

# BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

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## 2013 A NEW BEGINNING

January marks the beginning of a new calendar year. It is a time to take stock of the year past and a look forward into the year ahead.

While our December and January workloads and calendars are full as we wind up one year and begin work anew in the following year, we can take time to reflect on our successes and achievements. On Dec. 10, we recognized and celebrated the outstanding work of 26 extension faculty and staff during our Extension Excellence presentations.

On Jan. 11, the Division of Agriculture honored 11 of our extension faculty and staff with John W. White and Division awards for their exceptional work.

January also represents a new start for our state's Legislature, as the regular session convenes Jan. 14. This is a time when our work, programs and successes come under the gaze of House and Senate members from our local districts and legislative committees from across the state. Dr. Cochran and I will work to represent both the Division and Extension as we interpret for them the impacts of our research and extension effort.

Thank you for all you do for our clients and for the Cooperative Extension Service.

— Tony Windham

## Rural Life Conference set for Feb. 22

The **57th annual Rural Life Conference** will be Friday, Feb. 22, at the Pine Bluff Convention Center. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. with the opening session at 8:45 a.m. The conference theme is "Climate Change and Its Effects on Water Resources in Arkansas."

Sponsored by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences, the 2013 conference will feature several theme-related workshops. It will also offer a poster session highlighting UAPB research projects and exhibits by governmental and community agencies. Researchers and agency representatives will be at their posters and exhibits during registration and during the break to answer questions.

Preregistration is requested of everyone even though the conference is free to farmers, ranchers, homemakers and retirees. Preregistration cost for professionals and agency personnel to attend is \$50; after Feb. 10, late registration will be \$75. To preregister or for more information, contact Almetris Cobbs at 870-575-8141.

The convention center is located at One Convention Center Plaza. ■



**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE**  
**RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System

University of Arkansas,  
United States Department of  
Agriculture, and County  
Governments Cooperating

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DR. TONY WINDHAM  
Associate Vice President for  
Agriculture - Extension and  
Director, Cooperative Extension Service

# Extension honors excellence among ranks

Work by agents to help bring Arkansas' reinvigorated peanut industry up to speed and a device that may provide sustainable heating for poultry barns were among the projects and individuals honored with Extension Excellence Awards.

The honors are presented annually by the Cooperative Extension Service, part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

"These awards are an opportunity to showcase the best in the broad range of work done by faculty and staff at the Cooperative Extension Service," said Tony Windham, associate vice president-agriculture-extension for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

This year's winners:

**Diversity Award** – This award goes to Walk Across Arkansas, a project that reflects diversity not only in team composition but also in clients served. Last fall, Walk Across Arkansas counted 52 teams with 355 participants statewide. Over the eight weeks of Walk Across Arkansas, participants walked an astonishing 618,000 minutes, resulting in an estimated healthcare cost savings of more than \$60,000 dollars. The winners are:

**LaVona Traywick**, associate professor - gerontology  
**Donna Rinke**, web development associate - Communications

**Wilma Lewis**, web development associate - Information Technology and

**Mary Hightower**, assistant director - Communications and Marketing



Diversity Award winners (from left,) Donna Rinke, Wilma Lewis, Mary Hightower and LaVona Traywick with Dr. Tony Windham.

**Issue Team Award** – This award recognizes exceptional achievement by a team composed of employees from across departmental and county boundaries. Issue teams are formed for a specific project or convened to address a particular issue. This year's winner is the peanut production team composed of Randolph County Staff Chair **Mike Andrews** and Lawrence County Staff Chair **Herb Ginn**. From fewer than 1,000 acres in 2010, Arkansas' peanut production has grown to 18,000 acres. Part of Andrews' and Ginn's efforts included

hosting a peanut production meeting that drew more than 150 farmers from 12 counties and an integrated pest management scouting meeting for industry personnel. Information generated from their efforts has been seen in more than 400 news articles nationwide.



