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Cooperative Extension Service offers 2020 Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guide

Arkansans planning to exercise their voting rights during the upcoming November elections now have an invaluable education tool at their disposal: an online guide to Arkansas' statewide ballot issues.

The 2020 Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guide, published by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's Public Policy Center, is now available at www.uaex.edu/ballot. The Public Policy Center is also part of the Cooperative Extension Service, the arm of the Division of Agriculture dedicated to public outreach and education.

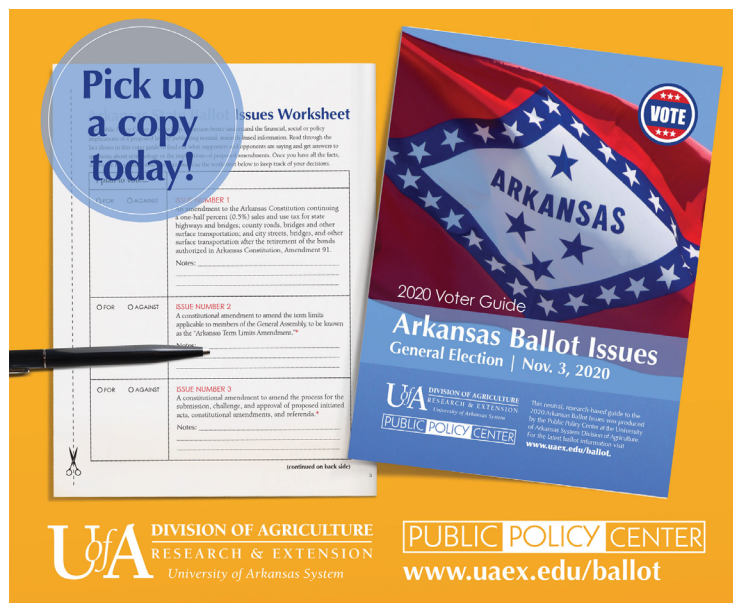
County clerks began mailing out absentee ballots on Sept. 18. Early voting began Oct. 19 and Election Day is Nov. 3.

Kristin Higgins, a program associate with the Public Policy Center, said the center has published unbiased fact sheets on statewide ballot issues since 2004 in an effort to help voters better understand what is being asked of them.

"Arkansas voters have some decisions to make this fall when it comes to the state constitution," Higgins said. "But in 2020 fashion, the status of several ballot issues remains uncertain.

"Various court challenges may impact what voters see on Election Day," she said. "But we urge voters to research the issues so they are prepared either way."

The publication covers six statewide ballot issues, although the Arkansas Supreme Court has recently ruled that three of the six do not qualify to be on the November ballot. Issue 1, Issue 2 and Issue 3 remain on the ballot. The online guide has been updated to reflect those court decisions.



Printed copies of the 2020 Arkansas Ballot Issues Voter Guide are now available for pick up at your county extension office

These issues remaining are:

- **Issue 1: A permanent 0.5% state sales tax for state, county and city roads, bridges and other surface transportation.** This ballot initiative proposes making permanent a 0.5% state sales tax that currently helps fund Arkansas's four-lane highway system, county roads, and city streets, by amending the Arkansas Constitution to include the tax. The existing 0.5% sales tax, which is used partially to repay highway, road and street bonds, is set to expire in June 2023.

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- **Issue 2: Changing General Assembly term limits and allowing re-election upon a break in service.** This amendment asks voters to change term limits for the General Assembly as described in Amendment 73 of the Arkansas Constitution. If approved by the voters, this amendment would eliminate life-time term limits but require breaks in service for future state senators and representatives.
- **Issue 3: Changing Arkansas' citizen initiative process, votes required for legislative proposals, and publication requirements for legislative proposals.** Voters are being asked to approve changes to Arkansas' citizen initiative process, the number of votes required for legislative ballot issues, and publication requirements for legislative ballot titles.

The [voter guide](#) includes:

- How the proposals will appear on the ballot
- What a "FOR" or "AGAINST" vote means
- Questions and answers about what proposals would do
- Supporter and opponent viewpoints

The voter guide is reviewed by University of Arkansas law school professors as well as issue supporters and opponents before publication.

Follow the Public Policy Center on Facebook or Twitter for up-to-date information on the ballot issues, or sign up to receive the center's ballot issue education newsletter by emailing publicpolicycenter@uaex.edu. 

Mother-daughter collaboration leads to book, superheroes for students in a COVID year

The 2020 school year has been like no other. Alison Crane, Garland County extension agent, and her daughter, Anna, spent part of this summer with a plan to help teachers and students as they returned to class during a pandemic.

The result of their effort is the book, "Zoe and the Very Different New School Year." In this book, the lead character, Zoe, returns to school and learns what it means to go to class during a pandemic and how to adjust to new situations, including not being able to share cookies at lunchtime.


"The need to help children cope in a positive manner with social distancing and sanitation steps like wearing masks is very important," Alison Crane said. "This is going to be especially hard for young children because social distancing goes against their natural tendencies."

The Cranes also created the Super Clean Team: Super Soaper, Mask-e-teer, Dynamic Distance Dude and Super Clean Kid, a quartet of youngsters whose superpowers enable them to help their peers understand the importance of mask-wearing, sanitizing, hand washing and social distancing.

"We had brainstormed a kind of fact sheet with comic strips to keep kids' interest in it with the adventures of the Super

Clean Team and their fight against the invisible Mr. Covid and his evil sidekicks flu, strep, etc.," Crane said.

Now the Cranes' efforts are available to schools and teachers online on a [Teacher Resources Page](#).

The page contains digital assets that teachers and parents can use in their classrooms and other learning spaces to remind students of the new skills they need for their new school year. 



