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BLUE LETTER

October 2024
No. 3870



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Take Time to Celebrate

My wife's birthday is Oct 28. Alfie takes full advantage of this position near the end of the month to justify all discretionary purchases in the month of October as being "for my birthday." We joke that she doesn't have a birthday, she has a birthday month. It is a month of celebration – well-deserved celebration, I might add.

October has been a month of significant celebration in CES as well. In the past couple of weeks, we have hosted regional retiree receptions in Little Rock and Fayetteville. These were great opportunities for celebration: of long-standing relationships, of significant past achievements, and of current program highlights. It is always a pleasure for me to meet with our retirees and to see their enduring commitment to our organization. The event in Fayetteville was especially meaningful to me, as it gave me a chance to catch up with Larry Keaton and his family. Larry was our county agent in Stone County while I was in high school. Larry was greatly respected by my dad and my uncle (no small accomplishment, for sure), and I still think of him as a model agent. If you are reading this before Nov. 8, we have a third retiree reception scheduled in Paragould at the new Greene County Extension Office.

This year, UADA and Bumpers College presented our annual Agriculture Awards in October. We have traditionally observed this celebration in January, but given the fickleness

of Arkansas winter weather, we decided to move this particular celebration to a more meteorologically serene time of year. As I write this column, I have just left the awards ceremony. Dr. Laura Hendrix was recognized with the John White Extension State Faculty Award. Laura has had a stellar career, starting as an FCS intern and making her way to full professor in the same department: an amazing accomplishment. Brad McGinley received the John White Extension County Educator Award. Brad is the Grant County Ag/4-H agent. In his 20 years as an agent, he has built strong programs in 4-H and agriculture in multiple counties. His 4-H work in Grant County in recent years has been truly exemplary. It's hard to summarize all that he has accomplished, but I will point out a singular achievement related to 4-H: one of his county Sea Perch teams placed second in international competition. Second in the world is a pretty nice achievement. Finally, the blackberry market development team received the John White Team Award. This team includes Extension faculty Amanda McWhirt, Aaron Cato, Jackie Lee and Renee Threlfall. The University of Arkansas is a leading player in the development of blackberry varieties and in the development of novel production and processing systems, and this team is doing an amazing job of carrying on a strong tradition for our institution.

I would be remiss if I didn't also note that October is also the birthday month of my indispensable administrative assistant, Amy Hedges. Happy Birthday (month), Amy! ■

INSIDE SCOOP

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- ...And much more!

National APEX Day

UADA staff celebrated the success of businesses that have secured government contracts with the help of APEX Accelerators on Oct. 9 as part of National APEX Day. Nineteen people attended the event where Jacksonville Mayor Jeff Elmore issued an APEX Day proclamation. This year was the first year to have the event outside of Little Rock.

The Jacksonville event was one of several events in cities across the U.S. as part of National APEX Day.

“We made it a fun, interactive event,” said Timothy F. Hicks, a certified procurement professional with Arkansas APEX Accelerator, which is part of extension’s Community, Professional and Economic Development unit. “Festivities

included welcomes, sharing of the APEX Day proclamation, introduction of resource partners, acronym solving activity and refreshments.”

Hicks provided training on the ABC’s of Contracting to conclude the event. ■



APEX Day 2024 attendees and staff during the event at the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce on October 9.

NEAFCS Conference

Thirty-seven Extension employees participated in the 2024 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences held in Tucson, Arizona.

Top Honors Received

Jefferson County agent Mary Ann Kizer and Jessica Vincent, assistant professor-health, received Distinguished Service Awards. Clark County agent JoAnn Vann received the Continued Excellence Award.



From left to right: Billie Collins, Torrie Smith and Megan Wells. The team won 2nd Place National and Southern Region Financial Management Award.

Other Award Winners Included

- **Heather Wingo and team** – 2nd Place National and Southern Region Marketing Package Award
- **Torrie Smith and team** – 2nd Place National and Southern Region Financial Management Award in Memory of Dean Don Felker
- **Megan Wells and team** – 2nd Place Southern Region Excellence

in Multi-State Collaboration

- **Jessica Vincent and team** – 2nd Place Southern Region Community Partnership Award Extension - Teaching the Nation at NEAFCS

Extension personnel led several sessions at NEAFCS. Presenters and topics included:

- **Torrie Smith and Billie Collins** — Estate Planning in the Ozarks
- **Tristin Bolton** – Partnering for Health: Middle School Health Classes Connect with SNAP-Ed
- **Laura Hendrix** — 52 Ways to Climate-proof Your Finances ■



Mary Kizer won the Distinguished Service Award.

