

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

No. 3721 • May 2012

FROM THE DIRECTOR

We recently welcomed 36 new employees to Extension through our “Check-in and Tune-up for New Hires” event at the state office.

Of the 36 new employees, 20 are assigned to county offices, reflecting our commitment to deliver education at the county level, which is essential to our mission forged more than 100 years ago when Extension emerged out of necessity and expanded into a national effort.

Delivering excellent programs and capturing their impacts in agriculture, family and consumer sciences, youth and 4-H, community development and public policy is essential.

By delivering programs that meet the needs of clientele, by carefully gathering, measuring and communicating impacts, and by encouraging clientele willing to advocate for Extension, you help assure our viability for decades to come.

For those who have recently joined us, welcome. Extension is more than a career. It is a way of life, and I know others in Extension join me in wishing you a successful and rewarding career.

– Tony Windham

Money segments broadcast statewide

KARK features a weekly money segment with Dr. Laura Connerly. These local money messages have gone statewide. The broadcast is now available in 1.4 million households.

KARK *News at Noon* recently began broadcasting the first 30 minutes of the show across the state. *Arkansas Today* is on KARK in Little Rock, KNWA in Fayetteville, KTVE in El Dorado and KTAL in Texarkana.

Watch Connerly on *Arkansas Today* the second Friday of every month and on KARK *News at Noon* on Tuesdays.

View clips of previous KARK money segments on our web site at www.arfamilies.org/arkansassaves. Click on Money Moments with Dr. Connerly.

For more money management tips, visit the Arkansas Saves Facebook page and follow Laura Connerly on Twitter. ■



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

Content management system update

The UACES and University of Arkansas have selected OmniUpdate as our content management product. OmniUpdate was designed specifically for colleges and universities and has slightly more than 100 higher education clients.

Members of the web site committee have worked with the product and have found it intuitive. In addition, the vendor provides easy to follow videos explaining how to use different elements of the product, and the vendor provides webinars as requested by clientele.

A content management system or CMS allows decentralized posting onto and management of a web site, with some level of control being achieved through user permissions.

With OmniUpdate, each county, department and unit within the UACES will be able to post copy, video, PowerPoint presentations, photographs, audio recordings and other media onto their county, section or department's web pages within the larger UACES web site.

The exact content management structure within CES has not yet been determined, but the software will support whatever level is chosen.

An overall design of the UACES web site will be determined, and templates will be developed that allow room to be creative in reaching clientele.

We will keep you posted as we progress. We are excited about the opportunities a content management system will afford you in helping strengthen your program's outreach. ■

The 40-Gallon Challenge

Do you know how much water you use every day? If you count the gallons, you may be surprised. You may be surprised, as well, to know that your water usage today may very well affect future generations.



If you want to make a difference, you'll want to sign on for the 40-Gallon Challenge, a program designed to help you conserve water. Your first step toward your water-saving goal is to pledge to reduce your water use by at least 40 gallons a day.

The 40-Gallon Challenge is available online. By visiting the blog, you'll have access to indoor and outdoor water conservation practices that bring big results through small changes in your daily routines.

When on the 40-Gallon Challenge site, be sure to fill out a pledge card and select practices you will implement, practices that you do not already follow.

After selecting the practices you'll put into action, add up the daily savings to see the total number of gallons of water per day you pledge to save.

Since February, the 40-Gallon Challenge has received close to 200 pledges, which will save more than 23,000 gallons. To play your important part, go to watersustainability.wordpress.com/40-Gallon-Challenge and take the pledge today! ■

Higgins places in Arkansas AP editors contest

The Public Policy Center's Kristin Higgins won an award April 14 for her reporting in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Higgins, formerly the newspaper's Little Rock City Hall beat reporter, placed third in the 2011 Arkansas Associated Press Managing Editors contest for her articles about the 2010 Census.

