

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

No. 3759 • July 2015

FROM THE DIRECTOR

There is a lot of hard work and a few nervous moments that go into being one of the three Arkansas 4-H Governor's Award finalists. After a morning spent being grilled by a trio of judges, the three finalists found themselves being questioned again, this time in the Governor's Mansion dining room by the governor himself. I was proud to see how all three handled the situation with the poise and enthusiasm developed throughout their 4-H careers. They all earned smiles from our lunch hosts, Gov. Asa Hutchinson – himself a former 4-H member – and his wife, Susan. I'd like to introduce you to this year's finalists:

Lauren Cheevers, Washington County. Lauren, who grew up on a cattle farm, is a first-generation 4-H'er who has shown livestock and rabbits. An accomplished public speaker, she earned first place at the 2013 Western National Round-Up in Denver with a presentation on equine infectious anemia. This fall she is entering her sophomore year as an ag communications major at UA-Fayetteville.

Stephanie Williams, White County. Stephanie comes from a lauded, multi-generation 4-H family. She showed cattle and other livestock and is competitive in rodeo, including being the reigning Arkansas State Rodeo Queen. Stephanie will attend Southern Arkansas University in the fall as a member of the school's rodeo team.

Joshua Lockhart, Benton County. Joshua also comes from a 4-H family. He has shown cattle and poultry. He excelled at leadership and public speaking and held many local, regional and state offices. Joshua was a state record book winner and presiding officer at the 2013 4-H National Congress at Atlanta. This spring he completed his freshman year as a poultry science major at UA-Fayetteville.

The governor's award winner will be announced at State O-Rama later this month. Congratulations to our finalists and thanks to the judges and 4-H staff for helping make the best better.

– Tony Windham



From left to right, Stephanie Williams, Governor Hutchinson, Joshua Lockhart and Lauren Cheevers.



**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

Pike County 4-H'er inducted into 4-H Hall of Fame



Dr. Tony Windham, Associate Vice President for Agriculture-Extension presents the Arkansas 4-H Hall of Fame award to Pike County 4-H member Heather Jackson.

Heather Jackson of the Glenwood Caddo River Gems 4-H club was the winner of this year's Arkansas 4-H Hall of Fame award. This prestigious award was presented June 10 at the Teen Star and Hall of Fame program at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center. Only one recipient was chosen from the entire state, and this is the second highest award in 4-H.

The Hall of Fame originated to recognize truly outstanding 4-H Teen Stars who have achieved at the highest level and who have contributed to making Arkansas 4-H a dynamic and well-known organization. She joins Tanyoka Williams, Sydney Steely and Natalie Jones as Hall of Fame members from the county.

Heather is the 18-year-old daughter of Jimmy and Renita Jackson of Caddo Gap. She and her brother, Andy, have been very active in the 4-H program, with her mother serving as a volunteer leader in the Caddo River Gems club. Heather is currently serving as a state 4-H officer.

Her main project has been leadership, with emphasis on educating the public about being prepared for natural disasters. After the tornado in Mena, she saw the need for disaster preparedness, researched the subject and developed a plan. She developed two brochures: *Disaster Packs for the Home* and *Disaster Packs for Camping and Lake Activities*.

She has distributed more than 8,000 of these brochures, and the Corps of Engineers at area lakes is distributing them around their camping areas. She has presented disaster awareness programs and workshops to many organizations.

Heather is blessed with the natural ability to influence others. Over the years, she has realized her leadership potential and has used it to benefit hundreds of youth and adults in her county, state and across the country.

Heather will receive \$11,500 in 4-H scholarships this year. She was the recipient of the Prudential Spirit of Community award, the Arkansas KARK TV and Department of Volunteerism Youth Humanitarian award, President's Volunteer Service award, FEMA Region 6 Director's award, the Adjutant General of Arkansas Army National Guard Recognition of Excellence award and the Daughters of the American Revolution Citizenship award. Recently she was selected as an honoree of "Kids Can Change the World" One Year Road Trip – Generation of Generosity, part of a nationwide multi-media documentary project with kid change-makers in all 50 states that are making the world better.

Heather's future plans are to attend Henderson State University and major in family and consumer science with an education degree. ■

Vaught recognized as Distinguished Animal Science Alumni

Carla Vaught, county agent - staff chair in Polk County, was selected by the U of A Animal Science Department as a Distinguished Animal Science Alumni. She was recognized at an awards ceremony April 22 in Fayetteville.

Vaught is a first-generation college graduate. She grew up on a diversified family livestock farm near Horatio in Sevier County. She started college at Southern Arkansas University in 1980 and transferred to the U of A in 1982.

Vaught was a charter member of the U of A Block and Bridle Club and was selected as an outstanding animal science student as a junior. She worked at the Ruminant Nutrition Barn and at the Rabbit Barn during her tenure at the U of A. She was also a member of the 1984 Livestock Judging Team.

