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BLUE LETTER

December 2016

No. 3776



Looking back on 2016

December is a cold month, and everybody that will listen to me whine long enough knows that I do not like the cold. But it is also a month that represents appreciative reflection of a year well-lived and some nervous anticipation of the year ahead. It is a month to recharge batteries and spend time with family and friends and, of course, catch up on paperwork. So, even though I do not personally like cold months, December is OK.

One great thing about this December was that we hosted our annual faculty and staff conference for the Cooperative Extension Service on the 5th. This day is a chance for all of us to learn from each other and look back as well as look ahead.

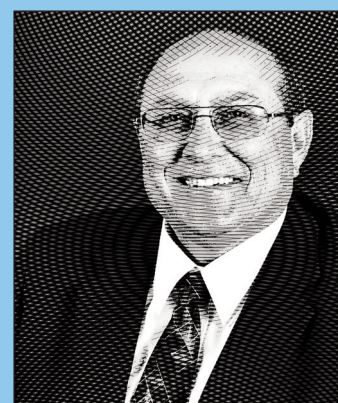
Looking back, we honor those who retired during the past 12 months and we say “job well done” and hope they are moving forward into a new and rewarding time. My father-in-law hated the idea of retirement, but once it happened he found that all the things he had “put off” during 50 years of work were still there – waiting – and I think he was busier and had more fun in many ways after retirement than before. If you know a Division retiree, please thank and visit them – they have much to share.

We also looked back that day to recognize those among us who merit special recognition for effort “above and beyond.” These colleagues represent all of us who strive to be the absolute best at what they do and to provide the gold standard of service for stakeholders. They are listed in this Blue Letter, and I cannot say enough thanks to them, and to you, for every day that you get up and work your heart out for the Division of Agriculture and the people of Arkansas.

While all of the awardees are special and certainly deserving of all accolades, I wish to repeat my thanks and recognition of Janet Carson. I have known Janet for many years, and she truly represents the highest ideals of our profession. I would put her up against any professional, anywhere, anytime. Janet, you are truly the best, and we thank you again.

We honor these colleagues in a special way but please remember that I honor all of you that work every day for our great cause, that do the right thing, that walk the road less easy. These awardees represent our ideals and a commitment to

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Extension recognizes achievement with 2016 Excellence Awards

Faculty and staff with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service met in Little Rock Dec. 5 to honor their own, recognizing standout achievements during the 2016 Excellence Awards.

The annual conference began with a presentation from Rick Cartwright, interim associate vice president for Agriculture. Cartwright spoke to the gathering of approximately 100 Cooperative Extension Service personnel from around the state, addressing the future direction of the Cooperative Extension Service, as well as the many challenges facing the organization today.

“The 21st Century Cooperative Extension Service and the Division of Agriculture face many complex challenges,” Cartwright said. “But we have exceptional employees, programs and advanced technology to better address them. With additional and appropriate resources, the best days for Extension and the Division are ahead, not in the past. Those best days are exemplified by the employees being recognized today.”

Both individuals and teams were honored with Excellence Awards in the ceremony that followed.

Janet Carson, extension horticulture specialist for the Division of Agriculture, was named 2016 Employee of the Year. Cartwright noted that the Employee of the Year award represents the “gold standard” for performance, going “above and beyond all expectations,” he said. “Janet Carson is an exceptional representative of the Division of Agriculture

by any measurement,” Cartwright said. “She is an extremely gifted professional, demonstrating the highest levels of competence, dedication and impact to benefit our stakeholders.”

Other award honorees include:

- **Steven Hefner**, website software developer: Early Career Classified
- **JoAnn Vann**, Clark County Cooperative Extension Service agent: Early Career County Agent
- **Terry Spurlock**, plant pathologist: Early Career Faculty
- **Kristin Higgins**, public policy program associate, Early Career Non-Classified
- **Diane Clement, Nora Terry and Les Walz**, Cleveland County: County Team
- **Diane Clement, Mark Peterson and Les Walz**, Issue Team Award for Positioning a Rural County for Success in the New Global Economy
- **Creenna Bocksnick, Shannon Caldwell, Eric DeVries, Darlene Horne, Taylor Knox, Casey Marshall, Luke Nipper, Chris Russell and Mike Simmons**, 4-H Center Programs: Unit Team Award

“All of our honorees represent the best qualities of the Cooperative Extension Service and the Division of Agriculture,” Cartwright said. “They were honored for their performance, creativity, responsiveness, dedication and program impact. These are truly outstanding individuals and teams that we are proud to call vital members of the Division family.” ■



Left to right: Dr. Cartwright with Cleveland County personnel Nora Terry, Diane Clement and Les Walz.



