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## BLUE LETTER

July 2022

No. 3843



FROM THE DIRECTOR

# O'Rama and More!

Although I have been with Extension for 20 years now, I attended my first “real” state 4-H O-Rama this month. It was a lot of fun and rewarding to see the involvement of so many Arkansas youth, volunteers, and employees from across the Division. I had no idea so many folks were involved. Our state officers once again did a great job, and I know that we have a great new team going forward.

I am excited to announce that we have begun our national search for a new Assistant Vice President of 4-H and Youth Development. We will follow this search with the announcement later this fall of our search for an Assistant Vice President - Family and Consumer Science. It has been years since these positions were separated at this level, and I look forward to seeing what these new leaders can accomplish going forward.

The first year of our summer intern program is now complete. Our interns have been trained by their respective counties, and I am very pleased with how this program has gone. I think we have made the most of our time with them and several told me that they would be applying again next year. Apparently, I missed an epic “intern lip sync” video at O-Rama that I am still trying to find. I hope to continue this program for at least the next few years. If you know of outstanding youth with an

interest in helping others and involved in any of our program areas, please direct them to our intern application for next year!

Finally, a couple of housekeeping items. I want to give a shout out to our Finance Office. They have been extremely busy during July closing out a fiscal year, dealing with an audit, making the one-time salary adjustments happen for all of us this month, and taking care of the hundreds of approvals that they must do in Workday on sometimes a daily basis, and that is probably not a complete list.

In addition, I asked Tammy Green to analyze why some approvals take longer than others in our system. We found that although there are hold ups in the Finance Office that took longer than probably necessary, the majority of approvals take only a few days. Two reasons for most of the long delays. First, the initial entry is incorrect and must be sent back. Mistakes happen; try and do all you can to get them right the first time and ask questions if you are not sure. Second, check your Workday inbox. The majority of the long delays occurred when a returned task sat in an inbox too long. Remember to delegate your approvals if possible if you are going to be out for an extended period. We will work to make our processes better, but we need everyone’s help! ■

## INSIDE SCOOP

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RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
*University of Arkansas System*





## iLEAD Graduates First Class



The 13 members of iLEAD's first cohort have completed their year-long training. Over the past year, they have traveled the state to experience the research and extension programs offered by the UADA — from cotton fields in northeast Arkansas to the Food Innovation Center in Northwest Arkansas, from rice research in southeast Arkansas to the ExCEL program in central Arkansas. The year-long leadership development program for Agriculture Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service employees culminated with a graduation ceremony featuring details about the graduates' leadership service projects.

The graduates and their projects include:

- **Jamie Baum**, associate professor, Identifying Food, Nutrition, and Health Misinformation in the Digital Age.
- **Rachel Bearden**, Hot Spring County extension agent-staff chair, 4-H Teen Star Leadership Program.
- **Leigh Ann Bullington**, family and consumer sciences educator, Video Series.
- **Amy Cole**, digital media program manager, Division Volunteers Website.
- **Sarah David**, SNAP-Ed finance manager/program associate, SNAP-Ed Virtual Orientation Training.

- **Eric De Vries**, 4-H Arkansas Outdoor School program coordinator, Leave-No-Trace Interactive Hiking Trail.
- **Kristen Gibson**, associate professor, Food Science Department Bulletin Weekly Update.
- **Fionna Goggin**, professor, Development of a Departmental STEM Mentoring Pipeline.
- **Mary Beth Groce**, family and consumer sciences agent, Cooperative Extension Yearbook.
- **Kristin Higgins**, Public Policy Center program associate, Jail Reentry Simulation.
- **Chris Meux**, design specialist, Division Logos and Standards of Use Website.
- **Keith Perkins**, Lonoke County extension agent-staff chair, Fishing Rock Restoration.
- **Laura Anne Warren**, SNAP-Ed county extension agent, Online Apparel Storefront.