TO THE RESCUE — Alison Crane, Garland County extension agent, and her daughter, Anna, spent part of this summer with a plan to help teachers and students as they returned to class during a pandemic.

Ursula Crow still lends a helping hand, even after retiring

Ursula Crow started working for Extension as a high school student, where she fell in love with that line of work.

"I worked for the University of Arkansas Research Center, where I kept track of inventory and stocking," Crow said.

After graduating high school, she bought a flower shop that she owned and operated for some time, but she never forgot her time spent in Extension. In fact, she is a second-generation Extension employee.

"My mother retired from Extension with 30 years of service," Crow said. "She actually worked in the print shop during the latter part of her career."

In 1992, Crow started her full-time career in Extension as a data entry clerk in what was then known as "The Warehouse", located in Pulaski County. She eventually made her way up to warehouse supervisor. Her favorite part about working for Extension was simply helping people.

"I liked helping people with their programs and what they were working on," Crow said.

After 25 years, Crow decided it was time to retire in 2017. That doesn't mean she is finished helping people out.

"Often times, the guys at work will still call me to help with questions or quick problems," Crow said.

Outside of her occasional helpful phone calls, Crow has focused on a variety of activities to fill her time. One of her favorite things to do is travel. She has been on many trips, cruises and other adventures. Some of her most memorable trips were to the Caribbean, California, Idaho, the Panama Canal and other locations.

"I think Alaska is my favorite place to visit. I have been there five

times now," Crow said.


She enjoys visiting the balloon festivals in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and traveling through the New England states. Traveling isn't the only thing that has kept Crow busy for the last three years. She is also active with her local church group.

"We have a sewing group at church that I work with," Crow said. "We make things for Arkansas hospice, patients at the children's hospital, veterans and pregnancy option groups."

Crow said she has helped sew quilts, masks and prayer shawls for those in need. She enjoys helping her community in any way that she can.

Another way she enjoys spending her time is staying connected with fellow retirees, especially through COVID-19.

"They are more than just a team to me, they are my family," Crow said. "That's what Extension is for me."

Crow's journey with Extension started as a child, watching her mother work and eventually getting a job in high school. She was able to make connections that are still strong today and has a wonderful family through Extension. After 25 years, she is now enjoying life and traveling to see the world. She still helps individuals in her community, and even lends some wisdom to the employees still working in the warehouse. That's how she enjoys her retirement years, and she couldn't be prouder of it. 



To our Extension retirees

I want to start with a big thank you to Mr. Earl Wilson. Earl has served on the Extension Cord editorial board for many years and recently stepped down. Earl, thanks for your second round of dedication to the Cooperative Extension Service. Earl's input will be sorely missed going forward. If you are interested in serving in this capacity or some other way, I suggest you email Brian Helms.

COVID-19 has made it very challenging for many of our people to deliver programming. However, I want to brag on our current Extension employees. Just imagine having to suddenly

deliver a program with few or no in-person meetings. Many agents and specialists have done just that, and their programmatic efforts just rolled on. I want to recognize all of those who have kept their programmatic efforts going under these circumstances. We are now allowing some in-person meetings on a case-by-case basis. For the time being, we remain in stage II, and many employees will continue to work from home or under some pandemic-related restrictions.



November Birthdays

Eric Grant - Nov. 3

Reba Hawkins - Nov. 3

Massie Silva - Nov. 3

Frances Story - Nov. 4

Joe Waldrum - Nov. 7

Ursula Crow - Nov. 9

Sue Palsa - Nov. 9

Nita Willis Cooper - Nov. 11

Jerry McIntyre - Nov. 11

Gerald Alexander - Nov. 12

Doris Begeman - Nov. 13

Patsy Keller - Nov. 15

Kay Stokes - Nov. 15

Gloria Eubanks - Nov. 16

Virlean Fisher - Nov. 18

Anita Clark - Nov. 20

Luther Roberts - Nov. 20

Linda Bates - Nov. 22

Joe Vestal - 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 Stone Hibbs - Nov. 27

Ron Matlock - Nov. 27

James Barrentine - Nov. 28

Louise McPherson - Nov. 28

Jim Frala - Nov. 30

Scholarship donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Extension Service Retiree Scholarship Fund

Patsy Keller

In memory of Kathy Lynch


Martha May

In memory of Colleen Owen

Rebecca Reynolds


Portia Short

In memory of Colleen Owen

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification. 

Welcome new retiree!

Gloria Taylor, Miller County – Texarkana

Gloria began her career with extension in May of 1978 and retired on Oct. 1, 2020. She was an administrative specialist in the Miller County Office and had 42 years of service. 

Buster P., Greene County 4-Her, wins 2020 4-H Giant Pumpkin Contest



Buster's 334 lb pumpkin was the heavyweight champ of the harvest season.

Retirees, cont.

I am sure most of you have been following at least some part of the election/voting process this year. One of our most popular efforts this fall has been our 2020 Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guide. Our folks have really been on the hot seat, so to speak, and they kept our input on a strictly informational and unbiased platform. They have done a great job. Our publication has been widely distributed this year and does a great job explaining complicated statewide issues on this year's ballot. My hat is off to Kristin Higgins, program associate in our Public Policy Center, and all the people who contribute to our voter education outreach.

Renovation work continues here at the state office while we have low occupancy. We have completed repairs to the air-conditioning plant, and upgrades are set to begin in both the Human Resources and Communication wings. We have plans for more renovations moving forward. I look forward to a time when everyone can come back to the office and enjoy this new space.

Lastly, do you know of anyone looking for a job? The pandemic has negatively affected many folks' employment status or job opportunities; however, at Extension we continue to have vacancies in many areas throughout the organization and state. If you know recent college graduates or others looking for work, be sure to direct them to our jobs to see if any are a fit! They can start at jobs.uaex.edu. 