During the past decade, Little Rock grew by just over 10,000 residents to 193,524 residents in 2010. The Census showed that Little Rock became a minority-majority city, with its black residents becoming the majority population in most of the city's seven wards. The city also underwent a dramatic shift westward, while at the same time experiencing a surge in downtown residents for the first time in 50 years.

Higgins, who used her maiden name Netterstrom in her byline, wrote several in-depth stories about the city's changing demographics. She left the newspaper in January 2012 to work for the Public Policy Center as a program associate. ■



Electric Cooperative employees Re-Shape into big losers!

As part of its ongoing wellness program, C&L Electric Cooperative in Star City partnered with the Lincoln County Cooperative Extension Service to offer the Re-Shape program to its employees.

Each week Jane Newton, Lincoln County Extension agent - family and consumer sciences, recorded weights during educational sessions when she discussed with participants research-based information regarding reading food labels, controlling portions, making healthy choices when eating out and establishing exercise habits.

At the end of the 12-week program, the 36 C&L participating employees – who had named their competition the Biggest Loser – were 438 pounds lighter!

A pre-program participant survey showed that:

- 76% were between 41-60 years old
- 12% had been diagnosed with diabetes
- 12% had been diagnosed with high cholesterol
- 44% had been told by a doctor that they have high blood pressure
- 76% did not participate in any type of exercise

At the end of the program, participants reported improvements in cholesterol levels, blood sugar levels,



Jane Newton, Lincoln County Extension agent - family and consumer sciences, gives C&L Electric Cooperative employee John Ryker a congratulatory hug for losing 71 pounds to become the Biggest Loser!

blood pressure readings and over half reported exercising at least three days a week. ■

BENEFITS CORNER

QualChoice Flexible Spending Account (FSA) – for those enrolled in the health care spending account referred to as FSA, you may use your QualChoice Benefits Card to pay for eligible expenses not typically covered by your health care plan.

Some typical expenses may include:

- health care co-pays and deductibles
- prescription drugs
- eye exams
- eyeglasses
- eye surgery
- contact lenses and solutions
- dental visits
- orthodontic care
- chiropractic services

Effective January 2011, over-the-counter medicines or drugs are not eligible for reimbursement without a doctor's prescription.

Access to your Flexible Spending Account is available online at www.qualchoice.com. Once you have registered, account balances are available 24 hours a day.

- **For members covered by Medical and FSA** – QualChoice requires that you self register at www.qualchoice.com using your member ID number located on your medical ID card.
- **For members with FSA only** – Call the QualChoice “UA Customer Service Team” at 501-219-5133 or 866-724-3570 to obtain your member ID number or for any health or FSA questions.

FSA forms are located online at www.qualchoice.com – Click on Members Forms (At the bottom of the page – University of Arkansas System (UofA) FSA Forms.)

Meet the *new* employees!



Tracy Fall

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences
Cleburne County

- **What's your background?**

I grew up in Heber Springs, Arkansas. I received a bachelor's degree in family and consumer sciences from the University of Central Arkansas in 2005.

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

I value the importance of team work and I'm self-motivated.

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

I'm dependable and professional.

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

I would like to establish a foundation for future programs in the community. I want to be an asset to Extension.

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

I became aware of the programs offered by Extension while interning with the Faulkner County Extension office when I was a senior in college. The topics of family and consumer science are important to me, and I look forward to educating people to improve the quality of life in my community.

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

I enjoy spending time with my husband, our six-month-old daughter and our extended family. ■

Henry Green

Program Technician - Geospatial
LRSO



- **What's your background?**

I have a B.S. in agricultural business.

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

I have worked with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service for more than three years as soil conservationist trainee and lead soil lab technician.

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

I would like my colleagues to know that I am easy to talk to and get along with, as well as a team player, and I was born in Germany.

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

I would like to learn as much as I can about geospatial technology. I would like to have a good understanding of each of the departments so if anyone has a question about anything, I can lead them in the correct direction.