CPED Hits the Ropes

The Community, Professional and Economic Development Unit (CPED) participated in an all-day team building retreat Oct. 15 at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center. Taylor Knox and David Rice led the group through team-building exercises in the morning. In the afternoon, the group headed to the ropes course where Taylor, with help from program assistant Kailey Stallmann and intern Baron Newton, instructed the group on harness safety and how to safely secure clips to the cables.



Stacey McCullough balanced the single-line cables like a pro.

The zipline was a popular activity with most participants experiencing the thrill of soaring through the tree tops.

The team learned some valuable lessons:

- Effective communication and cooperation

between team members is important.

- Everyone is important in the team-building process.
- Being in a team brings out the best in us.
- Building and maintaining trust is necessary for successful teams.
- We cannot reach our true potential alone.
- Others care about our accomplishments and want to share the joy.



Aleya Hassan holds on tight while enjoying the zip line.

It was an A+ to see colleagues out of the office with their serious sides transformed into fun-loving laughter. ■

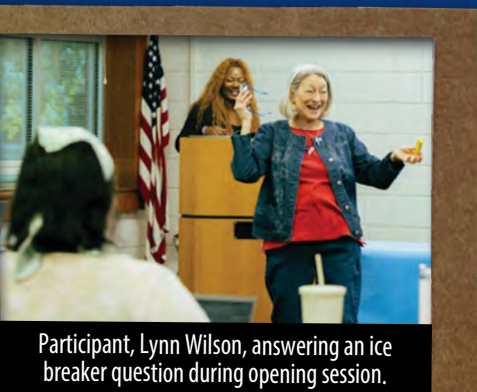


CPED group photo at team building event at the 4-H Center.

CPED Hosts

eLearning 101 Training

The CPED department hosted its first in-service training — eLearning 101 — on Sept. 25 at the state office with 10 participants. Armenta Lockhart and Ashley Henderson led the training, with engaging icebreaker games and team-building activities facilitated by Vanessa Lewis.



Participant, Lynn Wilson, answering an ice breaker question during opening session.

Participants learned about the fundamentals of eLearning and how to build courses in LEARN. This was a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) training where learners brought their laptops

or tablets to follow along with the instruction.

The CPED department will host additional eLearning 101 training sessions in the future. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and insights with their colleagues. This engaging and interactive training provided valuable skills and knowledge for effective eLearning course development. For more information about the training, contact Armenta Lockhart, alockhart@uada.edu or Ashley Henderson, ahenderson@uada.edu. ■



eLearning Superstar Melissa Johnson with her award certificate.

New Training and Mentoring Program

Extension's Community, Professional, and Economic Development (CPED) Unit is excited to announce the launch of the Beginning Farmer Training and Mentoring of Conservation Practices and Partnerships project!

This FREE, grant-funded program is designed to support beginning farmers with top-notch training and mentoring to increase beginning farmers' participation in conservation programs. Beginning farmers face unprecedented regula-

tions regarding natural resources and environmental concerns. The program encourages the success of new farmers by providing guid-

ance through mentorships. Through their years of experience, veteran farmers will serve as mentors and share practical information about farming methods, environmental considerations, and state and federal regulations.

Before mentorships start, veteran farmers will complete a mentor training program, developed and led by Extension personnel, and based on the needs of beginning farmers.

The program's goal is to boost farmers' involvement in conservation programs and help farms thrive through sustainable farming practices.

Training sessions will be held statewide, beginning in late 2024 or early 2025. For questions, contact Keith Harris at kharris@uada.edu. ■



Scenes from the Wheat Field Day held at the Lon Mann Cotton Research Station in Marianna.



Soybean Science Hosted Booth at

APSRC Fall Conference

The Soybean Science Challenge (SSC) hosted a booth at the Arkansas Public School Resource Center's (APSRC) annual fall conference in Hot Springs on Oct. 18.

The APSRC is a service-oriented, nonprofit membership organization that offers support, technical assistance, and training to charter schools and school districts across the state. Its highly trained staff assists in five primary areas: legal services, financial analysis and management, teaching and learning, technology, and communications.

