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## BLUE LETTER

November 2017

No. 3787



## A good time to look back on our successes

November is a month when the weather in Arkansas starts to really get serious about preparing us for winter and – ugh – cold weather. We had killing frosts the other day, followed naturally by a week of days in the 80s so that you really never know what to put on in the morning. But among the freeze-one-week, heat-stroke-the-next episodes are those crisp, clear and refreshing days that make living in our state such a blessing, at least four or five days a year anyway.

We are also entering the season when we evaluate “how we did” in our work with AIMS reporting completed back in early October, followed by reviews of the county extension impact statements. There are some interesting ones and, yes, I am reading them. We have also nominated each other for various recognitions and Dec. 4, we will have our annual conference in Little Rock to recognize length of service, extension excellence awards, and the many other external honors accumulated during the year by our colleagues.

Please know that recognizing and nominating peers is a distinct privilege, and something I consider a professional duty. I know that many of you are doing this already, and I have also recently appointed a committee, led by Dr. Stacey McCullough, to work year-round in identifying colleagues who merit recognition, opportunities for recognition, and to make sure an appropriate nomination is submitted. I appreciate Stacey and others for taking on this rewarding challenge.

Kudos time – one of Ples Spradley’s favorite words, which I stole and use now. Kudos to Aaron Cato and Joe Black in Entomology. Aaron won first place and Joe second place in their respective national graduate student competitions at the

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## Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center welcomes new staff



Alyssa Huber, program technician

Alyssa Huber joined APAC in May of 2017, just a few days after graduating from Henderson State University. Alyssa has her bachelor's degree in Family and Consumer Science, with a specialization in Foods and Nutrition.

Alyssa got her start with the Cooperative Extension Service and APAC as an administrative specialist. Five months later, she began her new position as a program technician. With a strong customer service background, Alyssa will be happy to assist you in any way possible. She is committed to strengthening Arkansas small businesses.

Debra Garcia came to APAC from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission where she was a grants manager for the Community Development Grant Block program. Debra is a PCED (Professional Community and Economic Developer) and a member of the Arkansas Economic Developers and Chamber Executives. She has experience in grants management, economic development and planning and zoning and also in assisting contractors in registration for SAM.gov, securing DUNS numbers and assisting with requirements pertaining to the Davis-Bacon Labor Laws.

She is an Arkansas native and resides in Little Rock with her husband, Robert. ■



Debra Garcia, program associate

## NEAFCS-Arkansas well represented at national meeting

Arkansas was represented well at the 2017 National Extension Association for Family and Consumer Science Conference, "Harvesting Opportunities in NEAFCS," in Omaha, Nebraska, Oct. 16-19. Eight county Family and Consumer Science agents, two FCS specialists, two spouses and Dr. Martha Ray Sartor attended the conference.

Concurrent session presentations included Dr. Lisa Washburn, "Enhancing Extension's Readiness to Implement a 'PSE' Approach to Positive Youth Development for Health." Dr. Jennifer Conner, Mary Ann Kizer, Leigh Ann Bullington and Dr. Washburn presented "Leveraging Extension Resources and Using the Community Coalition Action Theory (CATT) to Build and Strengthen Community Health."

Award winners included:

- Celeste Scarborough, former employee, 2nd place, Communication Award, Written Press Release, Southern Region
- Dianna Bowen, Lonoke County, School Wellness Program Award, Southern Region, 3rd place
- Jane Newton, Lincoln County, Distinguished Service Award
- Jean Ince, Howard County, Continued Excellence Award ■



The Arkansas Delegation heading out for States Night Out dinner. Left to right: James E. Phifer, Sr., Iris Phifer, Dianna Bowen, Terrie James, Jean Ince, Carla Hadley, Jane Newton, Leigh Ann Bullington, Mary Ann Kizer, Dr. Jennifer Conner and John Conner. Seated, left to right: Dr. Lisa Washburn and Dr. Martha Ray Sartor.



Jane Newton, Lincoln County, received the Distinguished Service Award, and Jean Ince, Howard County, received the Continued Excellence Award, two of the Highest Awards presented at the NEAFCS National Conference.



Dianna Bowen received the School Wellness Program Award, Southern Region 3rd place, from NEAFCS.