The next iLEAD cohort will begin their year-long odyssey in July. To learn more about the iLEAD program contact Julie Robinson, [jrobinson@uada.edu](mailto:jrobinson@uada.edu) or Lisa Davis, [ldavis@uada.edu](mailto:ldavis@uada.edu). ■



iLEAD Cohort 1 graduates from left to right: Amy Cole, Kristin Higgins, Keith Perkins, Eric De Vries, Leigh Ann Bullington, Fiona Goggin, Chris Meux, Jamie Baum, Mary Beth Groce, Rachel Bearden, Kristen Gibson, Sarah David, and Laura Anne Warren.

# Register Now: August Ballot Issue Education In-service

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Counties ordered more than 38,000 voter guides for this fall's Arkansas Ballot Issue Education program. Now that ordering is over, county agents have multiple online opportunities to learn about the November ballot issues.

Kristin Higgins in the Public Policy Center will lead a 90-minute training in August examining three proposed constitutional amendments from the legislature and two proposals from citizens. This training - Regnat Populus: A Deep Dive Into 2022 Arkansas Ballot Issues - is open to all agents and will be offered Aug. 26, 29 and 30. Sign up in [Learn](#) for one of the training dates.

Voter guides and ballot issue presentations can be incorporated into any county programming, with ideas ranging from including website or video links

in newsletters to working with 4-H members on civic engagement.

For county agents who joined extension after 2020, the Ballot Issue Education Program is one of the most visible extension programs. More than 200,000 people visited our website in past years to download voter guides and watch videos.

Agents who haven't participated in past program years are encouraged to review Introduction to Arkansas Ballot Issues, a recording in [Learn](#) featuring agents discussing past efforts and how they used program resources. Once completed, agents will then have access to register for the August in-service. Questions? Email [khiggins@uada.edu](mailto:khiggins@uada.edu) or call 501-671-2160. ■

## Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest



Arkansas 4-H Grassland Evaluation Contest teams from Cleburne, Madison and Independence counties made a near clean sweep of the top five spots at the 2022 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest held in Springfield, MO, on June 8. The three Arkansas 4-H teams took three of the top five team spots and took four of the top five individual awards. The contest included teams

from Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana and West Virginia.

Cleburne County 4-H, coached by CEA-Staff Chair Amy Heck, took first place 4-H team. Team member

Hannah M. took 4th place individual honors.

Madison County 4-H, coached by Jerry Jo Hamm, administrative specialist, took third place 4-H team. Team member Austin F. took second place individual honors, and Lavan F. took the fifth-place individual spot.

Independence County 4-H, coached by CEA-Staff Chair Michelle Mobley, placed 4th in team. Sydney B. was the first-place winner in individual awards. Austin F. and Hannah M. tied for second place. ■



Cleburne County 4-H team – First place 4-H team and 4th high individual at the 2022 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest.



Madison County 4-H team – Third place 4-H team and 2nd and 5th high individuals at the 2022 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest.



# Staff Come up Winners in APW, NFPW Contests

Seven current or former staffers from the UADA earned 35 awards in the 2022 state and national competitions held by the National Federation of Press Women and its Arkansas affiliate.

Fred Miller, science editor for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, won first place in the national competition for "Soybean researcher hunts genetics of drought tolerance from the air" about work being done by Larry Purcell, distinguished professor of crop physiology.

Also winning national awards on June 25 were:

- **Kristin Higgins**, program associate for the Public Policy Center, won two second-place awards for both communications campaign, "Redistricting in Arkansas," and for her blog post, "Redistricting in Arkansas: Legislators File Maps To Divvy Up Arkansas Congressional District."
- **Mary Hightower**, chief communications officer, won second place for infographics, "Arkansas Public Research, Global Benefits," third place for video for web-special interest for "Employee Update," and honorable mention for "ONE Division" in the electronic newsletter category.
- **Julianne Dunn**, a former extension instructor at the Division of Agriculture, took third place in the national

contest for her entry: "Truths We Tell: Stories from the Yarn Stage."

- **Murriel Wiley**, a former CREATE Bridges regional program coordinator with the Cooperative Extension Service, won first place in Web and Social Media, Podcast for "Bilingual in Business/Bilingüe en los negocios."



Fred Miller, right, receives a certificate for his first place entry in the 2022 NFPW Communications contest.