SSC Coordinator Keith Harris and Lynn Wilson, professional assistant with the Community, Professional, & Economic Development unit, interacted with more than 200 teachers, support staff, curriculum directors, and building and district administrators. The SSC team promoted the benefits of soybeans and encouraged educators to use soybeans in classroom instruction and research by using the free resources available on the Extension's 'soywhatsup' website.

The SSC also directs the School and Community Garden Project to bring the wonders of science, nutrition, and sustainability to classrooms and communities across the state.

This hands-on project is perfect for engaging youth in learning about agriculture, healthy eating, and environmental stewardship with the goal of a soybean-growing garden in every school district (if not every school) in the state.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the Cooperative Extension Service. The program is a farmer-funded, statewide middle and high school

education program that seeks to increase student knowledge about the value of Arkansas soybeans to the Arkansas economy, to the labor force, and to feed and fuel the world.

For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uada.edu or Keith Harris, kharris@uada.edu. ■



Keith Harris, SSC Coordinator, talking with attendees at the APSRC Annual Fall Conference.



LEADERSHIP LOG

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iLEAD

iLead Cohort IV Assesses Needs Across the Division

by Mishanna Lanes, regional program associate. iLead Cohort IV convened for their second Zoom meeting, focusing on identifying the needs across the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. The cohort split into two breakout rooms to brainstorm and discuss these needs. Read more details about the iLead Cohort IV meeting [here](#).



LeadAR Class 20 enjoy a once in a lifetime experience – riding a camel in the Agafay Desert.

LeadAR

Exploring Morocco: A Journey with LeadAR Class 20

As LeadAR Class 20 members embarked on their international study tour to Morocco, excitement buzzed in the air. Over 10 days, the class explored vibrant cities, rich agriculture, and unique cultural experiences that deepened our understanding of Morocco's agricultural landscape. For more of a detailed recap of their incredible journey read [here](#).

Leadership Lunch and Learn

Leadership Lunch and Learn:

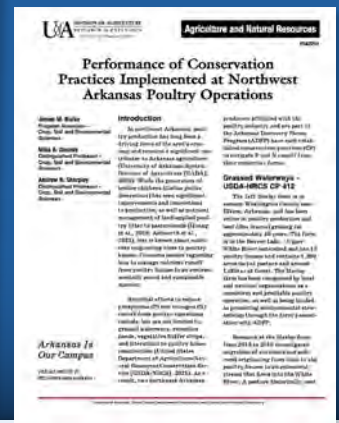
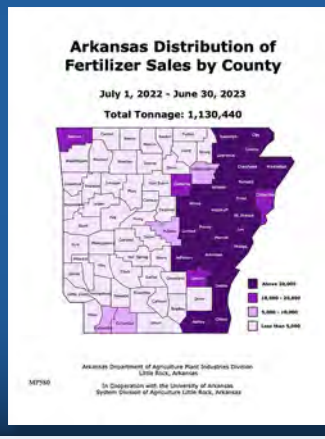
Everybody Matters

Reviewed by Karl Bradley. In the latest Leadership Lunch and Learn series, Karl Bradley, Extension Foundation leadership and team development specialist, reviewed “Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring for Your People,” by authors Bob Chapman and Raj Sisodia. The book delves into the transformative impact of genuine care in the workplace. The central theme emphasizes that prioritizing people leads to greater engagement, productivity, and loyalty. Watch the Leadership Lunch and Learn recording [here](#). Read details about the book review [here](#). ■



New Publications:

Many recently created publications are now available. (You know you want to look.) uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx





Cybersecurity Awareness Month

A Weak Password Cost Me Thousands: A UADA Employee's Story

How did a weak password cost me thousands of dollars? An extended family member had an online account compromised in a password attack. That ultimately led to a SIM swap and later SIM attacks on this family member's cell phone and local home network. On the next visit to see this family member, my phone and my wife's phone were compromised when they connected to the same home network. We were unaware of the compromise until we returned home and reconnected to our home network. Within a few hours, a work laptop on the same network was attacked. The local user password was changed locking us out of the computer. The next few hours were spent in panic mode. How far did the attack get? What data was accessed? Are my online banking accounts safe? I immediately began resetting passwords on all my accounts. Fortunately, none of my financial accounts had been accessed. I had to terminate a personal email account I had been using for years because it was constantly being locked out due to brute force password attempts.