## Stronger Economies Together (SET) in northeast and southeast regions of Arkansas

Facilitated by Cooperative Extension and USDA Rural Development, two regions in Arkansas have begun work to develop and implement economic development plans that build on regional assets and comparative economic strengths. The Northeast Arkansas Economic Development Coalition consists of Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence, Poinsett and Randolph counties. Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Cleveland, Desha, Drew, Grant, Jefferson and Lincoln counties belong to the Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District.

The Stronger Economies Together, a SET, planning process in each region has begun with civic forums to allow stakeholders to explore and discuss the region's strengths, challenges and opportunities. After the civic forums, there will be four additional planning sessions, as well as followup support. Through the program, each region is receiving:

- Coaching on core building blocks for developing and launching a regional High Quality Plan.
- In-depth data to help delineate critical drivers of the regional economy.
- Tools to uncover local assets and resources that can be tapped to advance regional economic strategies and actions.
- Technical assistance in implementing the regional High Quality Plan.

To learn more about the program and view progress for each region, visit [www.uaex.edu/SET](http://www.uaex.edu/SET). ■



Stakeholders engage in table discussions during civic forum held in Paragould on Sept. 27, 2017.

## Baxter County students participate in Arkansas Farm to You

On Oct. 24-25, more than 280 fourth-grade students at Hackler Intermediate school in Baxter County participated in Arkansas Farm to You. This exhibit gave students an opportunity to explore the interactive, walk-through display from the farm and through the body. Students learned about Arkansas foods and how their bodies use those foods as fuel for being active.

The exhibit consisted of 10 stations, with Mountain Home High School students teaching about agricultural and health adventures, including Farmer Dale's Farm, Milk Processing Plant and Market Café, Mouth, Stomach, Small Intestine, Muscle, Bone and Skin.

Groups of eight to 10 students spent about five minutes at each station participating in activities and learning about the relationship between agriculture, food and health. ■



Students participating in Arkansas Farm to You stations.

## Two Arkansas 4-H'ers attend National 4-H Dairy Conference



Julie and Tanner toured ABS Global.

The National 4-H Dairy Conference was held in Madison, Wisconsin, on Oct. 1-4. Julie Griffin of Benton County and Tanner Riddle of Van Buren County were selected to represent Arkansas at the conference and were provided an expense-paid trip through the Department of Animal Science. Julie and Tanner were able to partake in a variety of tours including ABS Global, Hoard's Dairyman publishing firm and dairy farm, World Dairy Expo and to various dairy producer farms. They also participated in hands-on seminars with topics including artificial insemination and making ice cream and cheese. Julie served on the head table committee and introduced one of the speakers, and Tanner served on the transportation committee.

Julie is the daughter of Jim and Jackie Griffin of Siloam Springs. Tanner is the son of Jason and Gina Riddle of Damascus. Next year's National 4-H Dairy Conference will be held Sept. 30-Oct. 3 in Madison, Wisconsin. ■

## Urban Homesteading Conference – farm life, city living

Cooperative Extension Service agents spent a day presenting to a sellout crowd Nov. 4 at the Arkansas Urban Homesteading Conference held at the St. Joseph Center in North Little Rock.

Homesteading – with its focus on sustainability – has become a hot topic in recent years, and in Arkansas, the concept has caught on thanks to the annual homesteading conferences begun by the *Cleveland County Herald* and the county extension office.

The Nov. 4 event was the first homesteading conference with a focus on urban audiences. “With several hundred attendees at the event, every session was standing-room-only,” said Beth Phelps, Ouachita District Director. “The event provided lots of visibility for Extension.”

Michelle Carter, Bradley County, did a session on food preservation focusing on canning meat. Randy Forst, Pulaski County, covered raised bed gardening. Janet Carson gave a presentation on edible landscapes. Les Walz, Cleveland County, talked about do-it-yourself high tunnels and hoop houses. JoAnn Vann, Clark County, showed conference-goers how to make cheese at home. Erica Williams and Blanca Hernandez, Pulaski County, had 4-H hands-on activities.

Amanda Perez, of Agriculture and Natural Resources, had an education display on the new Produce Safety rule. ■

## Bradley County wins American Royal 4-H Livestock Judging Contest

Bradley County represented Arkansas at the American Royal 4-H Livestock Judging Contest on Oct. 26 in Kansas City. Sixteen different states competed in the contest, and Arkansas came out on top. This is the first time a team from Arkansas has won this contest. Contest participants judged 10 classes consisting of steers, heifers, hogs, lambs and goats. In



JoAnn Vann demonstrates Cheese Making at Home.



