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BLUE LETTER

October 2023

No. 3858



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Congratulations

I want to start off this week's blue letter by congratulating Dr. John Anderson, current department head of agricultural economics and agribusiness, on becoming the new Extension Director beginning in January. I will try not to let the wheels come off for him until that time and of course offer whatever support I can during the transition. I know that Dr. Anderson will do a good job and look forward to serving Extension myself under his leadership.

In addition to my position, most of you have heard that District Director Kevin Lawson has made the decision to return to Faulkner County as an Agricultural Agent and fill an empty job in that county. I know this was a tough decision for Kevin, we thank him for his time as District Director and wish him the best of luck in his new county role. The search for a new District Director for the Ozark District will commence soon.

Dr. Debbie Nistler is currently interviewing for a 4-H Instructor Educator position. Once this position is filled, we will have 4 of these unique positions that are charged with helping new agents become successful in their respective counties more quickly, mostly focused on the technical side of the job as well as

with relationship building within the community. I am currently working with Dr. Roofe to determine the need for a second position like this in FCS. This, like our intern program, has shown some success in employee recruitment, retention, and over all job satisfaction. This program started under Dr. Cartwright, but I am happy to take as much credit as possible for expanding it!

Speaking of our interns, the position announcement went out recently for our 3rd class of Extension Interns and the response has been quick. I understand we already have a good number of applications. I am happy to say that we have already seen the fruits of this program in a number of ways, including some new hires. I am very proud of this program and both mine and the District Directors efforts to make it happen.

Finally, I want to congratulate Dr. Jeff Edwards on being named the new Dean of Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture. Dr. Edwards will be missed in the Crops, Soils and Environmental Science department both with our Extension faculty and our faculty located on campus. The search for a new Department heads both in CSES and AEAB will move forward soon I am sure. ■

INSIDE SCOOP

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2. New Extension
Director Named | 5. 4-H Professionals and Volunteers
Find Their Spark |
| 3. All About Goats! | 6. Tech Corner |
| 4. NEAFCS Conference | 7. EDA University Center Program...And much more! |

New Extension Director Named

An agricultural economist raised in the tiny Stone County community of Timbo is set to become the next director of the Cooperative Extension Service. John Anderson will assume his new role as senior associate vice president-extension for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture on Jan. 2, said Deacue Fields, vice president-agriculture for the University of Arkansas System.

As director, Anderson will oversee the extension service land-grant outreach mission across all 75 counties.

“With his broad experience, outstanding record of innovation and achievements and just plain enthusiasm for the outreach mission, John is set to strengthen the work the Cooperative Extension Service is doing to improve lives in Arkansas,” said Fields. “John’s

background in agriculture, economics and policy will be of great use as leader of the extension service.”

Anderson has been head of the agricultural economics and agribusiness department since January 2020, with appointments in both the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences and the Division of Agriculture. He is also head of the Fryar Price Risk Management Center of Excellence. Before that, he worked for the American Farm Bureau in Washington and is a veteran of the U.S. Army Reserve. Read more [here](#). ■



John Anderson

LEADERSHIP LOG



Leadership Lunch and Learn Book Review Series: *It's the Manager* Reviewed by Dr. Tearney Woodruff

The September Leadership Lunch and Learn Book Review Series focused on *It's the Manager*, reviewed by Dr. Tearney Woodruff, assistant professor and extension specialist with Texas & AgriLife Extension. Watch the recording [here](#). Read the blog post [here](#). ■

LeadAR Class 20 Goes to Washington D.C.

With the objective of learning more about the current issues facing our nation, LeadAR Class 20 kicked off its National Studies Tour on Sept. 17, 2023. The class hit the ground running in Washington D.C. Read the blog post [here](#). ■



NATIONAL STUDY TOUR

A Short Blog Post About the September iLEAD Virtual Session

The arduous process of getting this herd of cats rounded up began at 9 a.m. on Sept. 15, 2023. We all exchanged our customary pleasantries, and Dr. Julie Robinson launched us into the topic of “The Cohort’s Core Values,” a lively discussion of the “iCARE, We Serve” values statement which was officially adopted by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. Read the blog post [here](#). ■

All About Goats!

Knowledge and fun times had at the Arkansas Goat Festival in Perryville

On October 7, 8,000 to 10,000 goat lovers came together to have a good time at the Arkansas Goat Festival in Perryville. This year's event — featuring “au naturel” and costume contests, live music, food trucks and more than 100 vendors — attracted an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 goat lovers to the Perryville City Park for the annual festival held on the first Saturday of October each year. New this year was a kids' zone with inflatables, dunk tank, and obstacle course. Dan Quadros, extension small ruminant specialist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, and Perry County Extension Agent Blake Erbach kicked off the day's festivities with an overview of the goat and sheep industry in Arkansas.