So just how did this cost me thousands? Let's start with cell phones. There were eight phones that had to be reset multiple times. Six of those had to be removed from service or replaced with new devices. Additionally, two iPads were lost due to device syncing through iCloud. Six computers on my home network had to be reimaged or replaced due to the network compromise. Most of my data was backed up offline, but I still experienced some data loss. I upgraded my home network with a new firewall and segmented the network. It took almost a week of repeated calls to my Internet Service Provider to get a new IP address for their gateway. That was to make it harder for the hacker to find a way back into my network. I switched to a new email provider and no longer give out my actual email address. Instead, I make use of email aliases to protect the actual account.

I believe the one thing that kept this from being worse is the fact that multi-factor authentication (MFA) was set up on all

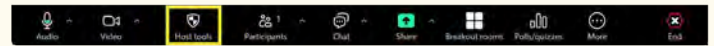
my important accounts. I have taken this one step further now by using MFA with a hardware key like YubiKey and avoiding SMS/texting as a second form of authentication wherever possible. Just to top it off, all my passwords are complex and longer than 20 characters.

It has been almost two years since that first account was compromised, and we are still feeling the effects. Anytime we pick up a mobile device or get a text from a number we don't know, it makes us stop and think. Make your plan now before it is too late. A good place to start is with a strong complex password.

Admin By Request

Admin By Request gives each UADA user using a UADA domain managed device (e.g., desktop computer, laptop, tablet, etc.) the ability to download whitelisted (approved) software not available in Company Portal, request administrative rights on their device, and to uninstall programs. A key benefit is that users can request admin rights without having to put in a ticket with the help desk.

Zoom Pro Tip



Using the Host Tools in a Zoom Meeting

The Security button has a new name and a slightly new look, but it still has all the settings you need to secure your meetings. Look for the Host Tools button on your meeting controls toolbar to change settings in your meeting when you need to restrict who can unmute or share screen. See all the settings you can control with the Host Tools button on the Zoom Support website.

Hump Day Hacks



- Using Filter in Microsoft Planner
- Add and Pin the Planner App to your Taskbar
- Admin by Request
- Microsoft Company Portal
- Customize your Pivot Table
- QR Code for Zoom Polls ■



2024 TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

Have you missed any past Tech Tuesday webinars or want to join future webinars? Check out the recordings and other resources on the [Tech Tuesday Blog page](#). More Tech Tuesday topics coming soon! Did you miss September's [Unlocking Productivity with Microsoft Planner](#) Tech Tuesday? Check out the recording and resources.



Dinner at the Vines Draws

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Crowd of 4-H Supporters

The Arkansas Foundation's annual Dinner at the Vines on Sept. 24 drew more than 250 attendees who enjoyed garden tours, a lakeside dinner, online and live auctions and entertainment — all benefiting Arkansas 4-H.

The event, now in its fourth year has become a signature fundraiser for the foundation. Table sponsorships and ticket sales brought in \$55,700; the online auction, \$13,700; live auction and donations, \$22,000. Proceeds this year will benefit both 4-H programs and the center. This year's guests also got to enjoy the center's new outdoor pavilion that was paid for with proceeds from previous Dinner at the Vine events. The pavilion provides a shaded and sheltered space for 4-H campers and other groups to enjoy the outdoors.

"Everything we do that draws adult audiences helps pay for opportunities for our 4-H youth," said Judy Riley, event chair." The more we can improve infrastructure, the

better we can provide enjoyable accommodations for all. Staying here is a way of giving back. That's a way people can pay it forward to help our youth."

Festivities kicked off in the 4-H Center's teaching garden where Pulaski County Master Gardeners gave tours and answer questions about the native plants in the garden. Guests then enjoyed dinner of locally sourced and season foods lakeside, near the center's rose garden, while enjoying tunes of Kordsmeier Music. Plus, more than 100 items were up for bid in the online and live auctions, organized by Shannon Caldwell and Mike Klumpp.

"This event has become a great tradition for so many of our Arkansas 4-H supporters as a way of connecting with old friends, making some new ones, and investing in our 4-H youth," said John Thomas, the foundation's managing director. ■

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Got an event?