Bradley County 4-H Livestock Judging Team, left to right: Madison McGhee, Abby Johnson, Taylor Gwin – coach, Samantha Clanton, Lupe Martinez.

addition, they gave six sets of reasons. The all-girl team consists of Samantha Clanton, Abby Johnson, Madison McGhee and Lupe Martinez, coached by Taylor Gwin.

### Team Awards:

- 1st Overall Team
- 1st in Swine
- 1st in Cattle
- 1st in Reasons
- 5th in Sheep/Goats

### Individual Awards:

- Samantha Clanton – 2nd Overall, 1st in Cattle, 4th in Swine, 4th in Reasons
- Abby Johnson – 3rd Overall, 6th in Sheep/Goats, 6th in Cattle, 6th in Reasons
- Madison McGhee – 9th Overall, 3rd in Swine
- Lupe Martinez – 3rd in Sheep ■

## 4-H National Youth Science Day

October 2017 will be the close of the term of Arkansas’ National 4-H STEM Ambassador Joshua Rodgers. Rodgers of Howard County was one of six ambassadors from across the country. He spent the last three years participating in National Youth Science Day and other STEM events.

This year, National Youth Science Day, or NYSD, was conducted at PS 21 elementary school in Brooklyn, New York. The one-day event began with a “pep rally” of famous scientists, including NASA astronaut and former 4-H’er Peggy Whitson.

Joshua’s role included facilitating youth in the “Incredible Wearables” challenge. Students in small groups were given a challenge in which they had to create a wearable fitness tracker that accurately tracked steps, heart rate and pulse. Some difficulties the youth faced were design of the tracker, securing it to the body and making sure the tracker was logging accurate data. One member of each group was the “athlete” who participated in aerobic activities and wore the tracker; the other group members were responsible for design or data collection. After the first trial, the groups were able to optimize or redesign the trackers before completion of the challenge.

The ambassadors also met with donors from Lockheed Martin, HughesNet and Google, just to name a few.

Unfortunately, the National STEM Ambassador program will not be renewed for the following year. However, the National 4-H Council will continue working with the donors to provide STEM activities for 4-H’ers around the country. ■



National 4-H STEM Ambassador, Joshua Rodgers, and youth participants conducting the Incredible Wearables Challenge.

**ARKANSAS PRODUCE SAFETY**

[WWW.UAEX.EDU/ARKANSAS-PRODUCE-SAFETY](http://WWW.UAEX.EDU/ARKANSAS-PRODUCE-SAFETY)

The Cooperative Extension Service has resources to help growers understand and comply with the new Food Safety Modernization Act regulations. Visit our website and complete a survey to find out how new regulations affect your farm or to register for one of the workshops listed below.

## PRODUCE SAFETY WORKSHOPS (Registration is required.)

### CENTRAL

**November 7, 2017**  
C.A. Vines Arkansas  
4-H Center | Little Rock

### EASTERN

**December 6, 2017**  
East Arkansas  
Community College |  
Forrest City

### SOUTHEAST

**January 9, 2018**  
UA Monticello

### SOUTHWEST

**January 16, 2018**  
Southwest Research  
and Extension  
Center | Hope

### NORTHWEST

**December 11, 2017**  
Don Tyson Center  
for Ag Sciences |  
Fayetteville

**U of A** DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
University of Arkansas System

ARKANSAS  
AGRICULTURE  
DEPARTMENT



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez, Produce Safety Educator  
aperez@uaex.edu or 501.671.2228

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution. If you require a reasonable accommodation to participate or need materials in another format, please contact your (insert appropriate office) as soon as possible. Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay.

## Monroe County Master Gardeners hold Fall Seminar

The Monroe County Master Gardeners held their Fall Seminar on Oct. 14 with approximately 65 people in attendance. This year's seminar, themed "Christmas in October," was a wonderful pre-Christmas event for all those in attendance.

