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BLUE LETTER

January 2019

No. 3801



Ready for 2019!

Well, we made it to 2019 and I confess I am glad to see 2018 in the rearview mirror ... not the best year for some of us but we have hope that this year will be better, and not just different.

I hope you enjoy the Blue Letter in 2019 as we continue to experiment with the format. Starting in February, I will be asking others to contribute a guest column in place of the Director's column from time to time, to provide updates and insights in the different areas of Extension. And we may try other ideas as well during the year, so hang on.

Please remember that we will host the Rice Expo the first week of August, and that Dr. Bob Scott is in the process of thriving out his first year as director of the Rice Research and Extension Center near Stuttgart. We will also host the wildly popular Division of Agriculture exhibit at the annual Flower and Garden Show at the State Fairgrounds on March 1-3, but I confess it will be a bit odd without Janet Carson as Extension faculty. But, she will still be there in her new role as a very active retiree.

In this issue, we note that our award winning C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center collected more awards recently in the Best of Biz competition hosted by Arkansas Business. Kudos to the team members at the Center for their consistent excellence in making the center the best one in the country.

Speaking of 4-H, there are several positive stories about 4-H Youth Development in this issue, and these serve as

a reminder that not all news today is bad. 4-H is making good news every day, and laying a positive foundation for the future through tomorrow's leaders. In looking at the news, it seems obvious we need more 4H'ers in the world.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Community development is one of the most complex program areas and challenges in extension education, but we have a new and more aggressive focus on improving rural Arkansas by Stacey McCullough and her team, including our own nationally known Dr. Mark Peterson. New Vision Newport in this issue is an example of the sustained work of this program on rural leadership, launching their 16th class, and we greatly appreciate all of the county agents who have taken on community and economic development work in their local areas. In talking with involved agents, I confess this work can be among the most rewarding local programs you can ever be involved in, and I encourage all agents to get more involved in community development.

Extension state and county faculty have become more and more successful in extramural funding through grants, and I personally commend all of you for your hard work and this success. I confess that grant and gift funding or "soft" funding

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2018 U.S. Rice Industry Sustainability Report Issued

At this year's Rice Outlook Conference in San Diego, California, Dr. Steve Linscombe, Director of the Rice Foundation, presented the results of a report commissioned to collect information from the past 36 years on sustainability of the rice industry. This information was compiled with the help of USDA NRCS.

Rice is a major crop for the state of Arkansas, and Arkansas is the largest rice-producing state. Nationwide, rice is grown on almost 3 million acres of land, with around 1.4 million of that grown right here in the Natural State. To put that in perspective, you could plant a field of rice 2 miles wide stretching almost from New York City to Los Angeles.

Although rice is a small crop in comparison to soybean and corn, how it's managed can affect the environment. This report highlights positive improvements made in rice production over the past three decades. These improvements include a 28 percent reduction in soil erosion and a 39 percent increase in land use efficiency, results that stem from improvements such as land leveling, conservation tillage, and now row rice production. Water use has decreased over 50 percent compared to 30 years ago. This decrease has been accomplished through improved management of surface water, tailwater recovery, a variety of precision water monitoring techniques and multiple inlet irrigation. Advancements in fuel efficiency, reduced passes across fields with various implements, solar technology at the farm

and mill and use of mill waste to generate energy have led to an estimated 41 percent reduction in greenhouse gases per cwt of rice produced. One of the most impressive figures presented was the \$3.4 billion dollars in estimated value of wildlife habitat that is provided by overwinter flooded rice fields.

The U.S. rice industry contributes more than \$34 billion dollars to the U.S. economy and more than 125,000 jobs. Local economies benefit greatly from rice production. In Arkansas according to USA Rice, the rice production value alone is over \$2 billion dollars, and the rice industry in Arkansas creates and supports 24,000 jobs.