From left to right: Sarah French (one of the organizers), Dan Quadros (UADA extension small ruminant specialist), Blake Erbach (Perry County Extension Agent) and the Razorgoat!

Goats' small size and high prolificity make them a good choice for small farm owners and homesteaders to quickly build a herd and create income from meat and milk. There's something about a costumed goat that gets a crowd excited. Goats came dressed as Hollywood divas, garden gnomes, bees, pumpkins, scarecrows, princesses, an Oreo, an orange-clad

inmate, sheriffs from the Wild West, and a “Baaa-rbie.”

See the photos [here](#). The success of the Arkansas Goat Festival is rooted in the work of two women, both of whom are graduates of the Cooperative Extension Service's LeadAR program. ■

Arkansas Sheep & Goats Advancement Program

The UADA Small Ruminant program, led by Dr. Dan Quadros is conducting a survey and webinars last month were held to identify industry needs and develop the small ruminant value chain. County extension agents are engaged in this process by sharing with their producers how to participate. The survey asks sheep and goat producers about their animals, breeds, health management, pastures and more. The survey is available [here](#). The webinar series, featuring county agents as special guests, is available [here](#).



Webinars were held on:

- Oct. 23, 7 p.m. — Special guest: Jennifer Sansom, Little River County agent
- Oct. 26, 3 p.m. — Special guest: Stacey Stone, Nevada County agent

Producers can use an online open channel available to provide input [here](#). Later, industry leaders will be invited to a workshop to discuss the results. ■

Top Honors Received at NEAFCS Conference

Forty-six Extension employees participated in the 2023 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences held in Providence, Rhode Island.

Jackson County Agent Joy West and Clark County Agent JoAnn Vann received Distinguished Service Awards. Leigh Ann Bullington, FCS-State Educator, received a Continued Excellence.

Other award winners included:

- Tristin Bolton and team – 1st Place National and Southern Region Communications – Podcast Award
- Torrie Smith and team – 1st Place National and Southern Region Food Safety Award
- Brittney Schrick – 3rd Place Southern Region – Communications Educational Publications
- LeeAnn Blevins – 3rd Place Southern Region – Communications Written Media
- Amy Monk – 1st Place Southern Region and 3rd Place National – Community Partnership
- Anna Goff – 3rd Place Southern Region – Early Childhood Child Care Training Team, 3rd Place National and Southern Region - Environmental Education Team, and 3rd Place National and Southern



- Region - Extension Disaster Education Individual
- Heather Wingo and team – 3rd Place National and Southern Region – Education Curriculum Package, JoAnn Vann and team– 2nd Place National and Southern Region- Education Curriculum Package
- Joy West and team – 2nd Place National and Southern Region – Florence Hall
- Kristal Draper and team – 2nd Place Southern Region – Human Development/Family Relationships. ■

Extension - Teaching the Nation at NEAFCS

Extension personnel led several sessions at NEAFCS. Presenters and topics included:

- Torrie Smith and Billie Collins — Food Safety on the Homestead
- Tristin Bolton – Development and Implementation of a SNAP-Ed Educational Program within the Garden
- Jessica Vincent and Bryan Mader – Panel Session

Exploring the Intersection of Cooperative Extension and Public Health

- Joy West – Building Authentic Connections that Inspire Trust, Engage Teams, and Achieve Goals
- Joy West — Everything You Need to Know About the NEAFCS Leadership Experience. ■



NEAFCS members greatly appreciate the support from our Extension Executive Team for our involvement in professional development, presenting at conferences, and awards recognition. This year we had a record number of first-time attendees to the national conference.



4-H Professionals and Volunteers Find Their Spark

Four 4-H agents and volunteers also attended the 4-H Conference of the Southern States at Rock Eagle 4-H Center in Georgia, Sept. 28 – Oct. 1. Participants included Amanda Rychtarik, Baxter County 4-H Agent; Amanda Stark, Prairie County 4-H program assistant; Kim Harrison, White County 4-H volunteer; and Misty Watkins, White County 4-H volunteer. The women had never met before this conference despite all being involved in 4-H! The group attended hands on workshops such as Food Challenge, Leather Feathers for Suicide Awareness, DEI Training, a Curriculum Showcase, and much more. They also had a great time meeting and

networking with others from different states. These ladies are hoping for more 4-H involved people to attend next year's conference! ■



(left to right): Amanda Rychtarik, Baxter County 4-H Agent; Amanda Stark, Prairie County 4-H PA; Kim Harrison, White County 4-H Volunteer; and Misty Watkins, White County 4-H Volunteer.