With just 15 members and the help of three county agents, it took all hands on deck to put together a seminar described as "one of the best Master Gardener events we've attended" by a participant. Judy Nash, president of the Monroe County Master Gardeners, said, "We are proud of our little county and wanted to exceed any expectations of what a small town seminar might be."



Participants admire a gardening-themed Christmas tree.

Attendees enjoyed a full-course meal prepared by the Monroe County Master Gardeners. The event's educational focus was guest speakers Blann Britton and Chris Norwood.

Britton, a gardening hobbyist from Crawfordsville, raises more than 400 roses and 600 zinnias at his home, among other projects. He offered an abundance of gardening advice, along with a Q&A session.

Norwood, vice president of floral operations at Tipton & Hurst, created before the guests over a dozen astounding holiday decorative pieces from materials supplied straight from the gardens and lawns of the Monroe County Master Gardeners. His creations became the most desired door prizes of the day. From a fine feast and numerous door prizes to fresh ideas for your garden and the holiday season, no one went home empty handed. ■



Participants enjoyed lunch and learned from speakers at the Fall Seminar.

## Share your information through videos on social media

Social media can be a great place to find new projects to try or interesting ways to make your life better. One of the most popular topics people find are quick and easy recipes. Some of our agents have created short videos that can be shared through Facebook, Instagram and even Pinterest. Extension programs like SNAP-Ed and EFNEP provide wonderful information on healthy and inexpensive meal prep. That information can be shared easily on social media where our main demographic already searches for their ideas.

Agents like Addie Wilson of Ouachita County have used their mobile device to create energetic and informative videos showing ideas for simple meals. Others like SNAP-Ed program assistant Hollie Davis of Pulaski County have taken advantage of the video studio at the state office. The studio has a working kitchen set that allows one of our videographers to help produce a high quality video to share on social media. If you feel like you can handle it on your own, Ricky Blair or Kerry Rodtnick will make sure you have what you need to produce the video by yourself.

At right are links to two videos Davis recently shot within the studio. ■



The holidays are rolling in, and SNAP-Ed at the Pulaski County Extension office has been busy preparing! Here is a simple, spooky treat made just in time for Halloween!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kiiwFW6qel&feature=youtu.be>



This pumpkin treat is sure to satisfy any fall craving and highlights whole grains in baking. These videos can be found on the Pulaski County SNAP ED Facebook page @SNAPED.Pulaski and are free to use for any educational need.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0bJrNWqv9c&feature=youtu.be>

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

## APAC hosts Department of the Navy Small Business director

On Oct. 18, the Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center, APAC, welcomed more than 60 small business owners and community leaders to a workshop with Emily Harman, director of the Office of Small Business for the Navy. Attendees heard from the Department of the Navy on upcoming contracting opportunities with the Navy and Marine Corps. Last fiscal year, the Department of the Navy awarded \$25 million in contracts to Arkansas-based small businesses, \$8.75 million in the city of Little Rock alone. The small business workshop was part of Little Rock's Navy Week.

APAC program manager Melanie Berman shared with attendees the many no-cost services the technical assistance center provides to small businesses. APAC is funded in part by a cooperative agreement from the Defense Logistics Agency with support from Cooperative Extension Service. APAC has offices in Bentonville as well as at the Little Rock State Office.

If you know of any small businesses in your county looking to grow through government contracting, APAC will be happy to help. Contact APAC with your request: [apac@uaex.edu](mailto:apac@uaex.edu) or 501-671-2390. ■



Emily Harman, director of the Office of Small Business for the Navy.

### Cartwright, cont.

Entomological Society of America meeting recently. Both are advised by Dr. Gus Lorenz, and both are going to make a huge difference in science in the future.

Kudos to Les Walz and Britt Talent and others for helping the St. Joseph Center in North Little Rock pull off a very successful homesteading event, patterned on the conferences held in Cleveland County over the years. It was standing room only at the meat canning (Michelle Carter) and cheese making (JoAnn Vann) classes. Where else are you going to hear this but Extension and the Blue Letter? (Editor's note: except Conversations with Cartwright)

Kudos to Joshua Rodgers of Howard County 4-H who completed service as one of six national STEM ambassadors. Outstanding. We need more Joshua Howards and 4-H'ers in our society today. Speaking of 4-H again, kudos to Bradley County. The 4-H Livestock Judging Team of Samantha Clanton, Abby Johnson, Madison McGhee and Lupe Martinez with volunteer coach Taylor Gwin won the American Royal Livestock Judging Contest in Kansas City against 16 other states. This is a first ever for an Arkansas team, so KUDOS.