Submit events for the UADA Calendar

uada.edu/add-events

View other calendar events at calendar.uada.edu/. You can search for events by date, type of event, and by topics.

Publications: What's New

- [An Essential Tax Filing Overview for Common Agricultural Business Structures](#)
- [Arkansas Distribution of Fertilizer Sales by County](#)
- [Performance of Conservation Practices Implemented at Northwest Arkansas Poultry Operations](#)
- [Alpha-gal Syndrome](#)

For questions or to submit new publications, contact: Oliver Williams: owilliams@uada.edu or Emily Davis: edavis@uada.edu

News

Got a news tip or story you'd like to see? Email Tracy Courage, tcourage@uada.edu. View all our [October news stories](#) online:

Social Media Toolkit:

Communications provides monthly social media kits with half a dozen graphics on topics relevant to the month.

Graphics and suggested texts are emailed out at the end of the month and also accessible on our [Communications webpage](#) under Social Media Assets. Find assets grouped by season and month.

You Tube Channel:

13,047 subscribers (as of Oct. 14, 2024)

New Videos

- [2024 Dinner at the Vines](#)
- [Board of Trustees Video NERREC Grand Opening - Grand Opening - Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center](#)
- [Preserving For You - Salsa Demo - How to Make Salsa - Preserving For You](#)
- [Dinner at the Vines - Promo Clip - Dinner at the Vines 2024](#)

Follow our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@AginArk. ■

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) 2023_SUB00003627	22,000.00	Amanda L McWhirt	University of Georgia
Develop and Implement of Outreach/Communication Strategies to Educate the Public, Specifically Hay Land Producers on the Benefits of Climate Smart Practices	204,709	Bronc Finch	USDA
University of Arkansas Bridge Access Program Amendment	10,000	Bryan Mader	Extension Foundation
Transform AR Innovative Technical Assistance and Transformative Education for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers in Arkansas	749,586.00	Dan Quadros	USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement
Building Vaccine Confidence, Community Partnerships, and Tailored Messaging for Pharmacists in Arkansas	40,000	Jessica Vincent	Extension Foundation
SNAP-ED Program FY 25	2,153,641.00	Nina Roofoe	Arkansas Department of Human Services
Crop Insurance Navigators Pilot Program Amendment	930,000	Ron Rainey	USDA
TOTAL AWARDS FOR SEPTEMBER 2024: \$4,109,936			

Benefits Corner



Open Enrollment Deadline Nov. 4

If you wish to make benefits changes or enroll in new coverages for 2025, the deadline is Nov. 4 at 11:59 p.m. Open enrollment is the only time you can make changes to certain benefits and coverages each year, outside of a qualifying life event. Head to Workday now and get started, as changes after Nov. 4 will not be accepted.

To review and make changes to your benefit elections, log in to Workday and click the Open Enrollment announcement to get started.

For most benefits, if you do not want to change your

coverage, no action is required. The following items, however, require re-enrollment for 2025:

- **Flexible Spending Account (FSA)**
 - Health Care FSA and/or Dependent Care FSA
- **Critical Illness Insurance elections**
 - If you elect dependent coverage for Critical Illness for 2025, you will be required to provide dependent information during the enrollment process.

Open enrollment is a good time to ensure the information on file for your dependents and beneficiaries is correct, even if you are not making any changes. Log in to Workday, then click the Open Enrollment announcement to review your current elections, dependents, and beneficiaries.

Contact yourbenefits@uada.edu if you have questions about open enrollment ■

Personnel Changes



Welcome Aboard:

Jasmine Reed – Administrative Specialist III - Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock
Lucretia McAlister – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science/4-H, Scott County
Dana Fincher – 4-H Program Assistant - Nevada County
Sheila Ballard – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Sciences, Nevada County
Kristen Ulsperger – 4-H Program Assistant, Pope County

Farewell to:

Robert E. Chastain – 4-H & Youth Development - Skilled Tradesman, C A Vines Arkansas 4-H Center
Cody Tucker – 4-H & Youth Development - Administrative Specialist III, Little Rock
Tiffany Hoss – Ouachita County - 4-H Program Assistant, Ouachita County
Anjanae Curry – Administrative Specialist II - Community, Professional, & Economic Development, Little Rock
Angelia Dodd – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Crawford County
Tina Munoz – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Howard County