National Tech Changemaker Training and Conference

Four teens from Perry, Bradley, and Jefferson County journeyed to Rock Eagle 4-H Camp in Eatonton, Georgia to participate in a National Tech Changemaker Training and Conference on Sept. 25-27. While there, the teens demonstrated their skills at teaching others about drone use, preparing resumes, and using social media to create marketing tools. Jada B., Sylvana B., Naideth P. and Elijah V. represented Arkansas 4-H on behalf of the

50+ teens spread across 20 counties in Arkansas who are providing lessons to help bridge the technical divide through education on tools to build jobs skills. The teens provide programming on Recreational Drone Licenses, Social Media, Job Searches, Resume building, and Safe Access to Internet. If you are interested in having a 4-H Tech Changemaker program in your county, please contact the Arkansas 4-H office. ■



2023-2024 Tech Changemakers from Arkansas, Bradley, Clay, Cleveland, Drew, Grant, Hot Spring, Jefferson, Lonoke, Perry, Prairie, Saline, Washington, and White County are ready to help you Bridge the Digital Divide!

Safety Online is Easy with These Four Steps

Click each link for more information.

Use Strong Passwords

Strong passwords are long, random, unique and include all four-character types (uppercase, lowercase, numbers and symbols). Password managers are a powerful tool to help you create strong passwords for each of your accounts.



Turn On MFA

You need more than a password to protect your online accounts, and enabling MFA makes you significantly less likely to get hacked. Enable MFA on all your online accounts that offer it, especially email, social media and financial accounts.

Recognize & Report Phishing

Be cautious of unsolicited messages asking for personal information. Avoid sharing sensitive information or credentials with unknown sources. Report phishing attempts and delete the message.

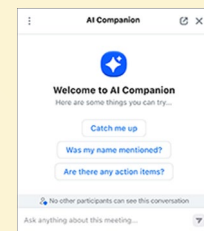
Update Software

Ensuring your software is up-to-date is the best way to make sure

you have the latest security patches and updates on your devices. Regularly check for updates if automatic updates are not available.

Zoom Pro Tip Meet the Zoom AI Companion

If you have a licensed Zoom account, you now have access to the Zoom AI Companion. The AI Companion can assist you across the platform with features such as Meeting Summaries, Team Chat thread summaries, and Team Chat message composing. For more information on any of these new AI Companion features, check out Zoom's [Getting Started with Zoom AI Companion Features support page](#).



Hacks from Hump Day

- [Excel Navigation Pane](#)
- [Getting Started with Microsoft Lists](#)
- [Experience the New OneDrive: Fast, Organized, and Personalized](#)
- [Using Meeting Summary with AI Companion](#)
- [Getting Started with Zoom AI Companion features.](#) ■



2023 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

Have you missed any past Tech Tuesday webinars or want to join future webinars? Check out the recordings and other resources on the [Tech Tuesday Blog page](#). More Tech Tuesday topics coming soon! Did you miss September's [Faculty Information System](#) and [Your Faculty Service Report](#) Tech Tuesday? Check out the recording and resources.



A BIG Thank You to the 94 people who completed the Staff Training Needs Assessment Survey and provided a record 83 theme ideas for the 2024 Support Staff Conference. Join us for the FUN Learning Event (Fantastic-Unbelievable-Networking) opportunity on March 27-28, 2024, at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center.

Save the Date!

Support Staff Conference

Wednesday/Thursday, March 27-28, 2024

The Vines Center



EDA University Center Program Award Winner

UADA's Community, Professional, & Economic Development (CPED) Unit has been awarded a five-year grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) totaling \$650,000 to establish and operate an EDA-designated University Center. The award was one of 23 selected across 14 states for the 2023 University Center Economic Development Program Competition that challenges institutions to leverage their assets, promote innovation, and strengthen regional economies.

The Center for Rural Resilience and Workforce Development will serve the states with a particular focus on rural marginalized populations including the Hispanic and Marshallese communities. In addition, the Center will work with Heartland Forward to develop workforce data tools and provide training and assistance to county

agents interested in developing or expanding their community and economic development resources. This will be done in partnership with the eight EDA-funded Planning and Development Districts (PDDs) while drawing on the expertise from the CPED team.

The Center's team includes director and principal investigator Dr. Hunter P. Goodman and Brandon L. Mathews, program associate - economic development. Work began Oct. 1. To learn more about the center, contact hgoodman@uada.edu or bmathews@uada.edu. ■



Brandon L. Mathews



Hunter P. Goodman

Brady EHC Club Endows 4-H Scholarship

The Brady Extension Homemakers Club in Little Rock made the best of a bittersweet situation. With just six members remaining in their century-old club, they decided to disband — but not without two more acts of service.

They sold their property at 201 S. Rodney Parham Road in Little Rock to a Little Rock congregation whose church was destroyed in a tornado. Then they donated \$281,800 to Arkansas 4-H to endow a scholarship for youth.