Not to forget but the Bradley County Forestry Team that we mentioned as winning the nationals last year; they did it again this year, two in a row – kudos. Kudos to all the young people who participated, or competed, at the Arkansas State Fair this fall. Ralph Shoptaw and staff put on an outstanding fair this year, but he reminded me that it was really all for these young people, and they showed up and made the fair again what it is. After watching them in and out of the show rings and learning events, I certainly agree. Kudos to all of our Extension staff, with a special kudos to Chelsey Ahrens, Allen Davis, Sherri Sanders, Jesse Bocksnick, J.J. Pitman and our many county agents for working so hard to help Arkansas youth have such a rewarding experience. It was a mind-boggling time.

And kudos to Amanda Perez for hitting the ground running on the Produce Safety Rule program statewide – impressive start. For everybody else that I have forgotten to say kudos to, sorry but I appreciate you and your hard work.

Final reminder that November is open enrollment month for our health care benefits. Please make your decisions before Nov. 30 and get this back to the provider(s). It is important. I appreciate our HR staff for keeping us informed of all the changes coming from the UA System with regard to insurance and retirement – all things being equal, it is much better to be informed than not.

Finally, I sincerely appreciate the hard work and professionalism of Matt Brown. Matt came on board back in July and has worked tirelessly on many complex and evolving problems. His is a challenging role, at a challenging time, and Matt handles everything so very well. Thanks Matt.

– Dr. Rick Cartwright ■

## Arkansas State Fair Skillathon winners

Skillathons were held during the Arkansas State Fair to test exhibitor's knowledge. In the Sheep, Beef, Goat and Swine skillathons, participants were divided into junior or senior age divisions. 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 – Addison Kennon, Stone County  
2nd – Will Martin, Norfolk FFA  
3rd – Vallie Yancey, Madison County

#### Seniors:

- 1st – Alisun Watson, Benton County  
2nd – Dustin Kendrick, Boone County  
3rd – Thane Stidham, Crawford County



**Sheep Skillathon winners:** Addison Kennon (left) of Stone County 4-H won the Junior Sheep Skillathon Contest; Alisun Watson (right) of Benton County 4-H won the Senior Sheep Skillathon Contest.

### Beef Skillathon Winners

#### Juniors:

- 1st – Savannah Jackson, Howard County  
2nd – Lea Ellison Phelps, Grant County  
3rd – Jaden Tweedy, Randolph County

#### Seniors:

- 1st – Nick Pohlman, Washington County  
2nd – Hayden Hyman, Miller County  
3rd – Baylee Mangrum, Greene County

### Goat Skillathon Winners

#### Juniors:

- 1st – Brayden Mooney, Van Buren County  
2nd – Kamryn Fulton, Union County  
3rd – Logan Pruitt, Stone County

#### Seniors:

- 1st – Bryce McWilliams, Greenbrier FFA  
2nd – Jenna Frederick, Sebastian County  
3rd – Madison Dickey, Greenbrier FFA



**Beef Skillathon winners:** Savannah Jackson (left) of Howard County 4-H won the Junior Beef Skillathon Contest; Nick Pohlman (right) of Washington County 4-H won the Senior Beef Skillathon Contest.



**Goat Skillathon winners:** Brayden Mooney (left) of Van Buren County 4-H won the Junior Goat Skillathon Contest; Bryce McWilliams of Greenbrier FFA won the Senior Goat Skillathon Contest.

### Swine Skillathon Winners

#### Juniors:

- 1st – Reese Mitchell, Taylor FFA  
2nd – Addison Kennon, Stone County  
3rd – Reid Wingert, White County

#### Seniors:

- 1st – Taylor Richey, Mountain Home FFA  
2nd – Tate Rodgers, Beebe FFA  
3rd – Ian Ruegsegger, Norfolk FFA ■



**Swine Skillathon winners:** Reese Mitchell (left) of Taylor FFA won the Junior Swine Skillathon Contest; Taylor Richey of Mountain Home FFA won the Senior Swine Skillathon Contest.