After graduation in 1985, Vaught continued her work for the U of A as a county Extension agent in Madison County. She completed a M.S. degree in general agriculture in 1991. She has also worked in Crawford and Logan counties as an agriculture agent. She has held her current position as county agent - staff chair in Polk County since 1997.

Vaught's focus as an agent has always been livestock and forage production and 4-H youth development.

She has the distinction of being the first female agriculture agent elected as the president of the Arkansas County Agriculture Agents' Association and the longest-serving female county agriculture agent in the state. ■



What's new in publications? Find out at:

<http://www.uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx>

Pope County 4-H'ers are jammin'



Pope County 4-H members Abbi J., Jelaina P., Colte M., Elyssa H. and Ashlyn W. prepare strawberry jam.

Eleven Pope County 4-H members participated in a jam/jelly making workshop June 19 at the Pope County Extension Office. The workshop was conducted by Pope County Extension staff members Jeri Vangilder, Lauren Cannon and Robbie Rye.

One group made strawberry jam, and the other group made grape jelly. In addition to learning how to properly can jams and jellies, the participants learned about kitchen and food safety, the types of equipment needed for water bath canning, and proper storage techniques for their canned foods.

Each participant was able taste both the jam and the jelly at the workshop and was also able to take a jar home to enjoy. All participants said they enjoyed the workshop and learned something new about canning. ■

Reminder to supervisors and time entry approvers

Supervisors, please remember it is up to you to determine the eligibility of your temporary employees receiving pay for the July 4th holiday. You will need to calculate the average hours the employee has worked for the four weeks prior to July 4th and use this information to determine their pay eligibility. Please send the hours worked and the eligibility determination to Payroll by July 16, 2015, in order for the holiday pay to be processed on their July 31 paycheck. Please review the following language in the revised C.E.S.P 7-20: Holiday Policy:

*Temporary employees (extra help) are eligible for prorated holiday pay if they work at least an average of twenty (20) hours per week for the four (4) weeks immediately prior to the holiday, and if they are in pay status at least fifteen (15) minutes on their last scheduled work day before the holiday or winter break and at least fifteen (15) minutes on the first scheduled work day after the holiday or winter break. **The supervisor will average hours worked by the temporary employee for the four (4) weeks immediately prior to the date of the holiday and will provide written direction to Payroll to pro-rate holiday pay accordingly. The supervisor will also provide written direction to Payroll if the temporary employee did not work on the last scheduled work day before or after the holiday or if they are ineligible for holiday pay for any other reason.** Holiday hours do not count against the State 1500 hour fiscal year maximum for temporary*

employees. Temporary employees are paid from department/grant budgets, so supervisors are advised to utilize temporary employees wisely.

As always, feel free to contact Amanda Lingo at 501-671-2011 or Verna Waddell at 501-671-2039 in Payroll with any questions or concerns you may have. ■

Microsoft Office 365 migration

Migration Web page is live

A new web page is live to provide updates and collect resources related to training and tasks to perform in advance of the migration. Take a look at uaex.edu/office365 for the latest.

Migration date

Monday, August 10 is the target date to begin using Microsoft Office 365. The cutover to the new system will begin the preceding weekend (August 7 through August 9).

More migration information

Comparex, our migration partner, will run the migrations in the background. They use a tool that copies e-mails, folders, calendar events and contacts directly from Zimbra to your new Microsoft Office 365 account. The migration will be transparent and not affect your daily use of Zimbra.

Training

Links to some of the resources are now available from the migration web page.

Questions, concerns or comments?

Please contact Sam Boyster (501) 671-2135 / sboyster@uaex.edu or Diana Morian (501) 671-2341 / @uaex.edu if you have questions. ■

Chi Epsilon Sigma wraps up food drive



Chi Epsilon Sigma would like to thank everyone who participated in the food drive for the Arkansas Food Bank. We collected and delivered 250 pounds of food and 32 pounds of nonfood items to them.

BENEFITS CORNER

Ah, Retirement!

Dreaming of retiring? Fishing at the lake? Unlimited time for grandkids or travel? If you have UA benefits, you'll probably want to know two things: Am I eligible to retire? Can I take my benefits into retirement?

1. To be a UA retiree, you must meet at least one of the following conditions.
 - a. Age 65 or older + 5 continuous years of University employment.
 - b. Age 62 or older + 10 continuous years of University employment.
 - c. Twenty years of continuous University employment.

If you can meet one of these conditions, let Human Resources know you want to retire at least 90 days before your planned retirement date. The last working day of the month is the ideal retirement date to assure that your benefits will start on time.

2. To continue UA health, dental, and/or life insurance into retirement, you must have:

- a. Been insured under the plan(s) for at least 10 continuous years prior to retirement AND
- b. Your age plus length of service must equal 70.