Many advances in sustainability have taken years to evolve while others have come along in recent years. The outlook for more improvement and even further development of the sustainability of this vital industry for Arkansas and the nation is very bright and a goal we work toward with each year's research within the Division of Agriculture. Advancements in irrigation techniques, varietal development, fertilizer use efficiency and pest management have all played a role in improved sustainability. The full report is available on the USA Rice website (usarice.com).

Sources: 2018 U.S. Rice Industry Sustainability Report- Executive Summary, USA Rice, The Rice Foundation. ■



Best of Biz Award Winners



The C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center is extremely excited to announce multiple wins in the 2018 Best of Biz awards released in the Dec. 24 edition of Arkansas Business. The center received awards for Best Team-building Center, Best Place for a Business Conference/Retreat, Best Place for a Company Retreat, Best Place for a Special Event and Best Place for an Employee Outing. In previous years, The Vines Center has been named Best Team-building Center on multiple occasions, so wins in four additional categories have provided great pride.

The team at The Vines Center hopes to use the momentum of these wins, coupled with continuous updates to the facility, to further the mission of Arkansas 4-H into 2019 and beyond. In December, an Ameri Corps team assisted in major updates to the center and continued the work on the upcoming Master Gardner demonstration garden. Additions and updates to the center that are currently taking place or will begin in 2019 include restroom and lodging renovations, continued LED lighting and signage improvements, additional cellular signal boosters and LED projectors and acoustical improvements to Cabe Hall. ■

Thank you

FOR VOTING FOR US!

**Best
of Biz**
Arkansas Business 2018



THE VINES CENTER

1 Four H Way ■ Little Rock, AR 72223
Phone: 501-821-4444 ■ Fax: 501-821-2545

- Best Place for a Business Conference/Meeting
- Best Team-building Center
- Best Place for a Company Retreat
- Best Place for a Special Event
- Best Place for an Employee Outing

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Share the Road Program

Cross County 4-H recently held its Share the Road program. 4-H'ers got a chance to hear about job opportunities in the trucking industry, road safety and how to operate a big rig.

The class was led by Loren Hatfield and Danny Fuller, truck drivers with the Arkansas Trucking Association. 4-H'ers and adults got a chance to operate a simulated semi-truck with a realistic screen designed to appear as if the youth was actually driving a semi-truck on the highway.

For more information about joining 4-H, please call your local Extension Office at (870) 238-5745. ■

4-H member Carlee N.



Holiday Canning Class

ASU- Midsouth Location

On Dec. 13, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent Meredith Wayman, held a holiday canning class in partnership with the Delta Cuisine Kitchen at ASU Midsouth. Participants learned about proper processing methods for water-bath canning through making green pepper jelly and orange cranberry chutney.

Along with freezing, dehydrating and fermenting, canning foods is an economical and nutritious way to preserve foods at their peak of freshness. Many in the class had some prior knowledge and experience with canning techniques and enjoyed the challenge of new recipes. ■



Class participants show off their finished cans of green pepper jelly and cranberry orange chutney. (Pictured L-R) Stacie Grubbs, Gail Grubbs, Donna Hooker, Anne S., Jackie Payne and Lindsey Burroughs.



Canning class participants work to properly fill their jars full of festive cranberry orange chutney.

Opportunity for 4-H at the Amazeum



Benton County 4-H teamed up with Urban Stormwater to be the Community Spotlight at the Scott Family Amazeum on Dec. 8, 2018.

The Apple Spur 4-H members assisted Amazeum attendees in putting together an art sculpture made from litter that had been tossed to the ground. Some of the items included plastic, aluminum, cardboard, CDs, etc. Linda Simpson, Program Assistant for Urban Stormwater from Benton County Extension, said, "The lesson was for them to use their imagination in creating the sculpture and for them to learn better environmental stewardship practices that protect water quality for good drinking water." The 4-H kids expanded their leadership, arts and humanities, community service and environmental projects all while promoting the 4-H program.