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

I was attracted by the diversity of Extension and how it's involved in the community. Also, my first week on the job, I met a lot of people that greeted me with a smile and let me know that if I ever needed anything, they would be willing to help. I value the fact that Extension treats everyone like family.

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

My hobbies include traveling! Being an army brat, I have traveled my whole life. I like swimming, bowling, playing cards and watching suspense movies. ■



Preston Hipp
County Extension Agent - Agriculture
Stone County

• **What's your background?**

For the past 13 years, I have worked in several different facets of the poultry industry for OK Foods and most recently Peco Foods as the hatchery manager.

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

I have worked with various types of agricultural people over the past years, and in doing so I have gained an understanding of agriculture in Arkansas. I also possess team-oriented skills along with leadership skills that will be helpful in pursuing a career with Extension.

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

I am easy to work with, and I like to learn.

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

I want to get an understanding of Extension and its programs, and most of all how to apply them.

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

I have had the opportunity to work with people in Extension in the past and have always admired the professionalism and personality they exhibited. When the opportunity presented itself, I wanted to be a part of the working atmosphere I saw in Extension.

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

I like to spend time with my family, which consists of my wife Tori and two sons Dax, 7, and Brooks, 4. We like to work together on our cattle/hay farm, and when we are not working, we play baseball....or vice versa. ■

Julian King
County Extension Agent -
Family and Consumer Sciences
Independence County



• **What's your background?**

I obtained my B.S in dietetics and M.S in family and consumer sciences from the University of Central Arkansas. I have worked nearly two years as a registered and clinical dietitian in the hospital setting.

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

I am bringing my knowledge of health and nutrition as well as my knowledge in all aspects of family and consumer sciences to Extension. My skills and experience in educating others will enable me to be successful as a county agent.

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

I enjoy working as a team and will help my co-workers any way that I can!

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

I would like to make an impact that is visible to everyone in my community within my first year at Extension.

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

I value the numerous programs and education that Extension provides to its communities, and that is what brought me to Extension.

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

I enjoy working out, spending time with family and friends, as well as learning and trying new things. ■



JoAnn Vann
County Extension Agent -
Family and Consumer Sciences
Clark County

• **What's your background?**

I graduated from Henderson State University with a B. A. in family and consumer sciences and a minor in business administration.

My previous careers include work in retail merchandising and banking.

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

I am passionate about assisting people live a better quality of life. I enjoy working with diverse groups of people to resolve their individual needs. I have experience planning, implementing and reporting data for program evaluation.

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

I am committed to helping build better lives for the clients in my county and the U of A Cooperative Extension Service through my dedication to listening for needs, learning relevant materials and applying resources to solve the needs.

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

I want to gain an extensive knowledge of the needs in my county. I plan to accomplish this by developing relationships with other local and state government offices and community leaders.

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

I have always used Extension information available in county offices and through the web site to address needs in my own life. I appreciate the objective and reliable information that is available. I came to Extension because I desire to help others achieve a better quality of life through the factual, objective educational tools that Extension has to offer.

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

I live in Sparkman with my husband Jeremy. We enjoy the many benefits rural Arkansas has to offer including raising a small flock of chickens, growing a garden, fishing local lakes and rivers, hunting and four wheeler riding. My other hobbies include sewing, baking and knitting. ■

Information Technology Update

Computer Performance: How hard is your computer working?

Recently we've looked at Internet speed (*Blue Letter*, January 2012) and hard disk drive performance (*Blue Letter*, April 2012). Now let's look at how hard your computer is working. If you press the Alt+Ctrl+Del keys at the same time, a window appears and one option is "Start Task Manager" or "Task List" if you're running Novell.

Once you've selected this button, a window appears with several tabs across the top. Click on the "Performance" tab. You should see several graphs that are constantly changing.