Issue Team Award winners Herb Ginn and Mike Andrews with Dr. Windham.

**Unit Team** – This award goes to the **Arkansas Row Crop blog**. The Wordpress-based blog has drawn more than 126,000 page views since it began in March. It can be found at <http://arkansascrops.com>.

Team members are **Tom Barber**, extension weed scientist; **Jeremy Ross**, soybean agronomist; **Jason Kelley**, wheat and feed grains agronomist; soil scientist **Leo Espinoza**; **Bob Scott**, weed scientist (Lonoke); **Nathan Slaton**, director of the soil testing lab; area agronomist for corn, sorghum **Kevin Lawson**; soybean and wheat verification coordinators **Chris Grimes** (based at Keiser) and **Steve Kelley** (based at Monticello); cotton verification coordinator **Blake McClelland**; rice verification coordinator **Ralph Mazzanti** (based at Stuttgart); extension entomologists **Gus Lorenz** (based at Lonoke) and **Glenn Studebaker** (based at Keiser); nematologist **Terry Kirkpatrick** (based at Hope); **Kim Rowe**, program associate - plant pathology (based at Hope); extension economists **Scott Stiles** (based at Jonesboro) and **Bob Stark** (based at Monticello); and **Mary Hightower**, assistant director of communications and marketing.



Unit Team Award winners (from left, back row) Kevin Lawson, Glenn Studebaker, Terry Kirkpatrick, Jason Kelley, Bob Scott, Jeremy Ross, Steve Kelley, Bob Stark, Gus Lorenz. (from left to right, front row) Leo Espinoza, Kim Rowe, Mary Hightower, Tom Barber, Chris Grimes, Blake McClelland, Ralph Mazzanti, Dr. Windham.



**Innovation Award** – This award recognizes new thinking or processes that enhance Extension's mission and/or operations. It recognizes departures – entirely new ways to approach a problem – rather than rewarding successes achieved using established approaches or technologies. **Samy Sadaka**, assistant professor and extension engineer, earned this honor for the development of a novel auger gasification/pyrolyzer system to convert bio-renewable resources to syngas or bio-oil.

**Cally Shore**, a 4-H program assistant in Randolph County, was winner of extension's **Early Career - Classified** award. In her three years on the job, Shore organized seven new 4-H clubs. She also raised the program's profile by working in schools, leading her to more than triple the number of contacts between 2009 and 2011. One of those new clubs is called Investigation Discovery – a forensic science club for 10th graders.

The **Early Career - Non-Classified** winner was **Jessica Vincent**, who is now a Garland County agent. Vincent started with extension as the coordinator for the Body Walk program. She managed



Innovation Award winner Samy Sadaka with Dr. Windham.



Early Career - Classified Award winner Cally Shore with Dr. Windham.

all aspects of the program including the budget, billing and even replacing or fixing parts when they became broken or worn out. In addition, Vincent found new ways of marketing Body Walk and revised the Body Walk curriculum. She later became coordinator for the AgrAbility grant, which helps Arkansans with injuries or disabilities keep doing the work they love.

The **Early Career - County Agent** winner **Trish Ouei**, an urban stormwater educator in Benton County, has kept the issue in the public eye at multiple levels. At the elementary school level, she helped design and coordinate the construction of four rain gardens, a project that includes group training, on-site design and plant selection. She developed a collection of resources being used by other organizations.



Early Career - Non-Classified Award winner Jessica Vincent with Dr. Windham.



Early Career - County Agent Award winner Trish Ouei with Dr. Windham.