Left to right, Dr. Cartwright with Issue Team Award winners Dr. Mark Peterson, Diane Clement and Les Walz.



Left to right: Dr. Cartwright with 4-H Center Programs team, winner of the Unit Team Award. From left to right, front row: Chris Russell, Darlene Horne, Creenna Bocksnick, Shannon Caldwell and Eric DeVries; back row, Mike Simmons, Taylor Knox, Casey Marshall and Luke Nipper.



Dr. Cartwright with Janet Carson, Employee of the Year.



Dr. Cartwright with Steve Hefner, Early Career Classified.



Dr. Cartwright with JoAnn Vann, Early Career County Agent.



Dr. Cartwright with Terry Spurlock, Early Career Faculty.



Dr. Cartwright with Kristin Higgins, Early Career Non-Classified.

Lafayette County farm family filmed as part of a documentary on pigs

In October, Rebecca McPeake, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture professor of wildlife, contacted Amanda Greer, Lafayette County staff chair, concerning a film producer who was looking for willing and interesting subjects to feature in a documentary. After making arrangements within the county, Greer met with Rachel Lob-Levyt, a British documentary producer from independent production company Ronachan Films, who was working with documentary maker Angus Macqueen to produce a feature length documentary on the subject of pigs. They made plans to interview some producers who might fit their story. The very first farmer was a hit!

Jeremy Kitchens, who was recently a runner-up in the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers, first showed off one of his pastures with hog damage and discussed feral hogs, control and cost of damage to agriculture. The group then continued to his hog barn where the family raises meat hogs. A lengthy discussion was held about both feral and domestic hogs and feral hog control.

After leaving the Kitchens Farm, Greer and Lob-Levyt visited in other parts of the county, speaking with David Dillard and Roddy Maxwell.

Ronachan films chose the Jeremy and Tracie Kitchens family as their subject matter. Rachel returned Nov. 20 to film several days of the Kitchens family activities at the farm, during the family Thanksgiving holiday and during a hog hunt. The footage will be used as a 15-minute segment regarding feral hogs in Arkansas. ■

New design, more online info key to ballot issue education success in 2016

When 2016 began, it appeared Arkansans would have the responsibility of deciding the most ballot issues since 1968. To put our nonpartisan ballot information into the hands of more citizens, we redesigned our education materials and increased the content posted online.

Our efforts and those of 75 county offices appear to have paid off. We increased voters' awareness, and evaluations show voters believed they had the information they needed to make decisions.

The numbers from this year's ballot program are:

- 23,000 Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guides distributed
- 11,717 voter guide pdfs downloaded
- 13,750 individual ballot issue fact sheets downloaded
- 48,732 views of our eight YouTube videos summarizing the issues
- 303,621 views of our ballot website

These numbers serve as our benchmark for future election years.

We also received phone calls and emails from voters who used our materials with statements such as:

“Thank you so much for preparing the voter guide for the ballot issues that Arkansans will vote for this election. With so many sources pumping out information and most of them with very little history to verify, I'm glad that there's an organization like yours. Thank you for presenting all relevant info for and against these ballot measures.” ■

Perry County Fall and Winter Forage Field Day



On Dec. 8, Perry County area cattle producers braved 28-degree weather conditions to learn time and cost saving production practices. The producers were given an overview of the on-farm 300 Days of Grazing project including site selection, preparation costs, forages, seeding rates and time management by County Agent Jesse Bocksnick. Dr. John Jennings followed up with variety selection, grazing management and nutrition, while fielding several questions from producers regarding these topics.

