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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

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Perdue pledges expedited disaster declaration to help Arkansas farmers

Arkansas farmers hit by flooding can expect an expedited disaster declaration, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said on May 7 following a flyover of northeast Arkansas.

Perdue, Gov. Asa Hutchinson, Sen. John Boozman and U.S. House members Rick Crawford and French Hill, took to the sky to get a first-hand look at the damage caused by storms that hit the Mid-South April 27-30. All spoke at a news conference held in the Arkansas State Police hangar at the Little Rock airport.

Hutchinson also said that, starting May 10, the Federal Emergency Management Agency would be in Arkansas working with regional teams to assess that damage.

“The president asked me to come down here and take a close look; obviously, for the impact [to] Arkansas agriculture,” Perdue said. “We’ve had our share of natural disasters in agriculture, but boy, you all are trying to set a record here ... Obviously in ’11 and even some last year, and this year as well.”

Before he can issue any declaration, Perdue said an assessment will have to be done. On Friday, May 5, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture issued a preliminary assessment of the damage, pegging the loss at \$64.5 million. Rice was expected to be the hardest hit with 156,000 acres affected.

(See <http://bit.ly/2017-Flood-Prelim>)

Before the news conference, the delegation met with Mark Cochran, vice president-agriculture for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, to discuss the estimates and the situation.

“Dr. Cochran and his team are already about that and will take the extension service, county directors both from FSA and the extension service all over the state” to get the assessment done, he said. “As soon as that report is given to the governor, he’ll send it up to us. I’ve committed to him that we will expedite that turnaround on that declaration as quickly as possible.”

“The Division of Agriculture is actively working in three primary areas: estimates of economic losses from the flood and rain – essential for disaster declarations; assistance to the farmers for the tough replant and land management decisions they will face when the water recedes; and the role our county extension offices will play in overall community assistance as the affected counties deal with this tragic event,” Cochran said.

The assessment will also include more detail.

“We’ll start estimating some expected yield losses from having to replant,” Cochran said. “With the late dates for the replanting, we know that’s going to result in considerably lower yields. That’s in addition to the lost costs from seed, fertilizer, land preparations and herbicide that they’ve already invested.”

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From left, Gov. Asa Hutchinson, Mark Cochran, center, VP-Agriculture for the U of A System Division of Agriculture, and Rich Hillman, right, discuss the flood damage rendered by storms on April 28-30, 2017.

THE INSIDE STORIES

Summer vacation savings

Tips for obtaining breaks on costs for travel, lodging, admission to parks and attractions, and food for your summer outings.

To Extension retirees

Dr. Rick Cartwright talks about the flood in northeast and east central Arkansas, current funding for Extension, and keeping in touch with retirees.

Replacing valuable papers after a disaster

Learn where to go to replace your valuable papers if they are lost or destroyed.

Save money on your summer vacation

Planning a trip this summer? Seniors can take advantage of a number of special deals and discounts to get the most from their travel dollars.

Citizens and permanent residents of the U.S. age 62 and older may purchase a **lifetime parks pass from the U.S. National Park Service** for \$10 in person at a federal recreation site or \$20 if ordering online (<https://store.usgs.gov/senior-pass>) or by mail. The pass provides admission to the pass owner and accompanying passengers and a 50 percent discount on some fees charged for facilities and services such as camping, swimming, boat launch. The pass will allow the holder access to more than 2,000 national parks and federal recreation areas. (See <https://store.usgs.gov/sites/default/files/PassIssuanceList.pdf> for a list of these sites.)

Some **airlines** offer senior discounts. Among these are:

- Southwest, which has discounts for 65-plus on all domestic routes.
- American, Continental and United, which offer discounts on select routes for 65-plus. Please check with the individual airline for specifics.

