindustrial private forest land. The FRCC is composed of 20 voting members, representing a diverse geographic spread across the country. Walkingstick's appointment will be for two years. ■

Meet the *new* employees!



Rhonda Wakelyn
In-Service Training and Distance
Education Coordinator
Little Rock State Office

- **What's your background?**

I have two master's degrees. The first is in international relations, and the second is in education – learning systems technology, to be more

precise – from UALR. I am beginning to work on my doctorate in workforce education - organizational development from UA in the fall.

Before coming to work at Extension, I worked for UAMS in the Organizational Development department as an online training specialist.

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

Having worked for the Organizational Development department at UAMS, I bring my knowledge and skills of workforce educational development, including the development of distance education with the aid of various e-learning tools and LMS programming and facilitation.

I'm a serious and focused worker. However, I like to laugh and have fun!

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

I would like to see the development and facilitation of more online trainings in effort to reach our faculty and staff statewide.

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

My position requires a specific type of skill. When I heard that Extension was looking for someone with my background and skill, I couldn't wait to apply! Extension values its employees, and that was a huge reason why I chose to move to Extension. Everyone here has worked very hard to make me feel welcome, and I value the professionalism that each and every employee provides every day!

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

I'm big into running and Kenpo, a form of martial arts. I love to cook, and my husband and I love to travel. For our honeymoon last April, we went to Scotland. For our next big adventure, we are going to take the entire family on a cruise to Alaska in 2016 to celebrate my 40th birthday and my husband's parents' 50th wedding anniversary.

I'm also very active with a military program called Strong Bonds. As a senior military officer's wife, I give frequent presentations to other new military spouses in an effort to educate and prepare them for what's ahead of them and what to expect as a military spouse. ■

Grants and contracts

for Month Ending December 31, 2014

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Feral Hog Education	\$ 50,000	Becky McPeake	Natural Resources Conservation Service
SARE Model State Program 2014-2015	11,111	Elena Garcia	University of Georgia
Influence of BMD on Susceptibility to BCO Lameness in Commercial Broilers	24,258	Karen Christensen	Zoetis LLC
2013-2014 NWA Regional Urban Stormwater Education Program	206,385	Katherine Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
2015 Military 4-H Club Program	27,500	Noah Washburn	Kansas State University
Irrigation Water Management Specialist	100,000	Rick Cartwright	Natural Resources Conservation Service
MS4 Stormwater Education for the City of Pine Bluff 2015-2019	461,957	Stacey McCullough	City of Pine Bluff
MS4 Stormwater Education for the City of White Hall 2015-2019	40,758	Stacey McCullough	City of White Hall
MS4 Stormwater Education for the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff 2015-2019	12,674	Stacey McCullough	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
MS4 Stormwater Education for Jefferson County 2015-2019	10,518	Stacey McCullough	Jefferson County
Characterizing Thermal Micro-Environment During Broiler Transportation	118,891	Yi Liang	U.S. Poultry and Egg Harold E. Ford Foundation
Total New Awards for December 2014	\$1,064,052		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Steven Hefner

Website Software Developer, Office of Information Technology, effective December 1, 2014.

Sondra Jones

Institutional Services Assistant, Office of Director of Physical Plant, effective November 17, 2014.

Bruce Lee

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Carroll County, effective November 24, 2014.

Extension says goodbye to:

Bethany Berger

Program Associate - Rice Entomology, Entomology, effective December 1, 2014.

Brenda Hawkins

Administrative Support Supervisor, Faulkner County, effective December 15, 2014.

Ramya Muddaragada

Programmer, Bio and Ag Engineering, effective December 23, 2014.

Donna Rinke

Web Development Associate, Office of Information Technology, effective December 23, 2014.

Gary Shepherd

Skilled Tradesman, Vines 4-H Center, effective December 1, 2014.