This was part of NW Arkansas Stormwater TOSSED program. TOSSED brings awareness to litter and its impact on the environment and water quality through art. While unsightly, litter is particularly problematic for waterways. Trash that makes its way into storm



Group Photo – Members and parents from the Apple Spur 4-H Club helped Amazeum attendees put together an art sculpture made from litter that had been tossed. (Pictured L-R) Becca L., Frances T. (Co-Leader), Katelyn R., Deette I., Mikenley T., Hannah I., Lisa I., Terri J. (Club Leader), and Jacob J. Not pictured are Lily L. and Shannon G.

drains flows directly into creeks, streams and rivers – not into water treatment facilities. Litter can reduce the recreational value of waterways, cause harm to wildlife and create an economic burden on cities and government agencies responsible for cleaning up in public spaces. ■

Tech Day

The South Shore Marion County Youth Leadership Team recently attended Tech Day sponsored by NATCO, a telecommunications company located in Marion County. During their visit the SSMCYL Team was awarded a \$3,000 grant by the South

Shore Foundation. The South Shore Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization working to enhance to quality of life in Marion County. Their continued support has allowed for the continuation of our Youth Leadership Program. ■



Group Photo – (Pictured L-R) **Front Row:** Keelyn S., Eli A., Sonora N., Jacey D., Lily L. **2nd Row:** Erica B., Joshua C., Haley P., Mason S., Lexi H., Skylar M. **Back Row:** Emilee Moody-CEA FCS, Raymond P., Connor H., Dawson W., Landon P., Tamara M., Macy Jo Y., Kaylee M., Julissa G., Vicki Stokes-Bruno-Pyatt Sponsor, Ryan Hargrove- Flippin Sponsor



4-H Programs Available at Carroll Smith Elementary

Carroll Smith Elementary in Mississippi County has fully embraced 4-H with 4-H programming in all grades due to the support of Principal Stefanie Smithey. First graders are learning about making healthy choices through the fun and engaging Organwise Guys program. Second graders discovered the mysteries of Arkansas mammals during the fall semester and will focus on plants in the spring semester. Third graders discover

healthy living through the Kids in the Kitchen program, while fourth graders concentrate on STEM activities including the scientific method, nature games and geology. Additionally, third and fourth graders are learning how to prevent bullying with the Stand Up and Speak Out 4-H Anti-bullying Program. Mrs. Percifull's class shows off a black bear fur as part of the 4-H Arkansas Mammal program. ■

Youth Leadership Program

Mississippi County 4-H Youth Leadership Program, YLP, targets high school juniors from each of the county's public school districts. YLP provides leadership and civic engagement experiences for youth to develop self-responsibility, civic engagement, working toward mutual goals, project management and much more. State Representative Monte Hodges spoke with the YLP regarding the importance of civic service, and gave youth tips on how they can become leaders in their community. ■



You Spoke, We Listened!

Based on your feedback, we have updates coming to our monthly training sessions we hope will improve your productivity.

1. In 2019, Omni Update (OU) Open Office Hours will be merging with Hump Day Hacks! If you need website editing/technical assistance, just join us for Hump Day Hacks where a member of the extension Webteam will be available to assist.
2. Hump Day Hacks will now be held at **2 pm** the **FOURTH** Wednesday of every month.

Go to www.uaex.edu/training for the link to join, suggest a topic, and a full list of other training options from Program and Staff Development and IT. ■



2019 HDH dates:

JANUARY 23	JULY 24
FEBRUARY 27	AUGUST 28
MARCH 27	SEPTEMBER 25
APRIL 24	OCTOBER 23
MAY 22	NOVEMBER 27
JUNE 26	

New Vision Newport Anniversary

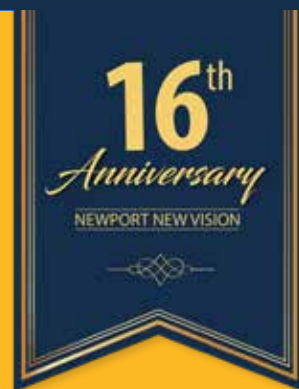
Congratulations to New Vision Newport, a community leadership program in Jackson County, for launching their 16th year class. The purpose of New Vision Newport is to equip residents for Newport and Jackson County to be effective leaders in the community.