At the state level, Division of Agriculture staff members earned numerous awards. Entries that earned first place at the state level were eligible for the national competition. The state contest drew 208 entries. The national contest had more than 2,000 entries.

To see a list of winners and their categories and entries, visit: <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/media-resources/news/2022/07-08-2022-ark-comms-contest-winners.aspx>. ■

## Teen Leaders Give Back

Sevier County teens Hunter F. and Aubrey S. recently put what they have learned through 4-H to good use. The two organized a co-ed softball tournament that raised \$3,270.50 and donated it to the Sevier County Cancer Survivor Committee. The committee will use the money to provide gas vouchers to patients who must travel for treatment.

"I've seen the toll cancer takes on a family, and if I could play a small part in helping them, I wanted to do that," Hunter F. said. Both Hunter and Aubrey are members of Sevier County 4-H.

Sevier County teen Ethan Wolcott recently organized a mental health night. Guest speakers included the Sevier County sheriff; Tonya Chambers, a psychiatric-

mental health nurse practitioner; and multiple community peers. The public was invited and learned about ways to help themselves and how to reach out to professionals in their area. ■



From left to right (top): Hunter F., Shelia Ridley (committee member), Linda Frachiseur (4-H Leader), Aubrey S., Montana Frachiseur (committee member)



# Sharing Stories Strengthening Arkansas Communities Citizens in Action

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The Cooperative Extension Service's Community, Professional and Economic Development (CPED) unit launched a new Sharing Stories – Strengthening AR Communities opportunity, which invites community members to submit stories to be shared on social media, online and in the CPED newsletter.

We invite people to share stories that correspond with a different quarterly theme related to CPED's and the Division's mission, vision and work developing communities across the state. This quarter's theme is "Citizens in Action" which calls for stories about how Arkansans are actively participating in their communities, looking for new ways organizations and businesses can help make change, and acting boldly in leading efforts for citizens to pave the way.



For communities throughout the state, sharing stories of success, impact or solutions with others can help improve the quality of life for all Arkansans. Sharing Stories – Strengthening Arkansas Communities aims to unify all that we do as an organization and state. Community stories are important because they contribute to a sense of belonging, identity and purpose for the individuals, businesses and organizations that comprise a community. By engaging with your fellow Arkansans about the work you are doing in your communities, we can learn from their challenges and foster collaboration.

- [Share Your Story Here!](#)
- [Access this Toolkit & Share with Your Networks.](#)

Keep your stories informal! They do not need to be perfect or polished—we want to capture your authentic and real experiences. You can share your story in four formats: narrative text, video, voice recording, or pictures with corresponding captions. Each monthly theme will be shared at [uaex.uada.edu/business-communities/share-your-story.aspx](http://uaex.uada.edu/business-communities/share-your-story.aspx), including prompts to help communities craft their responses.

For more information, visit the website mentioned above, contact Emily Smith at [elsmith@uada.edu](mailto:elsmith@uada.edu) or call at 603-387-1584. If you would like to be a part of the quarterly theme generation, let us know! ■

## Oklahoma Pecan Growers Convention

Two members of the Tri County Pecan Demo team attended the Oklahoma Pecan Growers Association's annual convention and trade show in Ardmore, Oklahoma from June 9-11.

White County extension agent Sherri Sanders and Lonoke County agent Kyle Sanders, along with White County pecan producers Keith and Tammy Feather, attended the three-day event, which included a pecan

food show and nut show. The convention concluded with a Field Day at Hauni Creek Ranch.

Funds from Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) supplemented the travel expenses for the agents to attend the conference. ■



From left to right: Keith and Tammy Feather, White Co. pecan producers, Sherri Sanders, White Co. extension agent and Kyle Sanders, Lonoke Co.

# 4-H Center Programs Buy Accessible UTV

The Arkansas Outdoor School (AOS) at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center offers environmental education and outdoor recreation programs for school groups, 4-H clubs, summer camps, homeschool students and other

groups. Some of the most popular classes include rock climbing, canoeing, fishing, archery, Arkansas wildlife and nature hikes. For some participants, getting to these various activities can be a challenge.