Seniors may also take advantage of many discounts offered by **hotel chains** (<http://seniortravelexpert.com/hotel-deals/>). The list of hotels offering discounts includes, but is not limited to, the Intercontinental Hotels Group, which includes Intercontinental Hotels, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites and others; Best Western Hotels; Hilton Hotels and Resorts, which includes Hilton, Hampton, Doubletree, Hilton Garden Inns and Conrad Hotels; Marriott Hotels and Resorts; Radisson Hotels, Ramada Hotels and Days Inn. Age requirements to qualify for a senior discount vary, ranging from 50 to 62 years of age, as does the amount of the discount, anywhere from 10 to 30 percent off full price.

For members, discounted tickets to some **Branson area attractions** are available from the Cooperative Extension Service Federal Credit Union (501-671-2037 or 501-671-2038). For 2017, the ticket prices are:

Silver Dollar City	One Day	Two Day
Adult (12 & up)	\$52.70	\$57.70
Child (4 to 11)	\$43.35	\$48.35



Glacier National Park

White Water

Adult (12 & up)	\$35.70	\$40.70
Child (4 to 11)	\$20.00	\$25.00

Silver Dollar City & White Water Park - Three Day Splash & Play

Adult (12 & up)	\$73.95
Child (4 to 11)	\$53.55

Showboat Branson Belle - Show, Cruise & Meal

Adult (12 & up)	\$45.05
Child (4 to 11)	\$27.00


Showboat Branson Belle - Captain's Club Upgrade

Adult (12 & up)	\$65.05
Child (4 to 11)	\$37.00

Restaurants offering senior discounts include IHOP, Denny's, Arby's, Applebees, Dunkin' Donuts, Golden Corral, Outback Steakhouse. Papa John's and others not listed. You can always ask if your restaurant offers a discount.

If you are a member of AARP or AAA, check out their web sites as both are good sources for information on travel-related discounts, including restaurant discounts.

- AARP: <http://www.aarp.org/benefits-discounts/travel-benefits/?intcmp=EWHERE-MBCHAE-NAV-TRV>
- AAA: <http://www.autoclubmo.aaa.com/home/travel.html>


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Wallace Cummings dies

Wallace C. Cummings, 87, of North Little Rock died April 18.

Cummings graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1951, and in 1990, after 39 years of service, he retired from Cooperative Extension Service as District Extension Agent - Chair, Northeast District. He loved hunting, the outdoors and the Razorbacks, but his greatest love was his family.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Betty Jo Cummings; two sons, Wallace Cummings Jr. and Chris Cummings; four grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Services were held April 20 at Griffin Leggett Rest Hills in North Little Rock. Memorial donations may be made to Park Hill Baptist Church, 201 East C Avenue, North Little Rock, Arkansas, 72116, or Hospice of Central Arkansas, 1801 Central Avenue, Hot Springs, Arkansas, 71901. 

June birthdays

Ford L. Baldwin, June 1	Martha May, June 11
Mae E. Rosby, June 1	Michael D. Hamilton, June 14
Linda C. Hon, June 3	Janet M. Kuykendall, June 16
Jesse D. Clark, June 4	Lila Grist, June 20
Mike McCarter, June 5	Rin Robertson, June 20
Jelyne H. Coldwell, June 6	Sherry Ann Black, June 23
Brenda S. Vick, June 7	Clifford M. Coker Jr., June 24
Lanny Ashlock, June 8	Carroll R. Garner, June 25
Vetress L. Strong, June 8	Sharon High, June 27
Rex R. Roberg, June 9	Dorothy A. Hall, June 29
Jo N. Howard, June 10	
Joe Bradley, June 11	

To our Extension retirees

I hope this issue of the Extension Cord finds you in great form and that you have the best May ever.

Most of you have heard about the flood in northeast and east central Arkansas, affecting more than 900,000 acres of crops and thousands of our friends and their communities and businesses. As always, the Cooperative Extension Service is helping, and this helping is going to go on for months and maybe years. This truly is a major disaster.

