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BLUE LETTER

December 2021

No. 3836



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Merry Christmas!

I want to start by wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am sure many of you feel the same way, but it is hard for me to believe another year has passed. I sat down the other day and found myself planning for next year as many of you probably have already done. However, it is also a good time of year to reflect on what we have accomplished before we completely say goodbye to 2021.

This year, we have accomplished much under the extra burden of a pandemic that still lingers. We broke ground on a new Extension center and county office in Jackson County, hosted in-person Check in and Tune up, 4-H O'Rama events, and had Dinner at the Vines. We got back out into communities, held virtual field days, had a great support staff conference, obtained over \$14 million in grants, and made over 13 million educational contacts using traditional methods and our new online skills that the pandemic has taught us. We did this and so much more.



Here at the Little Rock State Office, we finished a big renovation effort on the first floor. We filled 84 vacancies with both faculty and staff located throughout the state and said goodbye to 24 in retirement. We reconciled a fiscal year in Workday for the first time; for that matter, we operated under our first full year of Workday and

are still alive. We came back to the office and implemented a much-deserved salary increase based on a recurring budget increase. We held our annual Extension Employee Conference where we took the time to recognize individuals and teams for their outstanding work this year.

I know I cannot mention all we did this year, but the point is this year has been busy and productive through it all. I want to congratulate and thank all my Extension colleagues for your efforts. I hope you all enjoy the holiday break and come back recharged for 2022! ■

INSIDE SCOOP

2. Support Staff Conference
3. Extension Service Honors
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6. Service Milestones
7. Leadership Lunch and Learn
8. Tech Corner
9. Walk Across Arkansas...And much more!

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Support Staff Conference

All for One – One for All

A hybrid format for the Division's 2021 Support Staff Conference offered a variety of ways for support staff, presenters, and guests to participate this year. A new Zoom events conference platform was adopted quickly by Extension's IT Department which included a lobby,

Expo Cafes, and individual sessions. We were the first organization in the world to test the software with record attendance – up to 240. Microsoft Teams was used to encourage interaction including a virtual scavenger hunt.

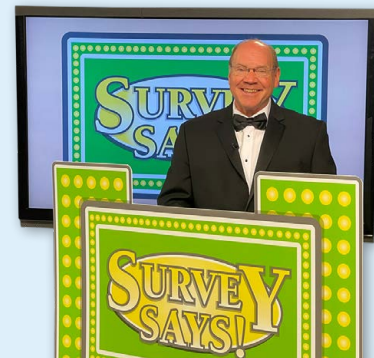
Seven remote watch sites were included: 4-H Center, Izard

County, Lawrence County, Lon Mann Cotton Research

Center, UA-Monticello, Faulkner County and LRSO. "Having a watch site was the next best thing to all being together. We had great food, fun and fellowship in Lawrence County," co-host Sandra McGinnis said.

The Survey Says-Family Feud game hosted by former extension administrator Sam Boyster, and assisted by Genean Butler and team members across Extension, provided "lol" to the max.

Kudos to the SSC UADA Planning Committee, Tech team, production crew, AES/CES IT helpdesks, session presenters, and internal and external Benefits Café participants who worked tirelessly behind and in front of the cameras to make it happen. ■



Former Extension administrator Sam Boyster hosting Survey Says-Family Feud game.



From left- Attending Lawrence County site, Sandra McGinnis, Lawrence County; Darlene Madden, Jackson County; Rose Dearn, Baxter County, Heather Akins, Randolph County, and Katie West, Greene County.

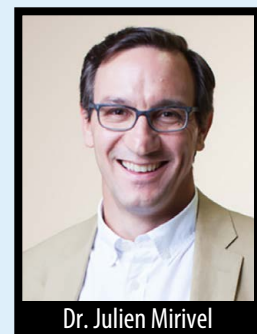
Effective Communication Positively Affects Relationships

Positive communication can improve our personal and professional relationships. This was Dr. Julien Mirivel's keynote message to participants in the closing session of the 2021 Support Staff Conference, Nov. 4.

His presentation, The Art of Positive Communication: Six Practices to Create Communication and Inspire Unity, included a practical model of communication we can use today.