The Arkansas Outdoor School now has an accessible utility terrain vehicle (UTV) with a ramp and locking tie-down system designed for motorized wheelchairs. With it, AOS staff can easily transport a student in a wheelchair around the 220 acres of the 4-H Center.

The school plans additional accessibility improvements in several of its class offerings. Staff have already purchased mechanical releases to help with gripping archery equipment, and they intend to install a canoe system that can help participants needing a little more stability on the water.

For more information on the AOS program, check out [4h.uada.edu/aos](http://4h.uada.edu/aos) or contact Eric De Vries, Arkansas Outdoor School coordinator at (501) 821-6884 or [edevries@uada.edu](mailto:edevries@uada.edu).



4-H Program Technician Marshall Dickey, left, and Hector, right, are all smiles as they get ready to roll.

# Babysitting Basics Workshop

Pope County Extension offered a two-day babysitting basics workshop July 5-6 for youth ages 9-19 to learn to be responsible, caring, trustworthy, respectful and competent babysitters. Students learned about safety and security precautions, the business aspect of babysitting,

age-appropriate activities and how to make nutritious snacks and lunches. Participants also toured the Russellville Central Fire Station where they learned CPR fundamentals, choking rescue techniques, and what to do in emergency situations at home. ■



Students who attended two-day babysitting basics workshop.

Engineer John McConnell (right), Russellville Fire Department, teaches Caleb L. (left) life saving techniques.





# National 4-H Shooting Sports Championships



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The Saline County 4-H Shooting Sports team represented Arkansas well at the National 4-H Shooting Sports Championships held June 27 – July 1 in Grand Island, Nebraska. More than 700 participants from 39 states competed in various events.

The Saline County team had three Top 10 finishes. They placed ninth in three-position air rifle and 40 shot standing position and placed fourth in air rifle silhouettes. In the Overall Awards category, the team earned fifth-place honors. Logan Yates placed second in the silhouette competition and ninth in the overall individual category. ■



From left to right (top): Logan Y., Mitchell E., Jonathan Y. and David Johnson.

## Accessibility Corner

# All About Screen Readers



A screen reader is an assistive technology that allows people with disabilities to "read" a website, document, or app — even if they can't see the screen. Screen readers will announce the words on a webpage, the heading levels on a PDF, the alternate text of images where links will lead a user to, and button or navigation options.

Typically, screen readers are software that can be downloaded to a person's work or personal device. Some common screen readers include JAWS, VoiceOver and NVDA.

Screen readers help a variety of people including those who are blind, visually impaired, dyslexic, or illiterate.

Users navigate through a webpage by using a series of keyboard shortcuts. By using these shortcuts, users who can't see a computer screen or can't read the language a page is written in can still fully interact with the content. ■

## Pack the Backpack AUGUST 1 - 12

Help equip 300 kids and youth in Our House Children's Programs & Homeless Prevention Program with all of the school supplies needed for the coming year! Tax Free Weekend is Aug. 6 - 7.

Donation tables under stairwells in LRSO. Scan QR Code below for school supply list.



OUR  HOUSE

AACES  
Arkansas Association of Cooperative Extension Specialists



## Attention! Is it Time to Update Your Email Signature?

Here are some things to look for:

- Still telling folks about our domain change and your “new” email address? That is old news and needs to be removed.
- Still have the old Covid infographics? An updated [Covid graphic](#) is available for your use.
- Do you have any old program logos still showing in your signature? It's a good time to update or remove them.

A good email signature for new emails should include the following elements:

- First name and last name
- Title and department
- Company logo and company name
- Company physical address
- Telephone number

Visit our [webpage](#) for more tips and information about email signatures. You can use this QR code for quicker access.



## Zoom Quick Reference “Show Me” Video

Creating and Collaborating with Zoom Whiteboard (3.5 minutes).



## Social Skills

Join us for August Social Skills: Writing for Social Media. [Register and check](#) out past Social Skills sessions.

## 2022 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

**Register for the August 9, 2022 Tech Tuesday webinar.**

Take a look at the previous 2022 Tech Tuesdays. Check out June's, [Video Editing Options](#).

Check out the recording and resources.