## BENEFITS CORNER

### It's Open Enrollment Time!

How do I enroll or make changes? Medical, Dental, Vision, Flexible Spending Account (FSA), Optional Long-Term Disability: Go to [www.uaex.edu/OpenEnrollment](http://www.uaex.edu/OpenEnrollment), click the Open Enrollment Forms tab and select the appropriate form. You must re-enroll in an FSA every year in which you wish to continue this benefit. The form(s) should be sent to HR – by fax (501-671-2251), email or in person. The deadline for our office's receipt of the form is 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 30, 2017.

### Are Your Beneficiaries Up to Date?!

You can view your designated life insurance beneficiaries at any time in CEDAR. Go to the CEDAR Link and log in: <http://cedar.uaex.edu> and then click on HR: Your Personnel Records and then Display Matches by Name. Review form(s) Group Benefits Enrollment Form or Group Benefits Change Form for the most recently named beneficiary.

Your retirement plan beneficiaries are maintained by your plan sponsor. If you are enrolled in the UA Retirement Plan, simply log into your TIAA and/or Fidelity account to update your beneficiary on-line, or call TIAA, [www.tiaa.org](http://www.tiaa.org) 1-800-842-2776 / Fidelity, [www.fidelity.com](http://www.fidelity.com) 1-800-343-0860. If you participate in the state retirement plan, APERS, beneficiary forms are available at [www.apers.org](http://www.apers.org) or call 1-501-682-7800. ■

## Arkansas State Fair Livestock Sale of Champions

The Arkansas State Fair Livestock Sale of Champions was held on Friday, Oct. 20, 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 Steer – Whitney Walker** of Prairie Grove FFA – \$18,000 – Arkansas Farm Bureau plus \$1,200 from Beef Brigade, for a total of \$19,200

**Reserve Grand Champion Steer – Samuel Tillery** of Saline County 4-H – \$13,000 – Arkansas Cattlemen's Association and Beef Brigade

**Grand Champion Market Hog – Katie Head** of Greene County 4-H – \$9,000 – Blue Ribbon Campaign

**Reserve Grand Champion Market Hog – Jessica Griffin** of Greene County 4-H and Greene County Tech FFA – \$7,000 – Blue Ribbon Campaign

**Grand Champion Market Lamb – Kinder Harlow** of Prairie Grove FFA - \$6,250 – Arkansas Farm Bureau Insurance

**Reserve Grand Champion Market Lamb – Kaylie Stone** of Gurdon FFA – \$3,500 – Blue Ribbon Campaign

**Grand Champion Market Goat – Ty Finch** of Buffalo Island Central FFA – \$7,000 – Arkansas Farm Bureau Insurance

**Reserve Grand Champion Market Goat – Kaylie Stone** of Gurdon FFA – Did Not Sell ■



Whitney Walker of Prairie Grove FFA with her Grand Champion Market Steer.



Samuel Tillery of Saline County 4-H with his Reserve Grand Champion Market Steer.



Katie Head (center) of Greene County 4-H with her Grand Champion Market Hog.



Jessica Griffin of Greene County 4-H with her Reserve Grand Champion Market Hog.



Kinder Harlow of Prairie Grove FFA with his Grand Champion Market Lamb.



Kaylie Stone of Gurdon FFA with her Reserve Grand Champion Market Lamb.



Ty Finch of Buffalo Island Central FFA with his Grand Champion Market Goat.

## Federal program offers loan forgiveness for government, nonprofit employees

Still making student loan payments? As a Cooperative Extension employee, you may be eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program. PSLF forgives the remaining balance on your Direct Loans after you have made 120 qualifying monthly payments under a qualifying repayment plan while working full-time for a qualifying employer.

Qualifying employers include:

- Government organizations at any level (federal, state, local or tribal).
- Not-for-profit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Other types of not-for-profit organizations that are not tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, if their primary purpose is to provide certain types of qualifying public services.

For more information, visit the Federal Student Aid webpage on the program at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service>. ■

## 4-H'er donates stuffed animals to White River Medical Center

Daniel Latus of the Batesville 4-H Club has collected more than 220 gently used stuffed animals to benefit young patients at White River Medical Center.