The program then shifted to fencing options. Kenny Simon, program associate - forages, explained how to properly train cattle to electric fence. He then discussed the differences in fencing systems while showcasing the new technologies being utilized in the Perry County demonstration, such as poly wires and new fence post features and low impedance energizers and their benefits.

The group then traveled to the Perry County Fairgrounds. Bocksnick gave an overview of the Solar Feeder Time and Cost Efficiency Demo that included talking about how the feeder operated and calibration but focused on the time savings that the producers incurred and how that related to cost savings. The day ended with lunch as the attendees discussed how they could implement these new practices. ■

Hot Spring County 4-H Veterinary Science Club learns about radiology

The Hot Spring County 4-H Veterinary Science Club welcomed Dr. Kelly Ross, owner Green Oaks Equine Veterinary Service in Hot Spring County, to our last club meeting to teach our 4-H'ers about radiology. With her digital X-ray machine, the 4-H'ers were able to not only learn safety procedures, different types of diagnostic imaging and how to take the X-rays. They were also able to take equine and canine X-rays during the meeting and examine them for issues. Dr. Ross was able to show the 4-H'ers what types of injuries to look for compared to healthy images.

By having veterinarians come to our club meetings, 4-H'ers gain more knowledge firsthand. Dr. Ross is one of five practicing veterinarians who help with our program regularly. The Hot Spring County 4-H Veterinary Science Club has 19 members in the curriculum program. We have also taken several field trips, including the Little Rock Zoo Hospital and Red River Equine Hospital in Shreveport, Louisiana. ■



Dr. Kelly Ross uses a digital X-ray machine to examine a horses' leg while 4-H'ers observe.

Chi Epsilon Sigma conducts food drive

Chi Epsilon Sigma hosted a food drive at the Little Rock State Office and collected more than 200 pounds of nonperishable food items, which were delivered to the Arkansas Rice Depot-Food Bank located in southwest Little Rock. Chi Epsilon Sigma is the Beta Chapter of the National Extension Support staff fraternity. Any Extension support staff member (50 percent or more) is eligible for membership. Many thanks to Kristen Kiefer (a member of LRSO Chi Epsilon Sigma) who helped to spearhead the project and to all Extension employees who contributed to this cause and helped to make it a great success. ■

Authur Smith, Jr.
LRSO, District
Director for Chi
Epsilon Sigma,
with food drive
contributions.



Saline County 4-H recognizes veterans



Elder Karl Barnes thanks 4-H members for the gift of the Quilts of Valor to Alderman Cunningham and him.

Saline County 4-H members and county staff recognized veterans recently and awarded Quilts of Valor. FCS county agent Kris Boulton conducted 4-H day camps, with the assistance of 4-H agent Stephany Rogers, where two quilts were constructed then displayed at the Saline County Fair. The quilts received Best of Show recognition prior to being awarded to local veterans.

The ceremony conducted by 4-H members recognized all veterans but focused special attention on residents of the Ralph Bunch community. The observance began with 4-H members along with county agent - staff chair and veteran Ron Matlock placing American flags on veterans' graves at Woodlawn Cemetery as a sign of appreciation for those who gave so much in service to our country, which allowed the privilege to gather and express gratitude to our living veterans.

Benton alderman Charles Cunningham and Elder Karl Barnes, pastor of Elect Temple of God in Christ, were singled out for special honors in the ceremony to receive registered Quilts of Valor. A reception followed with refreshments provided by the 4-H Foundation and Dabblers Extension Homemakers Club.

The veterans recognition was a collaboration among the Ralph Bunch Neighborhood Association, Dabblers Extension Homemakers, Saline County 4-H Foundation and county staff. ■



County agent - staff chair and veteran Ron Matlock reflects on the sacrifice of veterans at Woodlawn Cemetery with 4-H members while placing American flags on veterans' grave sites.