Mirivel explained that the way we communicate matters because it has consequences. When it is done well, communication creates human contact, enables a person to discover solutions, builds people up, deepens their relationships and serves as a source of inspiration and influence. He emphasized that

although we communicate every day at work and home, we often fall short of our own best aspirations because, most often, we may not know how to communicate better. His interactive presentation invited us to transform our communication.



Dr. Julien Mirivel

Mirivel is a TEDx speaker and trainer and professor of applied communications at the UA Little Rock, whose mission is to inspire individuals and groups to communicate more positively at work and at home. ■

Extension Service Honors Excellence, Service Among Peers

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The Cooperative Extension Service recognized the efforts and excellence of employees at the state and county levels during the service's annual employee conference on Dec. 6. This year's hybrid conference was held virtually and at the state office.

Bob Scott, director of the Cooperative Extension Service, commended this year's winners, who were nominated and selected by their peers.

"This year we saw innovative approaches by individual employees and team efforts led by faculty and staff at the Cooperative Extension Service," Scott said. "Extension is still very much a people business, and our faculty and staff have continued to find ways to reach our clientele."

Christa Littlefield, administrative specialist in Franklin County, was named extension's 2021 Employee of the Year.

Littlefield, who has worked with extension for nearly 30 years, is the first administrative assistant to be awarded Employee of the Year. She was nominated by staff chairs Herb Ginn in Crawford County and Jesse Taylor in Franklin County.

Throughout her three decades with extension, Littlefield has served in Franklin County and other counties as the need arose. When Crawford County lost its longtime administrative assistant, Littlefield stepped in and provided immediate assistance to the agents for more than six months until a new employee could be hired and trained.

"I have no doubt she is the best administrative assistant in this area and should be utilized as a model exhibit of what it means to go above and beyond," said Jesse Taylor, Franklin County staff chair, said.

This year's winners include:

Early Career Award - County Extension Faculty: **Casey Ford**, Franklin County extension agent-family and consumer sciences

Early Career Award - Program Technician/Associate: **Lizzy Herrera**, program associate, horticulture

Early Career Award - State Extension Faculty: **Aaron Cato**, assistant professor, horticulture
County Team Award - "Wondrous Wednesday," by the Saline County team of **Kris Boulton, Megan Maulden, Nicole Nichols and Jennifer Pruitt**. They created a 10-week virtual education

program to serve 4-H families in the absence of face-to-face meetings during the pandemic. The weekly program addressed topics such as pollinators, bread making, gardening, forestry, citizenship, engineering, healthy snacks, pets and animal science.

State Team Award — Soil & Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip team members **Mike Daniels, Matt Fryer, Mary Poling, Lee Riley, Kerry Rodtnick, Bill Robertson, Julie Robinson, Rita Watson and Diedre Young**. The team has presented 14 field trips since July.

Scholarship Recipients

The Lynn R. Russell Endowed Award of Professional Excellence was awarded to two county agents.

Allison Howell, Clay County extension agent-agriculture, will use her award to attend the National Association of County Extension Agricultural Extension Agents annual meeting and professional improvement conference in 2022. Benton County Extension Agent **Ryan Neal** is using his award to attend an online course in blueberry physiology, production systems and management from Oregon State University.

The Mildred and Liz Childs Professional Development Fund Scholarship was awarded to Arkansas County 4-H/FCS agent **Alta Lockley** who is working toward a Master of Public Service from the Clinton School of Public Service. ■



Christa Littlefield is extension's 2021 Employee of the Year! More photos available [here](#).



Aaron Cato



Allison Howell

Parenting Program

In September and October Kristal Draper, county agent for Family and Consumer Sciences in Hot Spring County, and Rebecca Simon, program associate - Early Childhood/Family Life, conducted a parenting program called "Ins and Outs of Parenting" for Covenant Recovery House, which is a men's half-way house. The two did not have a curriculum to meet the request, so they worked together to create a four-session parenting program with sessions on stages of child development, parenting styles; parent-child relationships; and communication.