"We have just six remaining members, and we didn't have the wherewithal to continue with maintenance and upkeep," Brady Extension Homemakers Club trustee Barbara Penney said. "We decided to sell our property and give the proceeds to a nonprofit. It was a hard and tearful decision, but we're proud to say that we honor those who came before us by creating an endowment for the Arkansas 4-H Foundation." The Apostolic Sanctuary of Little Rock

purchased the 1,800-square-foot building. "It's not every day we get an endowment, and certainly not one this size," said John Thomas, managing director of the Arkansas 4-H Foundation. "This will fund college scholarships, trips to National 4-H Congress for youth and provide some funds to help out 4-H state officers do their work." ■



Members of the Brady EHC Club present a check Sept. 25, to Arkansas 4-H Foundation to create an endowed scholarship.

Benefits Corner

Changes made to your benefits in 2023:

Access Perks. In August, the Access Perks employee discount program was introduced. Access Perks gives you access to the largest discount network in the country and can save you up to 50% on your everyday expenses such as groceries, traveling, electronics and more. Information about this benefit is available on the Employee Discounts page under Work-Life at uasys.edu/benefits.

Talkspace. A new mental health benefit, Talkspace, which offers 24/7 access to licensed therapists was introduced in August. Communicate through private messaging (via text or voice) or schedule a live video session, whichever best suits your needs. To learn more about this benefit as well as UAMS HealthNow and other in-network providers who offer telehealth access, visit the Telehealth Services page under Health & Wellness at uasys.edu/benefits. ■

Coleman Creek Cleanup



Thanks to the members of the cleanup crew. Taken at the end of the Oct. 26 Coleman Creek cleanup by extension faculty, staff and volunteers. Several members of the volunteer corps were not able to make the photo.

Ouachita County EHC

Shares Sweet Treats with Essential Workers

As a community service this year, Maul-Friendly Neighbors Extension Homemakers Club put their baking skills to good use. The members selected a different office or agency of essential workers each quarter to receive a special delivery of sweet treats as appreciation for their hard work. So far, the club has made deliveries to the Camden Fire Department, Ouachita County Sheriff's Office, and the Camden Police Department. All recipients expressed their gratitude for the goodies! As a separate project, the members also provided baked goods for the local Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program event. Maul-Friendly Neighbors EHC Club meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Ouachita County

Cooperative Extension Service. More special deliveries are in the works! ■



EHC Members presenting the baked goods to be delivered to CASA:
 Standing: Sylvia Wray (Club President); Leota Harvey (Council President); Addie Edwards; Elena Willis; Mary Strickland; Tami Reddin; Mary Ann Martin
 Seated: Linda Bohannon; Susan Bensberg Not Pictured: Bette Williams

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Program Assistant Grant MSA23	32,583	Amanda L McWhirt	University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc.
2021 Arkansas Extension Implementation Project - Amend #2	180,000	Glenn Studebaker	National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)
Urban Stormwater Education Program 2024	228,000	Katie Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
Emerald Village 24	500	Laura Hendrix	Emerald Village at Jonesboro
APEX Accelerator FY24 - Amendment #2	1,527	Melanie Berman	US Department of Defense (DOD)
Southern Risk Management Education Center 2023-2026	2,121,750	Ron L. Rainey	National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)
The Southern Plant Diagnostic Network	29,500	Sherrie Smith	University of Florida
UW Hempstead County 4-H Program Support 24	5,000	Terrie James	United Way of Hempstead County
Service Order 7 USA-23-031 TVE29/Clomazone Positioning for Weed Control 23 - 24	7,000	Tom Barber	FMC Corporation
Service Order 8 USA-23-065 TVE29/Clomazone Positioning for Weed Control 23 - 24	5,000	Tom Barber	FMC Corporation
Development & Expansion of Disease Management Decision-Making Tools Across Multiple Soybean Regions 23	15,000	Travis Faske	University of Kentucky Research Foundation
TOTAL AWARDS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023: 2,625,860			

Personnel Changes



Welcome Aboard:

Christopher Lee – Chief Information Officer - Information Technology, Little Rock

Arin Shaffer – County Extension Agent - Agriculture/Horticulture, Garland County

Violet Mefford – 4-H Program Assistant, Pope County

Chimere W. Hampton – Navigator Project Specialist, Agriculture Economics and Agriculture Business, Little Rock

Juan Miguel Lopez – EFNEP Program Assistant, Washington County

Quinn Muller – Maintenance Assistant, Facilities Management, Little Rock

A'ndrea Griffin – Instructional Designer - Human Resources, Little Rock

Farewell to:

Maya Powell – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Sciences, Woodruff County

Juanita Sherman – Grants Officer - Sponsored Programs, Little Rock

Cory Tyler – County Extension Agent, Agriculture, Fulton County

Gracie Wilson – Administrative Specialist III, Union County

Andrew Murchison Sayger – County Extension Agent, Agriculture, Prairie County

D.J. Moody – Institutional Services Assistant, 4-H Youth Development, 4-H Vines Center