Local 4-H members grow as citizens and leaders

With the help of Arkansas Farm Bureau and UACES Development associate, Jackson Alexander, Lonoke and Prairie County 4-H members discovered what it means to be good citizens. 4-H'ers learned about the legislative process, experienced what it's like to participate in a federal election, developed their own definition of citizenship, and participated in candid discussions about politics, policy, and public influence. Arkansas Farm Bureau guided the 4-H'ers through the Congressional Insight simulation activity, where teens divided into two teams, and each team was assigned a freshman congressman or congresswoman in the U.S. House of Representatives. Teens learned the importance of setting goals, listening to staff members, staying in touch with their constituencies, planning a budget, working with the media, and what affects the legislative decisions made by our lawmakers. At the end of the simulation, each team ran for re-election with one team winning their race and the other losing by a small margin. Through the Common Measures evaluation at the end of the program, 91% of participants indicated they are interested in others' opinions about public issues affecting their community, state, and world, and when they hear about an issue, they try to ensure they are getting both sides of the story. Eight of the teens even stated they would be interested in working in a government- or public service-related career. ■



Pictured left to right: Jackson Alexander, LRSO; Mallory Perkins, Aleigha Smith, Carlee Summerford, Mark Butler, Mary Beth Walker, Clayton Stark, Sara Beth Toll, Angela Hoover, Austin Stagner, Caleb Swears, Joey Summerford, Gavin Walker

Looking back (cont.)

being the best and that should be inside all of you. As I have noted, the Division of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension Service are not just organizations or "things" but a group of people working towards a common goal to make the lives of our stakeholders better through science-based solutions. We are a "people" business and we invest in people first and foremost, and we clearly want our people to be the best at what they do. You have my sincere thanks for a year well done.

Have a wonderful holiday season.

— Rick Cartwright

Exhibitors demonstrate livestock knowledge at State Fair skillathons

Chelsey Ahrens, assistant professor in animal science, conducted the Sheep, Goat and Swine Skillathons during the Arkansas State Fair to test exhibitors' knowledge. Exhibitors are 4-H or FFA members and were divided into junior or senior age divisions for each skillathon. In each division, participants were required to complete a quiz, identify breeds, identify feeds, identify animal body parts, identify retail or wholesale meat cuts and identify equipment. The top three winners received a ribbon and prize money, and the winners received belt buckles.

Sheep Skillathon Winners

Juniors:

- 1st – Thane Stidham, Crawford County 4-H
- 2nd – Caylee Turner, Little River County 4-H
- 3rd – Evan Stacy, Crawford County 4-H

Seniors:

- 1st – Dustin Kendrick, Boone County 4-H
- 2nd – Abby Taylor, Cossatot River FFA
- 3rd – Courtney Bemis, Beebe FFA

Beef Skillathon Winners

Juniors:

- 1st – Jaden Tweedy, Randolph County 4-H
- 2nd – Reid Wingert, White County 4-H
- 3rd – Jeb Tweedy, Randolph County 4-H

Seniors:

- 1st – Mesa Kutz, Washington County 4-H
- 2nd – Col Burden, Washington County 4-H
- 3rd – Hailey Hilfiker, Clay County 4-H

Goat Skillathon Winners

Juniors:

- 1st – Savannah Jackson, Howard County 4-H
- 2nd – Caylee Turner, Little River County 4-H
- 3rd – Sunni Deb Weaver, Drew County 4-H

Seniors:

- 1st – Abby Taylor, Cossatot River FFA
- 2nd – Aubrey Hargett, Smackover FFA
- 3rd – Morganne Savage, Boone County 4-H

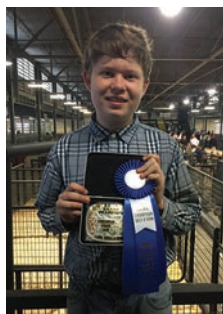
Swine Skillathon Winners

Juniors:

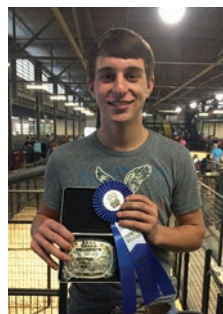
- 1st – Drake Price, Franklin County 4-H
- 2nd – Rayne Cranford, Columbia County 4-H
- 3rd – Lyndon Youngblood, Little River County 4-H

Seniors:

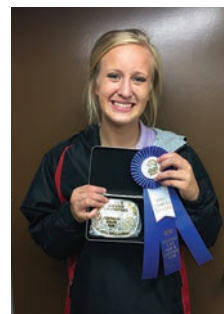
- 1st – McKayla Howard, Beebe FFA
- 2nd – Abby Taylor, Cossatot River FFA
- 3rd – Will Bryles, Beebe FFA ■



Sheep Skillathon: left, Junior winner Thane Stidham, Crawford County 4-H; right, Senior winner Dustin Kendrick, Boone County 4-H.