Ouei also worked with multiple organizations to create the Beaver Lake LakeSmart project, which teaches residents along the lake's shore ways to guarantee the lake's water quality. She co-authored the LakeSmart Training Manual and Evaluation Materials, which received the state, regional and national award for best training manual by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. ■

## AmeriCorps\* NCCC team makes improvements at Arkansas 4-H Center

New trails, benches and gathering areas are among the thousands of dollars in improvements being made by AmeriCorps\* National Civilian Community Corps during six weeks at the 35-year-old C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center:

The AmeriCorps\* NCCC Team "Earth 4" began work at the 4-H Center in November and remained until Dec. 18. There was no shortage of projects to be done on the center's 228 acres, and according to J.J. Pitman, 4-H Center program director, there's no shortage of elbow grease among the AmeriCorps\* team. Working with materials donated to the center, the team's list of accomplishments included:

- Built and mulched a new trail to Challenge Course
- Built three new footbridges
- Replaced 220-seat capacity benches at amphitheater
- Built nine new benches around the property
- Built and replaced orienteering course signs
- Cleared deadfall – limbs and brush – from around the Challenge Course and approximately 7.5 acres.

Although the work is valued somewhere around \$75,000, "the biggest value to the AmeriCorps projects will be noticed by the clients using the programs at the center," Pitman said. ■



# Ginger Beebe headlines 25th annual Pine Bluff Home and Garden Seminar and Show

Arkansas' first lady, Ginger Beebe, will be helping celebrate the silver anniversary of the Home and Garden Seminar and Show on Feb. 9 at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

This year's show will focus on raised-bed gardening, one of the largest growing segments in home gardens. According to Obadiah Njue, horticulture specialist and chair of the Agriculture Department at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, "Raised bed gardens bring your garden closer to you." He said, "If lack of space is the reason for not having a garden, you no longer have an excuse."

The show began in 1988 as a way for the Jefferson County Master Gardeners to help the public learn about gardening, and use the fruits of their efforts to help neighbors keep food on the table through maintenance of a large community garden.



The Jefferson Co. Master Gardeners work with local schools to teach children about gardening and how to enjoy the fruits of their labors. The education outreach is funded by proceeds from the annual Home and Garden Seminar and Show.

"We've come a long way since 1988," said Lloyd Wessels, a Jefferson County Master Gardener. "The show has grown in number and variety of exhibits, events and visitors, but we have never lost sight of the show's educational and community roots."

"Twenty-five years ago, we turned the first shovel of soil and we are still producing vegetables, teaching children and feeding the needy," he said. "We're at 25 years and still growing!"

The one-day show includes:

- Cake and punch celebration of the silver anniversary
- More than 125 exhibits
- How-to demonstration on building a raised bed garden
- Full schedule of educational and informative how-to sessions
- Gallery of entries in the youth "Art of Gardening" contest

For more information about the show, contact Ruby Poteet, 870-879-1378 or rwp8303@aol.com. ■

## Four 4-H'ers earn gold at state contest, invitation to national Junior Olympics

Four Arkansas 4-H members earned automatic invitations to the National Junior Olympic Pistol matches in Colorado Springs, Colo., after earning gold in the Arkansas 4-H Junior Olympic pistol competition.

The Arkansas Junior Olympics matches were held Dec. 7-8 at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center. Ninety-three youth ages 13-19 competed in the 10-meter air pistol and 50-foot .22-caliber sport pistol events, with separate divisions for boys and girls.

Rex Roberg, state 4-H shooting sports coordinator, said that the gold medal winner from each event receives an automatic invitation to the National Junior Olympic pistol matches to be held in April at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. And, "dependent upon nationwide scores, other medalists may also receive invitations as well," he said.

