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Extension offers 2024 Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guide

The 2024 Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guide is now available. It offers non-biased, research-based information about three proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot in the state's upcoming general election.

The Public Policy Center has provided a voter guide on all statewide ballot issues since 2004. Kristin Higgins, extension program associate for the Public Policy Center, said it's critical for Arkansans to access non-biased information about the issues that impact them.

"People need information to make a decision, and it can be difficult to find neutral sources of information about statewide ballot issues," Higgins said. "You're being asked as a voter to create or change state policy for years to come. The Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guide is that source of neutral information, and it also gives people the ability to read the ballot titles when they're not under a time crunch to make a decision."

The information contained in the guide goes through a thorough vetting process to ensure its accuracy and neutrality, which includes reviews by legal and subject matter experts, as well as both supporters and opponents of each issue. The guide breaks down what a "for" or "against" vote means for each of the three issues. It also spells out what each issue proposes, helping to parse the language of the ballot titles.

The guide includes reasons why people may support or oppose each of the proposals, and it provides a helpful worksheet for people to record their voting plans and take with them to the polls.

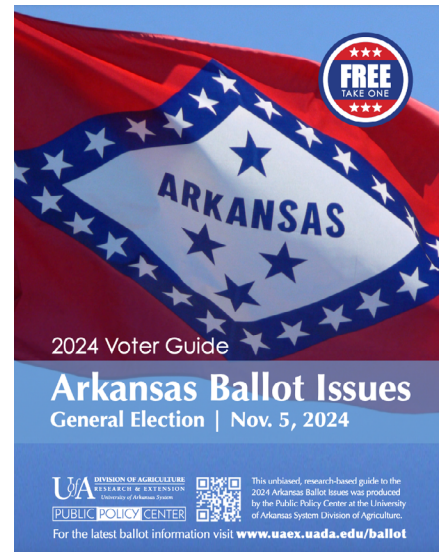
Higgins said it's important for Arkansans to use their voting privileges in the statewide election, especially as one of 15 states where citizens can put a constitutional amendment, state law or veto referendum on the statewide ballot for voters to decide.

"Voters have a direct involvement in deciding whether to change state law," Higgins said. "These state laws affect all Arkansans, so voting in these elections shapes your state and your experiences for decades into the future."

Organizations can request ballot issue education presentations from extension agents. The Public Policy Center also offers year-round ballot issue education, including a monthly newsletter with updates on upcoming issues.

The Voter Guide is available at uax.uada.edu/ballot. Printed copies are now available in county extension offices statewide.

Early voting began Oct. 21 and Election Day is Nov. 5, 2024.



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Dinner at the Vines event benefits Arkansas 4-H

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 answered questions about the native plants in the garden. Guests then enjoyed a dinner of locally sourced and seasonal 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.

View more photos from the event [here](#). ■



Nearly 400 attend grand opening for NE Rice Research and Extension Center

“When something happens once a century, it’s pretty special.”

That’s how University of Arkansas System Trustee Steve Cox spoke of the opening of the Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center, the first new Arkansas land-grant rice research and extension center in 100 years.

Both Cox and Marvin Hare, rice farmer and former chair of the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board, noted that in 1923, the Arkansas Legislature gave the green light for the University of Arkansas to create what was then known as the Rice Branch Experiment Station. Today that station is the Rice Research and Extension Center near Stuttgart.

“A century of land grant innovations, including discoveries in irrigation, fertility, disease, insect and weed management, has helped Arkansas’ rice industry grow to be the largest in the nation,” Cox said. “That brings us here today. It’s time for that second wave of innovations to have a home.”

The new center, near Harrisburg, is operated by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s research arm, the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station. The center has been conducting crop variety and production research on the 600-acre location since 2021.



The Aug. 30 grand opening drew nearly 400 people. Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders gave the keynote address.

Sanders noted that not only is agriculture Arkansas’ largest industry, but also “it’s much bigger than that. It’s a keystone in our communities and part of our way of life. It is the very fabric of who we are.”

She praised the center for providing a means to bring young people to agriculture.

“If we can’t get young people interested in feeding, fueling and fighting for America, we too cannot survive,” she said.

Read more [here](#). ■

'Ag is big' theme at Louisiana Tech game

The Nov. 23 Razorback game against Louisiana Tech will have an "Ag is Big" theme, and the Division of Agriculture will be out there representing. Discount tickets are available for \$20.



Tickets can be purchased by clicking [HERE](#) and entering code **ARKAGDAY**.

Come out and support agriculture for this game! ■

Free at-home COVID-19 tests now available to order

Residential households in the U.S. are eligible for another order of four free at-home tests from USPS.com.

Each order includes four individual rapid antigen COVID-19 tests and orders ship for free.

Visit the [USPS website](#) to order. ■



November Birthdays

Max Franks - Nov. 1

Massie Silva - Nov. 3

Eric Grant - Nov. 3

Reba Hawkins - Nov. 3

Frances Story - Nov. 4

Joseph Waldrum - Nov. 7

Sue Palsa - Nov. 9

Ursula Crow - Nov. 9

John Hopkins - Nov. 10

Russell Wilson - Nov. 10

Jerry McIntyre - Nov. 11

Nita Cooper - Nov. 11

Gerald Alexander - Nov. 12

Patsy Keller - Nov. 15

Kay Stokes - Nov. 15

Gloria Eubanks - Nov. 16

Eugenia Hockett - Nov. 18

Luther Roberts - Nov. 20

Anita Clark - Nov. 20

Joe Vestal - Nov. 22

Linda Bates - Nov. 22

John Philpot - Nov. 23

Brenda Hawkins - Nov. 24

Janice Jones - Nov. 24

Kathryn Fowler - Nov. 25

Jane Kriigel - Nov. 26

Rosemary Rodibaugh - Nov. 26

Vatra Hibbs - Nov. 17

Ron Matlock - Nov. 27

Sharon Reynolds - Nov. 27

Louise McPherson - Nov. 28

James Barrentine - Nov. 28

Jim Frala - Nov. 30

Message from the director



My wife's birthday is Oct 28. Alfi 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 longstanding 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! ■