CPU Usage and Usage History – The CPU is the heart of your computer. You can tell just how hard your computer is working by looking at the percentage. It's seldom zero but should be running between 15% and 40% most of the time. It's ok if it jumps to the 90%-100%

briefly, but you will notice sustained activity at this level with slow or unresponsive typing delayed screen changes.

Page File Usage and Usage History – This graphic shows how much of your physical Random Access Memory (RAM) is being used. The numbers directly below the graph shows the total amount of RAM available. If you're using 60% or less of your memory, you're probably just fine. But once you begin using a higher percentage (greater than 75%) your computer performance will degrade.

Next month, we will review options if these numbers are too high. ■

Questions or assistance? Contact the IT Call Center:

Local Call: 501-671-2255

Toll Free: 866-779-3375

E-mail: callcenter@uaex.edu

Grants and contracts

for Month Ending March 31, 2012

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Corn and Grain Sorghum Production Economics for Optimal Farm Management	\$ 9,300.00	Archie Flanders	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Flag the Technology	160,000.00	Bob Scott	Soybean Promotion Board
Field Scale Evaluation of Precision Agriculture Sensors for Corn Production	36,000.00	Dharmendra Saraswat	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Smartphone Apps for Information Dissemination to Corn Producers	36,000.00	Dharmendra Saraswat	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Monitoring for Resistance in Southwestern Corn Borers	12,420.00	Glenn Studebaker	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
2012 Multi-State 4-H ATV Safety Grant	5,260.00	Jack Boles	Oklahoma 4-H Foundation
Corn Verification	106,000.00	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Developing Planting Date Guidelines for Arkansas Corn	39,000.00	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Evaluation of White Grain Sorghum Hybrids in Arkansas	5,400.00	Jason Kelley	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Development of Effective Weed Control Programs in Grain Sorghum with Crop Safety	11,150.00	Ken Smith	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Weed Control Programs in Arkansas Corn	24,150.00	Ken Smith	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Alotian Club LLC Fuel Load Reduction	19,500.00	Kyle Cunningham	Alotian Club, LLC
AgrAbility Arkansas State Project	161,978.00	LaVona Traywick	National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Soybean-Soil/Nutrition Management	22,000.00	Leo Espinoza	Soybean Promotion Board
COTMAN Use in a Zone Management System	10,000.00	Leo Espinoza	Cotton Incorporated
Soil Fertility Requirements for Corn	26,000.00	Leo Espinoza	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
DOD/USDA Partnership: Child Youth Deployment Support Project	50,000.00	Maureen Rose	Kansas State University
Arkansas Discovery Farm Program (2011/12)	5,000.00	Michael Daniels	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Arkansas Discovery Farm Program (2012/13)	5,000.00	Michael Daniels	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Evaluation of Bt Corn Hybrids for Protection of Ears Against Ear Feeders	10,380.00	Scott Akin	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Evaluation of a Biological Litter Amendment on Chicken Litter Quality	14,000.00	Susan Watkins	Chore-Time Poultry Production Systems
Evaluation of Control Options and Treatment Thresholds for Redbanded Stink Bug	5,451.00	Travis Faske	Soybean Promotion Board
Assessment of the Importance of Root-Knot Nematodes and Northern Corn Leaf	16,000.00	Travis Faske	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Diseases of Grain and Sweet Sorghum Hybrids	16,910.00	Travis Faske	Corn & Grain Promotion Board
Economic Indicators of the Dairy Industry in Arkansas	2,250.00	Wayne Miller	Arkansas Department of Agriculture
TOTAL	\$ 809,149.00		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Christina L. Gordon

Education and Comm. Technician, Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences, effective April 16, 2012.

Henry L. Green

Program Technician - Geospatial, Bio and Agricultural Engineering, effective April 2, 2012.

Julian M. King

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Independence County, effective April 16, 2012.

Dustin M. Sullivan

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Franklin County-Charleston, effective April 23, 2012.

Wei Zhou

Program Associate - Plant Pathology, Plant Pathology, effective April 26, 2012.