Beef Skillathon: left, Junior winner Jaden Tweedy, Randolph County 4-H; right, Senior winner Mesa Kutz, Washington County 4-H.



Goat Skillathon: left, Junior winner Savannah Jackson, Howard County 4-H; right, Senior winner Abby Taylor, Cossatot River FFA.



Swine Skillathon: left, Junior winner Drake Price, Franklin County 4-H; right, Senior winner McKayla Howard, Beebe FFA.



BENEFITS CORNER

What can you do with unused, accrued leave? Donate it!

Annual leave must be earned before it is taken with approval from the appropriate supervisor. Annual leave is cumulative; however, no employee may have an accumulation in excess of 240 hours (30 days) on Dec. 31 of each year. During the calendar year, accrued leave may exceed 30 days, but those days in excess of 30 will be lost if not used before Dec. 31 of each year.

Sick leave must be earned before it is taken and may be taken for your own illness or injury; the illness, injury or death of the employee's immediate family member; medical, dental or optical treatment for the employee or an immediate family member. Sick leave is cumulative up to a total maximum of 960 hours (120 days).

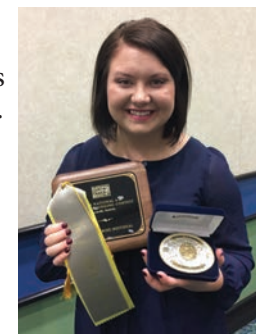
Immediate family member means your mother, father, sister, brother, husband, wife, child, grandchild, grandparents, in-laws or any individual who has acted as your parent or guardian.

Donations can be made to the Catastrophic Leave Bank through Dec. 31 in one-hour increments. You must maintain 80 hours of combined annual and sick leave to donate.

To donate, send a completed form EBEN-103 to Payroll/Financial Services.

Arkansas 4-H Livestock Judging Team competes at national contest in Louisville

The state winning Arkansas 4-H Livestock Judging team from Washington County competed at the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky, on Nov. 15. At the contest, they judged four classes of cattle, three classes of hogs, three classes of sheep and one class of goats. They also presented four sets of oral reasons and completed three questions classes. As a team, they placed 6th in sheep/goats, 9th in swine and 8th overall. The top 20 individuals in the contest were named All-Americans. Dixie Miller earned this honor by winning 18th overall. She also was 10th high individual in swine. This year, 32 teams competed in the National 4-H Livestock Judging contest. Members of the Washington County team included Dixie Miller, Corrine Burrus, Mesa Kutz and Sagely Burnett. ■



Dixie Miller was named an All-American at the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky.



The Arkansas 4-H Livestock Judging team from Washington County consisted of Coach Bryan Kutz, Mesa Kutz, Corrine Burrus, Dixie Miller, Sagely Burnett and Coach Clayton Sallee.

Arkansas Farm to School Health Impact Assessment



vegetable consumption and child health in Arkansas requires a comprehensive, structured evaluation process.

HIA is a rigorous process for assessing the health impacts of specific proposals, projects and plans like F2S and child health programs. The project is working to develop capacity for the HIA process by establishing a core of expertise from state agencies including the Departments of Education, Health, and Agriculture and from the Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service expertise (CED, FCS and ANR). Representatives from other sectors and nonprofit organizations, such as Heifer International and the Arkansas Minority Health Commission, serve as advisors. This expertise informs the planning process of supporting Farm to School capacity in Arkansas. ■

CED's Amanda Philyaw Perez is serving on the Arkansas Farm to School (F2S) Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Board. The goal of this project is to use the HIA process to evaluate the potential impact on childhood obesity rates and other nutrition-related health impacts of establishing a state Farm to School Coordinator position in Arkansas.