They conducted the program once a week for four weeks with 30 men each week. The program was well received: 98% of the men said they learned a lot from the program and planned to use what they learned to be better parents. One of the participants stated, "I plan to actually be in my kids' lives and make sure they know I love them and will be there for them." Another said he will strive to "Be more consistent, understanding, and especially patient. Make sure they always know I love them." There



Kristal Draper speaks at parenting program at men's half-way house.

were many more positive statements. The men received a certificate of completion at the last session which will become part of their file for court as they are up for release.

After the program was complete, it was shared with the FCS agents. Several agents have used the program. Torrie Smith in Carroll County and Katrina Sellers in Craighead County have taught the sessions and had similar success. ■

Local Agents and State Staff



Represent 4-H in Memphis

This year's National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYDP) was held Nov. 14-16 in Memphis, and extension staff represented Arkansas 4-H well, both in presentations and in awards. Laura Robertson (Crittenden County) presented on Succession Planning, while Hope Bragg (LRSO) presented on Pollinator Habitat Ambassadors and on her geospatial national award for her program using cookies to teach about mapping. Bragg also was recognized at the regional level (along with former county agents Elizabeth Easley and Cynthia Rorie) for work with the Pollinator Habitat Ambassadors. Valerie Seefeld (LRSO) presented a poster on Congressional Awards. Additionally, Casey Ford (Franklin) was awarded the Achievement in Service; Erica Williams (Pulaski) received the Distinguished Service Award; and Pia Woods (Jefferson) received the Meritorious Service Award. Congratulations to all who presented and won awards. You truly show what makes 4-H special in Arkansas. ■



UADA agents and state staff group in Memphis.

APTAC Fall Conference

Melanie Berman, program director for the Arkansas Procurement Technical Assistance Center, and Debra Garcia, procurement counselor, attended this year's Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC) fall conference where Garcia was recognized as a Certified Procurement Professional (CPP).

PTAC professionals from around the country



Debra Garcia (left), Arkansas PTAC procurement counselor and Melanie Berman (right), Arkansas PTAC Program director at the APTAC conference in Washington D.C.

gathered in Washington, DC, and online for training delivered by federal agency officials, private industry experts, and experienced PTAC colleagues. Participants learned about critical changes to small business regulations and acquisition priorities and gained a new understanding on topics ranging from cost proposals to market research to service contract labor standards to cybersecurity.

The PTAC program was established to expand the number of businesses capable of participating in government contracts. The program is administered by the Defense Logistics Agency's Office of Small Business in cooperation with states, local governments and nonprofit organizations. The assistance that Arkansas PTAC provides to businesses is available at no cost.

PTAC support to businesses includes registration in government vendor systems such as the System for Award Management (SAM), identification of contract opportunities, help in understanding requirements and in preparing and submitting bids. ■

Southern Risk Management Center Wins Award

The 2021 Farm Credit Market Maker innovation award winners were recently recognized at the 2021 National Agricultural Marketing Summit in Dallas. This annual award recognizes outstanding efforts by state and local programs around the United States that contribute to the development of local and regional food systems, connecting to new market opportunities.

The Southern Risk Management Center (SRMEC) was awarded first runner-up for its "Experience Arkansas Agriculture" program, a promotional campaign that connects consumers with opportunities to experience the many sides of Arkansas agriculture — from learning about unique farming families to understand the harvests offered by farms and ranches across the state.

Ron Rainey, assistant vice president for the Division of Agriculture and SRMEC director, received the award stating, "It's exciting to play a pivotal role in growing awareness and support of Arkansas agriculture. The promotional campaign has exceeded my expectations in terms of collaborations and consumer engagement." ■



Pictured left to right: Celise Weems, SRMEC. Gary Matteson, Farm Credit Council. Dr. Ron Rainey, UADA and SRMEC. Logan Duvall, Owner of Me and McGee Market, host of Experience Arkansas Agriculture.

2020 Service Milestones

Congratulations & big thanks to the following employees for their service.