If these conditions are met, the following UA insurance may be elected:

- Medical
- Pre-age 65 retiree - UMR
- Post-age 65 Medicare-eligible retiree – UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) Plan
- Delta Dental
- Life Insurance \$10,000

Visit <http://uaex.edu/extension-policies/employee-benefits/fringe/cesp8-18.aspx> for details. ■

Meet the *new* employees!



Chelsey Ahrens
Specialty Livestock/
Youth Education Specialist
Little Rock State Office

• What's your background?

I have a Ph.D. in agricultural communications from Texas Tech University, a master's in agricultural leadership from the University of

Georgia and a bachelor's in animal science from the University of Arkansas. Most recently, my other employers have been OK Foods, Inc., Texas Tech University and the Arkansas State Fair.

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

I grew up on a farm in Lamar, Arkansas, raising and showing breeding, commercial and market cattle, sheep and hogs. Therefore, I understand both the production

and showing aspects of livestock. I was an Arkansas 4-H member for 10 years and was also an active FFA member for 5 years where I served as a state officer my freshman year of college.

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

I'm happy to help in any way I can. My door is always open, so feel free to swing by, call, text or e-mail any time you need me.

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

I would like to understand the needs of county agents to help grow and improve the 4-H livestock program as a whole. I want to work with county agents in order to deliver high quality events, workshops, resources, etc. I also want to update fact sheets and resource materials as well as develop relationships with key stakeholders.

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

Being a fifth-generation farmer, I'm truly passionate about agriculture, especially livestock, and I wanted to make a career out of something I'm passionate about. I truly believe in and understand what Extension is, does and stands for, and working in Extension is a perfect fit for me.

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

I love being in the kitchen! I absolutely love to cook and bake. I consider myself a foodie and love trying out new restaurants, especially local ones. I love to travel, both internationally and domestically. I also enjoy canning, sewing, knitting, and reading. I have a miniature Australian shepherd, Shooter, who keeps me busy playing fetch. ■



Casey Marshall
Program Technician
C.A. Vines 4-H Center

- **What's your background?**

I have a bachelor's in history with a minor in geography from Arkansas Tech University. After graduating college, I began working

with the Ozark Folk Center State Park as a substitute crafter demonstrating many different 19th century trades for visitors as well as running the sound board for the evening concerts. I continued working at the Folk Center in many different departments, including the lodge, gift shop and group sales.

After one year I transferred to Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park as a seasonal interpreter. During my time with Arkansas State Parks, I received my CIG Certification with the National Association for Interpretation and was able to attend two NAI regional conferences.

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

Knowledge of Arkansas history, Ozark folk culture, as well as prehistoric Native American cultures.

I am a very crafty person who enjoys any type of work with my hands. Woodworking is a particular favorite.

I have presented in front of many diverse audiences and am not afraid to work with large groups.

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

I am a barbecue connoisseur. I have studied the changes in barbecue preparation/presentation

geographically across the U.S. I have a list of 42 barbecue restaurants outside of the state of Arkansas that I hope to one day visit. I also have eaten at 32 barbecue restaurants within Arkansas.

I am a very active person and can usually keep up with kids all day, but when I get home I like to kick back and watch a movie.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year at Extension?**

I would like to gain a better knowledge of the agency I have become a part of. I would also like to share programs, props and ideas with fellow educators.

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

I came to Extension because I was seeking a place where I was free to use my skills and be an outdoor (nontraditional) educator. I value Extension's reputation for quality and being a safe place that challenges you to grow.

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

I like to play music and go on road trips. Seeing a new place for the first time is always exciting. I enjoy going to the latest adventure movie when it comes out in theaters. I also collect hiking stick medallions from Arkansas state parks as well as national parks.

I have enjoyed going to professional conferences the last few years. They have enabled me to hear about new places and meet people I would not have connected with otherwise. ■



John McFarland
County Extension Agent -
Agriculture
Jackson County

- **What's your background?**

I grew up on a rice and soy-bean farm around Hickory Ridge, Arkansas. After high school, I attended Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, and received my B.S. in agribusiness in 2002. This is also where I met my wife, Jennifer. We have been married since 2002. I later attended the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and received a M.S. in agriculture food and life sciences.

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

I've had the privilege of working for the UA Extension Service for eight years previously (from 2003-2011) and bring with me experience working

with producers and 4-H families, providing them Extension-based research.

The last four years I have worked for Farm Credit Midsouth and Farm Credit of Western Arkansas, where I had the opportunity to learn more about the business side of agriculture and have seen the challenges brought by the tightening profit margins that Arkansas farmers now face.

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

The two things I am most proud of in all of the world are my two children, Little John and June Baby.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year at Extension?**

I would like to maintain the high level of quality agricultural programming that my predecessor established in Jackson County. I would like to become the number one resource for information and advice our county producers can turn to.