# National Extension Technology Community Awards Extension Members

The Information Technology team received the National Extension Technology Community (NETC) Award for Team Excellence, and Gretchen Skinner won the NETC Award for Individual Excellence.

Both awards honor outstanding efforts, encourage workplace creativity and innovation, and celebrate the achievements of information technology professionals serving the Cooperative Extension community. ■



From left to right, front row: Ed Zuech-NETC President, Diana Morian, Karen DiCicco, Amy Cole, Melissa Johnson, Kristena Merritt, Robin Ertz-NETC Vice President; back row: Michael DiCicco, Mary Poling, Gretchen Skinner; team members not pictured: Samantha Barker, Steve Hall, Ryan Hood, Trent Burroughs, Chase Zimmerman, and Joseph Kready.



From left to right: Ed Zuech-NETC President, Gretchen Skinner, Robin Ertz-NETC Vice President.

## Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Pilot Program to Demonstrate Implementation and Benefits of the US Cotton Trust Protocol and Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) Cotton Programs FY23	30,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Inc.
MOA between UADA & UAMS for Healthy Pantry Toolkit Project	12,864	Josh Phelps	University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)
4-H Tech Changemakers (2022-2023)	200,000	Lori Canada	National 4-H Council
Jackson County Quorum Court support for Jackson County 4-H Program	5,000	Matthew Joseph Davis	Jackson County Quorum Court
Arkansas Procurement Technical Assistance Program FY23	532,987	Melanie Berman	Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)
UACES Early Care and Education Projects	322,500	Rebecca M. Simon	Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education (DCCECE)
ABC Best Care Program for FY23	225,625	Rebecca M. Simon	Arkansas Department of Education
Service Order #153 - Evaluate multiple herbicide programs to provide recommendations for XtendFlex Soybean management in areas or situations where XtendiMax is not used	9,702	Tom Barber	Bayer CropScience LP
<b>TOTAL AWARDS FOR JUNE 2022: \$1,338,678</b>			

# Benefits Corner

## Assistance Programs

Whether you're dealing with stress, mental health concerns, a child with a learning disability, a parent who needs in-home care or a difficult colleague, the UADA offers resources to help.

The assistance programs provide resources for life's issues —no matter how big or small. You and your immediate family members can use the assistance programs for confidential, no-cost individual and family counseling.

There are two options: the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and the UnitedHealthcare (UHC) Member Assistance Program (MAP).

To schedule an appointment with UAMS-EAP call 800-542-6021 or 479-973-9072, or visit the EAP website.

To schedule an appointment with UnitedHealthcare MAP, call 877-660-3806 (TTY: 711) for personal and confidential assistance.

For additional information: <https://benefits.uasys.edu/work-life/assistance-programs/>. ■



# Personnel Changes

## Welcome Aboard:

**Emma Kentner** – Administrative Specialist II - 4H & Youth Development, Little Rock  
**David Turner** – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Sebastian County  
**Taylor Ibbotson** – Program Associate - Entomology, Lonoke Agricultural Center  
**Andrew Russell** – 4-H Program Assistant, Sebastian County

## Farewell to:

**Debbie Baker** – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Clay County  
**Roxana Jones** – Administrative Specialist III, Little River County  
**Terrell Davis** – County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Pike County  
**Amber Crockett** – Administrative Specialist III, Cleburne County  
**Debra Garcia** – Procurement Counselor, Little Rock  
**Ariel Little** – Administrative Specialist III, Little Rock  
**Sandra Kaye Kirk** – Administrative Specialist III, Hempstead County  
**Mary Poling** – Coordinator for Interactive Communication, Little Rock  
**Brandi Sanderson** – Administrative Specialist I, Logan County  
**Malinda Noel** – Administrative Specialist III, Pike County  
**Jesse Bolden Kelly** – Program Tech - Plant Pathology, Lonoke Agricultural Center  
**Sydney Jones** – Administrative Specialist III, Little Rock  
**Jewell Sanders** – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Calhoun County  
**Martha Ray Sartor** – Associate VP - Family & Consumer Science & 4-H, Little Rock  
**Jessa Heavin** – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Van Buren County