Decision-making regarding the efficacy of F2S programs for impacting children's fruit and

Drain Smart Pine Bluff



Local artists participate in the Cooperative Extension Service Urban Storm Water Education Program. Seen in photos above Mrs. Virginia Hymes, Pine Bluff High School art teacher, admires work of student winners Justin Thomasson and Ashia Shelton. The drains are located at 10th and State and 11th and State. The idea behind the art is to make people stop and think about where stormwater flows after it enters a storm drain. Many different contaminants can flow off roadways and hard surfaces into the water supply.

Arkansas State Fair Livestock Sale of Champions



Andrew Ellis (right) of Greene County with his Grand Champion Market Broiler



Brandi Frachiseur of Sevier County with her Grand Champion Market Steer



Laney Osbon (center) of Washington County with her Grand Champion Market Hog



Brittney Beck, Faulkner County, with her Grand Champion Meat Pen

The Arkansas State Fair Livestock Sale of Champions was held on Friday, Oct. 21 in Barton Coliseum in Little Rock. Arkansas' junior livestock exhibitors received scholarship awards from the individual or organization bidding the highest amount for their grand champion or reserve grand champion livestock. The scholarships go to:

Grand Champion Pen of Broilers – Andrew Ellis of Greene County 4-H – \$6,500 – Poultry Federation

Reserve Champion Pen of Broilers – Kelsey Rohr of Mountain Home FFA in Baxter County – \$3,700 – Arkansas Farm Bureau

Grand Champion Steer – Brandi Frachiseur of DeQueen FFA in Sevier County – \$19,000 – Arkansas Farm Bureau

Reserve Grand Champion Steer – Kendel Sisco of Western Grove FFA in Newton County – \$13,000 – Arkansas Cattlemen's Association

Grand Champion Market Hog – Laney Osbon of Washington County 4-H – \$10,500 – Steve Cobb Family and Blue Ribbon Campaign



Travis Mos of Polk County with his Grand Champion Market Lamb

Reserve Grand Champion Market Hog – Will Exum of Greene County 4-H – \$4,500 – University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, Pulaski County Farm Bureau and Blue Ribbon Campaign

Grand Champion Market Lamb – Travis Mos of Mena FFA in Polk County – \$5,500 – Arkansas Farm Bureau

Reserve Grand Champion Market Lamb – Riley Pearce of Faulkner County 4-H – \$4,000 – Publishing Concepts, Inc.

Grand Champion Market Goat – Kaylie Stone of Gurdon FFA in Clark County – \$5,000 – Blue Ribbon Campaign

Reserve Grand Champion Market Goat – Jack Hoyle of Columbia County 4-H – \$4,150 – Arkansas Electric Cooperatives

Grand Champion Meat Pen of Rabbits – Brittney Beck of Faulkner County 4-H – \$3,600 – Arkansas Farm Bureau Insurance

Grand Champion Single Fryer Rabbit – Brittney Beck of Faulkner County 4-H – \$2,500 – Deggeller Attractions ■



Kaylie Stone of Clark County with her Grand Champion Market Goat



Brittney Beck of Faulkner County with her Grand Champion Single Fryer

CED's APAC team hosts big event for small (and large) businesses

Landing a government contract is stressful. Having knowledge of the company and position and being able to talk to people at the company might help alleviate anxiety of the unknown. Participants had such an opportunity in December at the 2016 Arkansas Regional Industry Days.

The Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center, which is in the Community and Economic Development Unit, partnered with the U.S. Corps of Engineers to host the industry forum. More than 130 attendees from small and large businesses learned about upcoming opportunities from government agencies such as the Veterans Administration, U.S. Forest Service and many others. They were also able to briefly meet with many agencies one-on-one during the Dec. 6 and 7 event at the University of Arkansas System Cooperative Extension Service headquarters.

APAC program associates Mary Love and Max Franks advised and provided training during the forum. Before the event was over, APAC staff fielded telephone calls from local businesses requesting help.