Sponsored by the Newport Area Chamber of Commerce, New Vision Newport also has benefited from involvement by the Newport Economic Development Commission, the Cooperative Extension Service and other community organizations from its inception.

“We started this program 16 years ago. We visited other communities that were doing well, and one common thread was that they had a community

leadership program. The most important impact has been 18-20 ambassadors for Newport and Jackson County, armed with positive information to share with others,” said Julie Allen, Newport Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director.

“Over 300 citizens have completed New Vision Newport, and many are now in key positions in Newport and Jackson County,” said Jon Chadwell, Executive Director of the Newport Economic Development Commission, a Breakthrough Solutions Partner. “New Vision Newport is a great model for other communities to learn from,” said Mark Peterson, Professor of Community and Economic Development with the Cooperative Extension Service. ■



MyPI

The My Preparedness Initiative, MyPI, program is a youth preparedness program that enhances individual, family and community preparedness for disasters, while at the same time strengthening youth leadership and decision-making skills. 4-H youth completing the MyPI program will complete FEMA's CERT, Community Emergency Response Team, training, technology and career tracks, CPR/AED certification and a disaster simulation. Recently, 4-H youth in the MyPI program at The Delta School, Mississippi County, learned proper search and rescue techniques from the Blytheville Search and Rescue Squad. ■



(Pictured L-R) Kiefer S., Trevor H., Jude S., Aiden T., and Alexander W. practice using a backboard.

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Investigating Hops Production in Arkansas to Support Specialty Crop Growth	\$27,905	Jackie Lee	Arkansas Agriculture Department
2013-2014 NWA Regional Urban Stormwater Education Program	\$214,473	Katherine Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
Survey of Ticks and Tick-Borne Pathogens of Feral Swine	\$29,935	Kelly Loftin	Arkansas Department of Health
TOTAL AWARDS FOR DECEMBER 2018: \$272,313			

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

Feb. 13 (morning) – Russellville – River Valley Beef Cattle Conference
Feb. 13 (afternoon) – Ashley County – Smarties 4-H Club
Feb. 14 (morning) – Saline County – Cattleman's Meeting
Feb. 16 (morning) – Searcy County – Master Gardeners Meeting
Feb. 18 (morning) – Fordyce – DEEP (Diabetes Education) Class
Feb. 19 (morning) – Charleston – Pesticide Applicator Training
Feb. 21 (afternoon) – Hot Springs – Introduction to Government Contracting
Feb. 23 (all day) – 4-H Center Little Rock – Wildlife Habitat Practice Session
Feb. 25 (evening) – Dover – 4-H Art Club Meeting
Feb. 26 (evening) – DeWitt – Share The Fun/Fashion Revue
Feb. 28 (evening) – Batesville – Pesticide Applicator Training

MARCH

Mar. 2 (afternoon) – 4-H Center Little Rock – High Adventure Parent/Camper Rally
Mar. 5 (evening) – Ashley County – Bullseye Bandits 4-H Club
Mar. 6 (morning) – Fort Smith – Selling to the Government
Mar. 9 (morning) – Lonoke – Sewing Club
Mar. 11 (evening) – Bentonville – 4-H Horse Roping-Registration
Mar. 11 (evening) – DeWitt – Arkansas County 4-H Achievement Banquet
Mar. 12 (afternoon) – Jefferson County – Mediterranean Cooking Class
Mar. 13 (afternoon) – Crossett – Conservative Consuming Teens 4-H Club
Mar. 14 (evening) – Benton – Saline County Cattleman's Club
Go to <https://calendar.uaex.edu/cal/main/showMain.rdo> to see all of the upcoming events!