Among those going to the nationals is Dustyn Perkins, who earned gold in the air pistol event and a bronze in the .22 event. Dustyn is the son of Extension's own Keith and Renee Perkins. ■

## Family Life team recognized

Dr. Anne Sortor, associate director - FCS and 4-H Youth Development, recognizes and congratulates the family life team for their professional contributions to the field. In 2012, Drs. James Marshall and Wally Goddard were busy writing and publishing their research. They published four refereed journal articles and had a fifth article accepted for publication. These articles are published in four different journals and address healthy marriage and couple relationships. In addition, they published four peer reviewed articles in professional and trade magazines such as *Parenting in Arkansas*. ■

**What's new in publications? Find out at:**

[http://www.uaex.edu/depts/Administration/blue\\_letter/Monthly\\_Publications\\_Report.htm](http://www.uaex.edu/depts/Administration/blue_letter/Monthly_Publications_Report.htm)



# Division of Agriculture recognizes achievement by faculty, staff

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture recognized outstanding performance by faculty and staff members at an awards luncheon Friday, Jan. 11, at the Embassy Suites in Rogers. Recipients included Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences faculty members at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Vice President for Agriculture Mark Cochran said, "The award recipients represent some 1,500 faculty and staff members on five university campuses, at research and extension centers and stations throughout Arkansas, and in all 75 counties."

The Division of Agriculture includes the Cooperative Extension Service and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station. In addition to conducting research and delivering information and educational services on agriculture and forestry, it also promotes public health and nutrition; opportunities for youth, families and communities; safe and secure food systems; and environmental sustainability.

Many research and extension faculty members are also members of the teaching faculty on five university campuses.

The **Robert G. F. and Hazel Taylor Spitze Land Grant University Faculty Award for Excellence** was presented to **Yanbin Li**, professor of biological and agricultural engineering. Li is known internationally for his development of a world-class research program pioneering in biosensor technology for rapid detection of pathogens and as one of a handful of recognized experts in biosensing engineering. He has conducted critically important research in food safety through models for microbial prediction and quantitative risk assessment, and antimicrobial technologies for food processing and for the detection of avian influenza.



Yanbin Li

**Charles Rosenkrans**, professor of animal science, received the **Jack C. Justus Endowment for Teaching Excellence Award**. Rosenkrans has attended numerous teaching conferences and has included several new technologies in his teaching style to further stimulate student learning. He has been a frequent participant and organizer of teaching and advising workshops both locally and at professional meetings. In 2000, Rosenkrans was selected to become a member of the University of Arkansas Teaching Academy.



Charles Rosenkrans

**Bruce Ahrendsen**, professor of agricultural economics and agribusiness, received the **Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences Alumni Society Advising Award**.

Ahrendsen is known for maintaining an open-door policy and for encouraging the students he advises and has initiated several innovations as an adviser. He developed the Agribusiness Management and Marketing concentrations and its eight-semester plan that has enabled students to structure their programs to pursue double majors or minors. He has also developed a network of employers to assist students in job placement.



Bruce Ahrendsen

John W. White awards for outstanding teaching, research and extension service are named for the U of A System's first vice president for agriculture when the Division of Agriculture was made a statewide unit of the U of A System in 1959.

The **John W. White Outstanding Teaching Award**, jointly awarded by the Division of Agriculture and Bumpers College, was presented to **Leslie Edgar**, associate professor of agricultural and extension education. Edgar has developed 12 courses in the five years she has served on the Agricultural Communications faculty. She also redesigned two courses and developed an agricultural communications minor and has developed curriculum for four graduate courses. Edgar has also spearheaded the development of a study tour and internship program in Belgium that served 11 students in the past year. Twenty-six of her students have received awards for materials created in coursework, and 28 students published research manuscripts or abstracts.



Leslie Edgar

The **John W. White Outstanding Research Award** went to **Pengyin Chen**, professor of crop, soil, and environmental sciences. Chen has implemented one of the nation's top soybean breeding programs as part of a comprehensive research program encompassing soybean cultivar breeding, germplasm enhancement and molecular marker development. During the past decade, he has released 12 new soybean cultivars and six germplasm lines. He has also developed and identified edamame types and provided the basis for a new industry for the state. Chen has remained a prolific writer amid his research, publishing six book chapters and



Pengyin Chen

113 refereed journal articles while receiving grants totaling \$6.2 million in research funding.