"As part of the CES Community and Economic Development team, our goal is to support Arkansas businesses and help them grow through government contracting," Franks said. "We hope this event makes them aware of bid opportunities and that they win contracts." ■



More than 130 people met in the Little Rock state office auditorium to learn about upcoming opportunities for landing contracts from government agencies.

Boone County 4-H members participate in 'Build Your Future'



Boone County 4-H members tour North Arkansas Regional Medical Center. 4-H members learned about career opportunities in the medical services field.

Boone County 4-H members participated in 'Build Your Future' as part of a summer enrichment program. The activity gave them the opportunity to explore several career fields, improve interview skills and learn what it takes to start your own business.

The Build Your Future: Choices, Connections, Careers National 4-H curriculum was utilized to help 4-H members identify life skills and technical skills gained from participating in 4-H activities and project work. 4-H members toured several area businesses and were able to ask questions ranging from education needed, the typical work day, salary level, and more. Area businesses assisting with tours included Harrison Animal Clinic, North Arkansas Regional Medical Center, Neighbor's Mill and North Arkansas College. The locations were chosen based on the interest of 4-H members. 4-H members also participated in hands-on sessions that focused on interview skills, appropriate dress, proper handshakes and greeting the public. The day was a huge success, and 4-H'ers have requested another session.

According to program evaluations:

- 100% of participants increased their knowledge of the Veterinarian/Veterinarian Tech and Medical Science career fields.
 - 84% were able to explain the difference between a life skill and technical skill needed to be successful in the workforce.
 - 84% were able to identify their personal life skills and technical skills that needed to be developed or improved to meet workforce needs.
 - 100% increased their knowledge of how to prepare for interviews including proper dress, questions and professional behavior.
 - 100% identified the importance of teamwork in all professional fields.
- The following are comments from 4-H members:
- "No matter where you work, teamwork is important."
 "It is important to be a professional as possible at all times."
 "I feel more confident about job interviews and proper dress." ■



Harrison Animal Clinic veterinarian Heath Jones and assistant Kelley Hudspeth check a pup as Boone County 4-H'ers Rebecca Everett and Liza Williams observe.

What's new in publications? Find out at:
<http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx>

Livestock Skillathon Team competes at national contest in Louisville

The state winning Arkansas 4-H Livestock Skillathon team from Franklin County competed at the National 4-H Livestock Skillathon Contest in Louisville, Kentucky, on Nov. 14. Team members included Cole Crumpacker, Bailey Durning, Rebecca Wheelless and Gabby Sisk.

In the individual portion of the contest, they identified equipment, retail meat cuts and livestock breeds. They also participated in a hay judging class, wool judging class, individual quality assurance exercise and a 30-question quiz. The team portion of the contest consisted of meat and carcass evaluation, performance and marketing, livestock feeding, animal breeding scenario and a team quality assurance exercise. ■



Pictured left to right: Bailey Durning, Gabby Sisk, Rebecca Wheelless and Cole Crumpacker.

Christmas brings hope to Independence County

Christmas Brings Hope is a charitable organization that has been delivering boxes to an average of 1,000 needy families in Independence County since 1992.

More than \$50,000 of food must be donated to fill the boxes. This is accomplished partly by the donations from individual households but also by businesses and organizations that support the project financially.

The work goes on year-round behind the scenes, but the first week in December is when the hard work begins. It takes hundreds of people to accomplish the tasks necessary to be successful in feeding all of the families in need.

Starting this year, Independence County 4-H is partnering with Christmas Brings Hope to achieve this yearly mission. 4-H clubs and school clubs from all around the county come to construct boxes, sort food and distribute and organize food into boxes to be delivered. Once the boxes are full of food, they are delivered to homes by community fire departments. Included in the boxes are a whole chicken, a turkey breast, a loaf of bread, canned goods and potatoes, as well as a variety of soups and other types of foods. It is our hope that this project will provide for many people who would, for some reason, not have a Christmas dinner. ■



From left: Sarah Barber, Samuel Duneheew, Chase Reinhart, Michael Duneheew and Payton Reinhart pose for a picture after distributing more than 2,000 canned goods into boxes.