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

Extension is the “shining city upon a hill” that Ronald Reagan referred to when he quoted John Winthrop in his 1989 farewell speech. I have worked many jobs and have met many people. However, I’ve never worked with a finer group of people than those employees of the Cooperative Extension Service. The culture of cooperation, teamwork and friendliness that Extension provides is rare. The collection of such great minds, fantastic communicators and employees genuinely interested in helping their clientele is unheard of in other industries. It is the honor of my life to have the opportunity to return to Extension and serve the citizens of Arkansas.

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

My interests outside of work include camping, hunting and fishing. I also enjoy investing in the stock market; however, I’ve had much better success with the outdoor activities. ■

Breana Watkins

Program Associate – Economics

Northeast Research and Extension Center, Keiser

- **What’s your background?**

I was raised on a family farm in northeast Arkansas, with our main crops being rice and soybeans. I graduated in 2010 from the University of Arkansas with a bachelor of science degree in management and in 2012 with a master of science in agricultural economics.

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

Before coming to Extension, I worked as a grain merchant advisor and last year received my commodity broker license. My main focus has been advising farmers and ranchers on the tools available for hedging crop/livestock revenues.

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

I love to travel and have been to all continents except Australia and Antarctica. I swam in the Nile in Upper Egypt and in the Loch Ness in Scotland but didn’t see a crocodile or the Nessie, the Loch Ness monster.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year at Extension?**

In my first year with Extension, I hope to create a viable tool for farmers to assist with making grain storage and marketing decisions.

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

I first learned about Extension as a cloverbud in 4-H when I was a little girl. I look forward to being a part of the research and tools given to those in agriculture that help sustain and support their - livelihoods.

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

I enjoy spending my free time outside gardening, fishing, and doing hot yoga. ■

DIVISION AWARDS LUNCHEON
January 8, 2016 • Arkansas 4-H Center, Ferndale



Save the Date

Grants and contracts

for the month ended June 30, 2015

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Provisia Rice and Herbicide Project/Testing Protocol	5,400.00	Bob Scott	BASF Corporation
Carbon and Nutrient Dynamics of a Bioenergy Agroforestry System	2,610.00	Dirk Philipp	USDA, ARS MSA
Test Crop Purchase Agreement	10,000.00	Gus Lorenz	Bayer Crop Science LP
Developing Profitable Irrigated Rotational Cropping Systems	9,060.00	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Influence of BMD on Susceptibility to BCO Lameness in Commercial Broilers	11,788.10	Karen Christensen	Zoetis LLC
Expanding the Monitoring Efforts at the Atkins Discovery Farms	50,000.00	Michael Daniels	West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc.
Arkansas 4-H Mentoring Program 2015	164,000.00	Noah Washburn	National 4-H Council
Boots & Spurs 4H Horse Club - Fair Grounds Arena Maintenance	250.00	Sarah Whitaker	Walmart Foundation
AGFC/Drew County Conservation District Grant	30,000	Gus Lorenz	Monsanto Company
Evaluation of MON 63479 Premix Applied Preplant and Preemergence in Cotton	6,550.00	Tom Barber	Monsanto Company
Total New Awards for June 2015	\$266,458.10		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Chelsey Ahrens

Specialty Livestock/Youth Education Specialist, Animal Science, effective June 1, 2015.

Debbie Clevenger

Administrative Specialist, Washington County, effective May 18, 2015.

Casey Marshall

4-H Center Program Tech, 4-H and Youth Development, effective June 1, 2015.

Bridgett Martin

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Scott County, effective May 18, 2015.

John McFarland

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Jackson County, effective June 1, 2015.

Ella Reyes

Program Assistant - EFNER, Benton County, effective June 15, 2015.

Breana Watkins

Program Associate - Economics, Ag. Economics and Ag. Business, effective June 1, 2015.

Extension says goodbye to:

Karen Collins

Administrative Specialist, Drew County, effective June 4, 2015.

Torya Fields

County Extension Agent - 4-H, Mississippi County, effective June 30, 2015.

Linda Floyd-Chappell

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Washington County, effective June 30, 2015.

Kim Fryer

Administrative Specialist, Animal Science, effective June 1, 2015.

Keith Gresham

County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Dallas County, effective June 30, 2015.

Zach Hallum

4-H Center Program Assistant - ExCEL, 4-H and Youth Development, effective June 26, 2015.

Josh Hesselbein

Program Tech - Discovery Farm, Crop, Soil and Environment Sciences, effective June 5, 2015.

Elizabeth Johnson

Program Associate - Early Child, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective June 15, 2015.

Amber Runsick

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Baxter County, effective June 25, 2015.

David Stritzinger

County Extension Agent - Interim Staff Chair, Hot Spring County, effective June 18, 2015.