**Michael Daniels**, professor of crop, soil, and environmental sciences in the Extension Water Quality and Nutrient Management program, received the **John W. White Outstanding Extension State Faculty Award**.

Daniels has served as an Extension faculty member during the past 16 years focusing on reducing agriculture's impact on the environment, gaining trust from farmers and environmental groups to implement effective and innovative efforts such as the Arkansas Discovery Farm program. He has also helped livestock operations adopt nutrient management planning as a strategy to reduce environmental impact, comply with new state and federal regulations and lessen individual legal liability.



Mike Daniels

The **John W. White Outstanding County Extension Educator Award**

winner was **Iris Phifer**, county Extension agent-staff chair in Ashley County. She has served 38 years in Ashley and Desha counties as a county agent. She has taught many health and nutrition education classes that include two of her specialties, diabetic workshops and the Strong Women and Men classes. Through these programs, she has reached over 4,000 individuals. She has been recognized for having one of the most successful Walk Across Arkansas programs.



Iris Phifer

The **John W. White Outstanding Team Award** was presented to a group of faculty and staff who developed and executed the 300 Days Grazing Program, a strategic livestock and forage management system designed to educate producers and agents in ways to reduce livestock



The 300 Days of Grazing Program Team receives the John W. White Outstanding Team Award. Presenters and recipients are, from left, Tony Windham, John Jennings, Steve Jones, Clarence Watson, Shane Gadberry, Kenny Simon, Paul Beck, Mary Hightower, Don Hubbell, Tom Troxel, Mark Cochran and Michael Vayda.

production expenses, help mitigate the impact of drought and improve the sustainability of livestock farm operations. Team members are **John Jennings, Kenny Simon, Tom Troxel, Shane Gadberry, Steve Jones and Paul Beck**, all of the Department of Animal Science; **Don Hubbell**, resident director of the Livestock and Forestry Research Station; and **Mary Hightower**, assistant director of Extension Communications and Marketing.

The **Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel Award** went to **Mary Hightower**,

assistant director of Extension Communications and Marketing. She has developed numerous initiatives to improve the Cooperative Extension Service's communications effectiveness during her years with the organization. In the past two years, she has created and implemented a media campaign to promote the annual Rice Expo field day that resulted in substantial news coverage and contributed to increased attendance. Hightower has also reorganized the procedures for collecting and disseminating news by cultivating a "news network" of county agents and specialists who regularly offer insights into conditions on the ground and are willing to be interviewed frequently by news media.



Mary Hightower

The **Division of Agriculture Classified Support Personnel Award**

for the Cooperative Extension Service was presented to **Mona Norris**, administrative support supervisor in Family and Consumer Sciences at the Extension offices in Little Rock. Norris has worked for FCS for nearly 15 years. She received the Classified Employee of the Quarter in both 2004 and 2009. She is an integral part of the success of the Best Care program by outlining presentations and editing lessons with little supervision and has enhanced the quality of Best Care curriculum materials.



Mona Norris

The **Division of Agriculture Classified Support Personnel Award**

for the Agricultural Experiment Station went to **David Gilmore**, a research technologist at the Fruit Research Station. Gilmore has been on its full-time staff since 1986 after graduating from Arkansas Tech University with a math degree. In his current position, he has been in charge of breeding activities under the direction of the resident director and principal investigators, serving as their eyes and ears when they are unable to be at the station. ■



David Gilmore

# LeadAR Class 16 meets for first seminar

Twenty-three men and women representing 14 Arkansas counties were selected for Class 16 of the LeadAR program in early November. They will take part in their first three-day seminar in Little Rock Feb. 7-9, which focuses on learning about major issues facing Arkansas, including agriculture, education, the environment, the criminal justice system and legislative issues.