Daniel presented the stuffed animals to “Doc” Spurlin, who is pastoral care chaplain at the hospital. Spurlin will distribute the animals to four different locales in the hospital: the pediatric floor, lab, ICU and emergency room. The stuffed animals are given out to young patients who are at the hospital to give comfort during their stay.

Daniel asked 4-H clubs in the county to help with the drive. He was able to use his contact, George Latus, WRMC laundry manager, to wash and sterilize the stuffed animals before they were placed in circulation. Daniel selected this community service project because he realized it would be beneficial to the entire county.

If you have stuffed animals you would like to donate to Daniel for his community service project, you may drop them off at the Independence County Extension Office at 1770 Myers Street in Batesville or call 870-793-8840. ■



“Doc” Spurlin accepting the over 220 stuffed animals that Daniel collected for the hospital.

## Get Real, Here's the Deal class a big success at Wynne High School



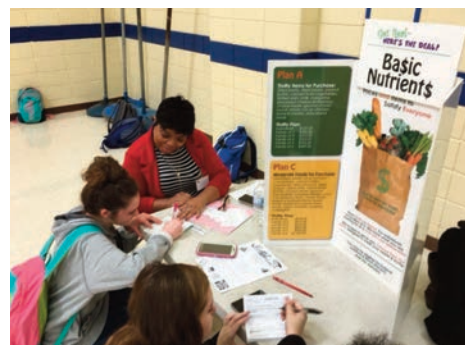
Tenth-grade students and peer ambassadors at Wynne High School.

More than 225 10th-grade students participated in “Get Real, Here's the Deal” classes and an interactive exhibit at the Wynne High School 10th-grade academies on Oct. 27. Assisted by nearly 60 business and community leaders, the students faced adult financial issues as they negotiated the exhibit.

Sherry Breckenridge, district parent coordinator and collaborator, stated: “You know a program is successful when teachers, students, parents and members of the community request to expand and

repeat (the program) before the event is even over. A teacher emailed to say that students who are seniors this year were so impressed they also want to participate.”

Plans are underway to reach 11th- and 12th-grade students before the school year is over. ■



Donna Hill, Cross County Department of Human Services, offers information on basic nutrients to participants.

## Grants and Contracts for Month Ending October 31, 2017

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Demonstrating Conservation Practices Benefitting Wildlife, Water Quality and Farm Economics on Working Lands	105,726.00	Becky McPeake	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Project/Testing Protocol Attachment A-26	10,000.00	Bob Scott	BASF Corporation
Wheat Research Verification Program	47,300.00	Jason Kelley	Wheat Promotion Board
Provide an Enhanced Understanding of the Interactions of Management Practices and Composting Process of In-Vessel Composters	67,730.00	Karl Vandevender	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Building Capacity for Watershed Leadership and Management in Twelve Mississippi River Basin States	25,759.00	Michael Daniels	University of Wisconsin-Extension
2018 National Direct Agricultural Marketing Summit	80,000.00	Ron Rainey	Agricultural Marketing Service
Drew County 4-H Program	2,000.00	Steve Kelley	Heart of Arkansas United Way
<b>Total Awards for October 2017</b>	<b>\$338,515.00</b>		

## Personnel changes

### Please welcome the following:

**Alan Beach**, Program Associate, Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences, effective October 2, 2017.

**Casey Hill**, Administrative Specialist, Community and Economic Development, effective October 2, 2017.

**Adrien Mason**, Administrative Specialist, Ag. Economics and Ag. Business, effective October 2, 2017.

**Tammy Tenison**, Administrative Specialist, Marion County, effective October 2, 2017.

**Cindy Whiteside**, Administrative Specialist, Lincoln County, effective September 18, 2017.

**Jordyn Williams**, Program Technician - Obesity Reduction, Family and Consumer Sciences, effective September 18, 2017.

### Extension says goodbye to:

**Keith Bramwell**, Extension Poultry Specialist, Poultry Science, effective October 23, 2017.

**Anabel Grunauer**, EFNEP Program Assistant, Pulaski County, effective October 20, 2017.

**Charlet Jones**, County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Lee County, effective October 10, 2017.

**Ashley King**, County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Pulaski County, effective October 31, 2017.

**Susan Watkins**, Distinguished Professor, Poultry Science, effective October 31, 2017.

**Jackie Yarbrough**, Director of Financial Services, Finance and Administration, effective October 20, 2017.

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

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