Blue Ribbon Extension Publication Award Earned

The Extension Communications Awards committee from Auburn University has informed UAEX that the publication, "Significant Timeline Events for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) 1926-2017" by J. Robbins, J. Maja, and C. Meux, will receive a Blue Ribbon Extension Publication Award.

This award will be presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Region of the American Society for Horticultural Science in Birmingham in January.

The award was initiated in 1987 to recognize outstanding contribution to the understanding of horticultural subjects reported in written, video, audio and electronic form, including internet based formats.

The award serves to give those authors of extension publications recognition among their peers and administrators. ■



2018 Significant Timeline Events for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) 1926-2017 cover

New publications:

(You know you want to look.)
uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx



Director's Column Continued

is complex and challenging, but more and more of you are having success and this diversity of revenue really contributes to our success today. So, thanks to all of you that show excellence in grantsmanship. It is critically important and you are obviously very good at what you do – I know this because grantors and donors say it with their dollars, repeatedly. While there are many successful faculty in this regard, I have to “high-five” Katie Teague and Sherri Sanders for developing extramurally funded programs at the county level for some time now. While there are others, they have developed extremely well respected local programs with impact magnified by grant support. Kudos to both.

Finally, I sincerely appreciate all of the hard work reflected at the recent Division of Agriculture and Bumpers College Awards luncheon, not just to the awardees, but also the nominators, event staff, and those who served on the peer selection committees. It is a professional responsibility to recognize and make sure others recognize excellence among our peers, so I thank you for doing so. The awards luncheon was a good day and if you could not attend, you can read about the ceremony and awardees at <https://www.uaex.edu/media-resources/news/january2019/01-11-2019-Ark-Division-Awards.aspx>.

Have a great January and 2019! ■



Welcome to 2019!

After Jan. 15 please review your 2019 benefits, deductions and taxes on your Jan. 15 pay stub. Log into the Banner 9 link: <http://uaex.edu/links> and click on Banner 9 login. Use your Active Directory login and password to login. Click Applications, then Employee Dashboard, then next to latest paystub select 01/15/2019. For questions regarding your benefit enrollments, contact yourbenefits@uaex.edu. For deductions questions, please contact Payroll at payroll@uaex.edu. We strive to ensure your selections are captured accurately, but it is your responsibility to confirm your benefit elections and deductions are correct.

Employees enrolled in the University Medical Plan through UMR should have received new cards in the mail the first week of January. ID numbers remained the same which allows members to continue using

their old cards until the new ones arrive. New enrollees' cards might be a little later arriving. If you did not receive your card by Dec. 31, 2019, please contact UMR at the number below. Cards are also available through the UMR portal. The Real Appeal Program became available starting 01/02/2019.

UMR Medical Customer Service: 1-888-438-6105 or www.umar.com

MedImpact Prescription Drugs: 1-800-788-2949
Flexible Spending Account (FSA): UMR Benny Card 1-866-868-0145

Superior Vision: 1-800-507-3800 or www.superiorvision.com.

Arkansas BCBS: 1-844-662-2281 or www.uasdental.blueadvantagearkansas.com

Please update your address in Banner. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome aboard:

Tommy Butts Extension Weed Scientist, Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences, Lonoke

Stephanie Gilbert Program Associate, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program, Sebastian County, Barling

Tiffany Schafer Administrative Specialist II - Lonoke County, Lonoke

Emily Smith Program Associate - Community and Economic Development, Pulaski County, Little Rock

Jasmine Walton - Administrative Specialist I - Arkansas County, Dewitt

Farewell to:

Mark Keaton - County Extension Agent Staff Chair, Baxter County, Mountain Home

Rachel Mayfield - Program Assistant, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program, Pulaski County, Little Rock



Pursuant to 7 CFR § 15.3, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services (including employment) without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, sexual preference, pregnancy or any other legally protected status, and is an equal opportunity institution.