This year is the 28th anniversary of the program that began in 1984 with a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The program has graduated more than 450 adults since its inception. Class 16 includes:

**Chris Bacchus**, Johnson County

Program Advisor, Agriculture Education, Arkansas  
Department of Career Education

**Kevin Barron**, Mississippi County

Assistant Director, Mississippi County Library System

**Beau Bishop**, Pulaski County

Local Affairs/Rural Development Coordinator, Arkansas  
Farm Bureau Federation

**Pat Brown**, Pulaski County

Director, Small and Minority Business, Arkansas  
Economic Development Commission

**William Campbell**, Desha County

Field Manager, Arkansas Department of Workforce  
Services

**Robert Cissell**, Sharp County

Senior Developer, Simplicity Corporation

**Laura Connerly**, Faulkner County

Assistant Professor, UACES

**Tara DeJohn**, Pulaski County

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, UALR

**Kris Elliott**, Saline County

CEA-FCS, UACES

**Virginia Hillman**, Pulaski County

Mayor, City of Sherwood

**Christy Himschoot**, Sharp County

Family Support Specialist, Inspired Communities

**Tamika Jenkins**, Mississippi County

Project Coordinator, Great River Economic Development  
Foundation

**Brad Nelson**, Greene County

District Manager, Craighead Electric Cooperative  
Corporation

**Louis O'Quin**, Pulaski County

First Vice President - Investment Officer, Wells Fargo  
Advisors

**Michelle Pass**, Crawford County

Owner/Operator, Natural Connections/Pass Farms

**Fendley Ragland**, Washington County

Instructor, University of Arkansas - Fayetteville

**Kim Randle**, Washington County

Regional Outreach Manager, Clean Line Energy Partners

**Tim Scott**, Pulaski County

Energy Efficiency Program Manager, Arkansas Economic  
Development Commission

**Brian Thompson**, Lonoke County

Agent, Shelter Insurance

**Elizabeth Walker**, Sevier County

Owner/Operator, Lucky 13 Farm

**Tandee White**, Drew County

Customer Service Manager, Entergy

**Kandi Williams**, Little River County

Extension Program Aide, University of Arkansas at  
Pine Bluff

**Stacey Witherell**, Pulaski County

Labor and Employee Relations Manager, City of  
Little Rock ■

## Performance Evaluation Form

**County Extension Agents:** Performance evaluation conferences for the October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012 rating period were due for completion by **December 31, 2012**.

**All Other Non-Classified Employees:** Performance evaluations for all other non-classified employees for the 2012 calendar year rating period must be completed **within 90 days of the end of the calendar year 2012**.

Please note the new and revised non-classified performance evaluation forms at [http://division.uaex.edu/policy\\_management/default.htm](http://division.uaex.edu/policy_management/default.htm)

1. PMGS-03-2 - Classification & Promotion Criteria Non-Classified Support/Program Personnel (Program Associates and Program Technicians)
  - Non-Classified Support/Program Personnel Annual Performance Review Form (completed by employee)
  - Non-Classified Support/Program Personnel Annual Performance Rating Form (completed by supervisor)

2. PMGS-03-2.5 - Classification & Promotion Criteria Project/Program Administrators

- Project/Program Specialist and Project/Program Manager Annual Performance Review Form
- Project/Program Director and Senior Project/Program Director Annual Performance Review Form

- 3.. Faculty Performance Evaluations

- PMGS 03-9 - Faculty Service Review Form & PMGS 03-11 - Annual Plan of Work
- PMGS-07-2 - Non-Tenure Track Faculty Annual Performance Evaluation & Faculty Performance Measures - Definitions
- PMGS 07-3 - Annual Faculty Evaluation

4. PMGS-08-1 - Non-Classified Performance Evaluation Appeals Procedure

All completed evaluations with signatures and higher authority approval (if applicable) are submitted to the Human Resources Office, where ratings are entered into Banner and evaluation forms are placed in official employee personnel files. ■



# BENEFITS CORNER

## Happy New Year!

### Benefits Quick Reference Chart Effective 1/1/13

**UMR Medical Coverage:** 1-888-438-6105 (Classic or Point of Service plans). **List of providers:** [www.umar.com](http://www.umar.com). Click on "Find a provider," "Medical," "UnitedHealthcare Options PPO" and "Medical."