Funding update

As you know, we did not receive the \$3 million request to increase our base budget for the Division of Agriculture from the state. This was a setback but we have been there before. While still not final, we are increasingly confident that we will receive a substantial one-time amount that will help us manage over the next year or so. Nevertheless, we find ourselves in a situation where we will have to downsize somewhat.

This is unfortunate, as after 30 years of getting more efficient, we are really about as “lean and mean” as we can get. But, as always, we will make the most of what we have – and the great thing is that our current personnel, just like you, are about the most creative and hard-working people for doing “more with less” that I have ever seen.

The Extension Service is its people, it really is not a building or a name or some budget line item. It is us, and extension people “carry on.” But I confess, not having enough money makes it more challenging.

I do want to extend my sincere thanks to all of you that have helped us during the advocacy campaign for the \$3 million. All did a great job, but I also need to share with you that this campaign will continue constantly from this point forward. The appropriate funding of this fine organization is needed and justified, and we will continue to make the logical case that this investment by the state and counties and federal government and private grantors and giftors returns measurable benefits many-fold. This work is worth doing, it is worth appropriate funding. It is a hugely powerful investment in the present and future good of Arkansas.

Enough about money.

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Replacing valuable papers after a disaster

When preparing for or recovering from a disaster, it's important to know how to replace valuable papers. Documents such as birth certificates, insurance policies, and health records may be lost or destroyed. Prompt replacement prevents delays when the documents are needed.

Birth certificate, death, marriage and divorce certificates are available from the Arkansas Department of Health Division of Vital Records is located in Little Rock, Arkansas. Call 501-661-2174 or visit the website at: <http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/certificatesVitalRecords/Pages/default.aspx>

Contact your insurance agency for a copy of your policy. If you have any trouble locating the company, contact the Arkansas Department of Insurance at 501-371-2681 or www.state.ar.us/insurance.

Order a replacement social security card online at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount> or visit your nearest Social Security office.

To replace a driver's license, visit your local revenue office. Contact your local Circuit Clerk's office for property deeds. Visit your local Postal Service office for a new passport.

For a more complete list of valuable papers and how to replace them, visit www.uaex.edu/money or contact your county Cooperative Extension Service agent and ask for the publication *Replacing Valuable Papers*, FSFCS45.


– Laura Hendrix 

Disaster declaration, cont.

Cochran said the Division of Agriculture would also look into the effect of on-farm storage and gauge “the severity of the losses of grain grown last year that we were hoping we could find markets for. We will also begin to estimate losses to irrigation and other equipment once the fields dry.”

“We have great sympathy for the ag industry and we will try to get these numbers as soon as we possibly can,” he said.

More than once, Perdue remarked on the strength of the farming community.

“I just got to hand it to our ag interests. They are the most resilient people I've ever seen. While they may be covered up in water right now, they're going to be back out there as soon as this water recedes, doing what they've always [been] doing, feeding a hungry world.” 



“FARMERS ARE RESILIENT” — Ag Sec. Sonny Perdue speaks after getting an aerial tour of the flooded areas of NE Arkansas. May 7, 2017.

To our Extension retirees, cont.

I sincerely hope all of you are doing well. As Brian Helms has led the effort to reconnect to our retired colleagues – some lost over the years to us – he has shared with me some of the concerns, regrets and yes even anger some still hold for the way they were treated by extension administration during or near the end of their career. Now that I have mentioned the “elephant in the room” for some, let me just say that I totally understand. I felt this way at times as a specialist, and there are times today when I do not feel good about the way I have handled things either. But I do hope you will consider reconnecting with us, that times do change, and I promise that while I am the Interim Director that we will make every effort to honor you and what you mean to this work. The work of Extension lives on, and that body of work is partly you, and we want you to know that we sincerely appreciate each of you. And that goes double for me.

– Rick Cartwright 

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Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____. My gift is in honor / in memory of _____.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts: _____

Please make check payable to the **UA Foundation** and mail to Martha Thorpe, Communications Dept., 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204-4940.