Agent horticulture training a success in Malvern



The tomato horticulture training conducted on Sept. 12 by new horticulture specialists Dr. Jackie Lee and Dr. Amanda McWhirt in conjunction with Hot Spring county Extension agent Rachel Bearden was attended by about 25 agents and several Arkansas Department of Corrections staff members.

The first part of the training involved talks on best management practices for fall tomato production, how to identify nutrient disorders or diseases and a presentation on the history of tomato production in Bradley County by staff chair John Gavin.

The second part of the training centered on a field demonstration of best management practices for fall tomato production that was conducted at the Ouachita River Correctional facility in Malvern. The demonstration compared six different varieties of tomatoes that were transplanted into either plastic mulch, hay mulch or bare-ground rows. Different combinations of pre-plant herbicides were also compared.

Following the demonstration and training the Arkansas Department of Corrections has requested future collaborations with horticulture specialists and CES agents.

Yell For Toys

Yell County 4-H members from the Little Johns' 4-H Club spent all day Saturday, Dec. 3, taking in donated money and toys for the Yell for Toys campaign,

Yell County version of Toys for Tots. Donations added up to \$350.81. These much needed funds and toys will provide special gifts to area children in need. Nine 4-H members donated their time at the local grocery store in Danville, AR to make these special gifts possible.

Becky Shewmake, club leader, said, "It is important for our 4-Hers to learn about giving time to help the community and to think about helping others." ■



Left to right, Lawson Wilkins, Santa, Doug Woods and Ethan Ellis.

Mississippi County youth develop leadership skills

The Mississippi Youth Leadership Development (YLD) program is a countywide program designed to help high school juniors develop basic leadership and related "soft" skills valuable for personal, career, and academic growth and development.



Mississippi County Youth Leadership toured the State Capitol on Dec. 5 as part of a two-day leadership experience. Representative Monte Hodges spoke with the group about the importance being a leader in your community. Pictured from left: Tucker Thompson, Brooke Childs, Reggie Amerson, Ashley Wright, Braydon Tillman, Blyth Booker, Jordan McClure, Shelby Herron, Representative Monte Hodges, Cody Harlow, Latijah Starr, Destiny Haymon, Neal Benson, Pinal Patel, Amy Guo and Khalil Allen.

Each month youth meet for a three hour session covering a multitude of topics such as conflict resolution, etiquette and community service-learning. During this time, youth discover how to set realistic goals, develop their communication skills, and how to effectively work as a team.

On Dec. 6, the Mississippi and Clay counties' YLD programs met at the 4-H Center to jointly complete Yoga for Kids training before tackling the challenging ExCEL program. In addition to networking with youth from another county, participants completed hands on problems and obstacles that required them to use leadership and teamwork in order to reach the end goal. Youth also tackled the high ropes course which encourages creative problem solving, team trust, communication, and individual responsibility.

To gain practical, hands-on leadership experience, youth from both counties will complete a Yoga for Kids service-learning project in their school during the spring semester. ■

Union County Homemakers make gifts for nursing home residents

The Union County Newell Extension Homemakers Club met and constructed clothing articles for residents of Grace Point Nursing Home in El Dorado for holiday gifts. Over five hours, the six members created three walker caddies, seven adult bibs, 19 lap robes and 18 pillows. They are proud "Volunteers for Holiday Cheer." ■



Newell Extension Homemakers Club members, left to right, seated: Janice Couch and Pat Smith; back row: Becky Riggs, Julia Murray, Sarah Cameron and Terri Simpson.

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Tellisha Brown

Program Technician - Health, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective October 17, 2016.

Polly Greenbaum

Accountant, Credit Union, effective November 1, 2016.

Blanca Hernandez

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Pulaski County, effective October 17, 2016.

Phil Horton

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Arkansas County - DeWitt, effective October 17, 2016.

Esmeralda Pena

Program Assistant - EFNEP, Pulaski County, effective October 17, 2016.

Extension says goodbye to:

Bobby Hall

Director of LeadAR, Community and Economic Development, effective November 30, 2016.

Jason Osborn

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Mississippi County, effective November 15, 2016.