**MedImpact Prescription Drugs:** 1-800-788-2949

**Delta Dental:** 1-800-462-5410. **List of dentists:** [www.deltadental.com](http://www.deltadental.com).

**Superior Vision:** 1-800-507-3800. **List of providers:** [www.superiorvision.com](http://www.superiorvision.com). Click on "Locate a Provider" (to select an eye care provider or ensure your current provider is part of the Superior Vision network).

**Onlife Health:** 1-877-369-0285. **Health Coach:** [www.OnlifeHealth.com](http://www.OnlifeHealth.com)

#### Retirement Issues:

Fidelity – 1-800-343-0860

TIAA-CREF – 1-800-842-2776

APERS – 1-800-682-7377

**CES Human Resources:** 501-671-2219

#### Flexible Spending Account (FSA):

- Participants can continue to use any remaining funds on their QualChoice flex debit card for 2012 qualified expenses through March 15.
- Participants enrolled in FSA for 2013 – UMR Flex cards will be mailed to your home after December 14.

#### UMR:

- UMR health cards will be mailed to your home after December 14. The UMR card also replaces the MedImpact Pharmacy cards; a separate pharmacy card is no longer needed.
- For medical or pharmacy services after December 31, participants must have the provider record plan information from the new UMR ID card.

## Meet the *new* employees!

### Skip Armes

County Extension Agent - Agriculture  
Searcy County

#### • What's your background?

I was born in Memphis, Tennessee. I graduated high school at Marshall High School. Then I served in the U.S. Air Force from 1986-1990. I was a cattle rancher for 20 years.

#### • What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?

I have owned a couple of businesses in Arkansas and raised beef cattle for 20 years, which allows me to relate to agricultural producers.

#### • What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?

I love God first above all things. I thank him for my family and the great country we are blessed to live in.

#### • What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?

Develop strong relations with the people of Searcy County while establishing the Extension office as a key resource in the community.

#### • What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?

The degree of excellence with which the U of A functions which facilitates personal development.

#### • What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?

Roping, reading and raising kids. ■





**Rachel Chaney**  
County Extension Agent -  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
Stone County

• **What's your background?**

I grew up in Hazen. I worked at Lonoke County Experiment Station in weed science for two summers during high school. When I graduated from Hazen High School

in 2008, I moved to Fayetteville to attend college at the University of Arkansas. I was involved in Sigma Alpha Sorority (Sisters in Agriculture), the Iota Chapter throughout college. During college, I worked in the Plant Pathology Department for a little over a year at the University of Arkansas. I worked as a leasing consultant with Lindsey Properties at Cornerstone Apartments in Fayetteville for two years. During the summer of 2012, I worked as an intern for the Hummingbird Foundation, which is a foundation in Arkansas that raises awareness of preemies. I received a B.S. in human environmental sciences with a concentration in food, human nutrition and hospitality in August 2012.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

My father, who is in Faulkner County, has worked in Extension my whole life, and my mother started in Extension over a year ago in Van Buren County. I have seen Extension and the many responsibilities of a Cooperative Extension agent through their eyes. I have taken numerous family and consumer science courses during high school and college, and I was involved in 4-H, FCCLA and STAR events while living in Hazen. I have planned a variety of social and fundraising events for FCCLA, Sigma Alpha, American Cancer Society and the Hummingbird Foundation.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I am excited about being a part of the Extension family and look forward to getting to know everyone involved with Extension. Of course, most of you know my parents, Hank and Regina Chaney. I have a brother, Michael, and sister-in-law, Ginny. I have a niece, Emma, age 3, and nephew, Elliott, age 1, who call me Aunt Ray-Ray.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I look forward to discovering the needs of Stone County and working on a plan to meet those needs. I also want to get my name out in the county to where the people of the county know me. I look forward to learning more about the different programs that Extension offers and how to use them in Stone County.

• **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I have always wanted to work in a job where I can help people and help better the community. I have found with Extension that you help people and better the county through the work you do in 4-H and various other programs. I have met numerous Extension employees through my parents and when I worked in plant pathology and weed science. I admire the work they do.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I love spending time with my family and friends. Also, playing with my niece and nephew is one of my favorite pastimes. I love cooking, being outside, playing volleyball and playing any type of game that gets people together having fun. I enjoy watching sports, especially watching the Hogs play. ■

**Krishna Ellington**

Leadership Programs Coordinator  
Little Rock State Office



• **What's your background?**

I graduated from Henderson State University with a Bachelor of Arts in English. My professional career started with Alltel as a marketing analyst, which transitioned to Verizon as a result of the company's divestiture.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I was a partner in my own event planning business and have experience in logistic planning, web design and social networking.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

It is my desire to obtain a master's degree in professional and technical writing.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I would like to discover and implement practices that streamline the logistics of the leadership programs.

• **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

I was introduced to Extension by way of my aunt who is a graduate of the LeadAR program. I like that Extension is all about providing resources and tools to help the public better their lives.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I enjoy planning all sorts of events, spending time with my friends and family, especially my niece and nephew. ■



**Marsha Horton**  
County Extension Agent - Family  
and Consumer Sciences  
Newton County

• **What's your background?**

I graduated from the University of Central Arkansas. I am married to Tony Horton of Harrison, and I have one daughter, Tori.

• **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I have taught family and consumer science in Arkansas public schools for 28 years. I have also worked as a 3-5 preschool director for a program that works with children with special needs for the past 4½ years.

• **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I love a good challenge.

• **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I hope to increase the number of members in our county 4-H clubs, and I would like to strengthen the EHC clubs' membership with new members as well.

• **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

The opportunity that Extension has given me is the chance to come back to the county in which I taught FACS for 20 years. I love Newton County and its people, and the chance to work again with the young people and families that I taught as a FACS was something that I could not pass up.

• **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

I love to travel and camp, both of which are usually done together. My family has taken our camper to over 20 different states. I also enjoy meeting new people. ■

## Grants and contracts

for Month Ending November 30, 2012

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Development of Branded Educational Programs to Manage and Mitigate Herbicide Resistant Weeds	30,000.00	Bob Scott	Purdue University
Agronomic Maximization of Soybean Yield and Quality	38,000.00	Jeremy Ross	University of Minnesota
Expanding Marketing Opportunities for Non-GMO Products	13,850.00	Ron Rainey	Soybean Promotion Board
Beef Quality Assurance	13,163.00	Tom Troxel	Arkansas Beef Council
<b>TOTAL NOVEMBER 2012 AWARDS</b>	<b>\$95,013.00</b>		

## Personnel changes

### Please welcome the following:

**Tibebu A. Gebremariam**

Professional Assistant, Plant Pathology, effective January 2, 2013.

**Melody R. Hutchens**

Administrative Specialist, Ag. Economics and Ag. Business, effective December 3, 2012.

**Melinda M. Johninon**

Institutional Services Assistant, Facility Maintenance, effective January 2, 2013.

**Toby B. Woodson**

Program Associate - AgrAbility, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective January 2, 2013.

### Extension says goodbye to:

**Patrick R. Bryant**

Institutional Services Assistant, Facility Maintenance, effective January 2, 2013.

**Jerry R. Foley**

Livestock Market News Reporter, Animal Science, effective January 2, 2013.

**Jesse E. Howard**

Entomology Program Technician, Southeast Research and Extension Center, effective December 12, 2012.

**Dena R. Malone**

Administrative Support Supervisor, Van Buren County, effective January 2, 2013.

**John R. Payne**

Public Issues Education Instructor, Program and Staff Development, effective January 2, 2013.