EMPLOYEE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	EMPLOYEE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE
Heather Akins	Randolph Co.	5	Cherie Bradley	White Co.	10
Denise Brown	Finance Department	5	Eric DeVries	4-H Youth Development	10
Tara Clayton	Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences	5	Ashley Henderson	Family & Consumer Sciences	10
Debra Clevenger	Washington Co.	5	Christy Kelsey	Entomology & Plant Pathology	10
Ginger Ellison	Montgomery Co.	5	Kathy Reece	Yell Co.	10
Kayla Gill	4-H Youth Development	5	Mark Russell	Animal Science	10
Victor Hernandez	Facilities Management	5	Pearl Webb	Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences	10
Bob Hilton	Information Technology	5	Barbara Batiste	Office of Inclusion, Access, & Compliance	15
Robert Hoyle	Entomology & Plant Pathology	5	Robert Goodson	Phillips Co.	15
Shaura Ivy	Drew Co.	5	KeriJo Halpine	Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences	15
Chelsey Kimbrough	Animal Science	5	Jerry Jo Hamm	Madison Co.	15
Sandra Kirk	Hempstead Co.	5	Sherry Kaufman	Conway Co.	15
Taylor Knox	4-H Youth Development	5	Robbie Rye	Pope Co.	15
Kim Krummel	Washington Co., Community, Professional & Economic	5	Julie Treat	Horticulture	15
Armenta Lockhart	Community, Professional & Economic Development	5	Kelley Cochran	Delta District Office	20
Linda McCargo	Animal Science	5	Chris Meux	Communications	20
D.J. Moody	Vines 4-H Center	5	Katie Reddick	Pulaski Co.	20
Graham Peterson	Facilities Management	5	Janet Beck	Cross Co.	25
Mary Poling	Information Technology	5	Jerry Clemons	Delta District Office	25
Pam Pugh	Poinsett Co.	5	Roxana Jones	Little River Co.	25
Lee Riley	Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences	5	Claude Kennedy	Lonn Mann Cotton Research Station	25
Nyalya Salter	Human Resources	5	Kimberly Magee	Community, Professional & Economic Development	25
Jan Sampson	Office of Chief Operating Officer	5	Amy Hedges	Office of Senior AVP	30
Phyllis Scurlock	4-H Youth Development	5	Laura Hendrix	Family & Consumer Sciences	30
Gretchen Skinner	Information Technology	5	Steve Hall	Information Technology	35
Courtney Spinks	Entomology & Plant Pathology	5	Gus Lorenz	Entomology & Plant Pathology	35
Mike Vowell	Printing Services	5	Kelly Thomason	Calhoun Co.	35
Heidi Ward	Animal Science	5	Susan James	Information Technology	40
Breana Watkins	Ag & Natural Resources	5	Sharon Treat	Phillips Co.	40

Drew County 4-H Update



Drew County Teen Leaders prepare food boxes.

Thanksgiving Meals

Drew County Teen Leaders chose four local families in need and donated Thanksgiving meal kits. The members met on Nov. 21 at the courthouse to prepare the kits and then delivered them to the families.

Fallen 4-Horses

4-H Horse Club in Drew County hosted its annual "Fallen 4-Horses" event on Oct. 31. The club members gave pony rides to visitors to the ranch and enjoyed some riding themselves. Visitors brought canned food for pony rides, and the club then donated the food to Hope Place of Monticello. ■



Club leaders and members giving donated food to Hope Place Monticello representative.

3 Tips to Improve Your Networking Skills

In the latest Leadership Lunch and Learn session, Miguel Lopez, community outreach officer for Encore Bank, shared his personal story and how networking has impacted his life.

As a young boy, his mother gave him great advice, "Write your path in pencil and your purpose in pen."

“ Write your path in pencil and your purpose in pen. ”

- Miguel Lopez's Mother

He said this has guided him throughout his career. During the presentation, he provided three tips to improve networking and influencing skills.

1. **Be authentic.** He said his mentor taught him the value of sharing his story. Sharing personal stories relays the message that you have been there, overcame obstacles, and describes how.
2. **Be intentional.** Lopez suggested asking open-ended questions outside the standard line of what do you do for a living? An alternative might be what do you like to do for fun? He said networking is an opportunity to make friends before you need them.
3. **Know where you want to go.** He said if you have an idea of where you are going, others are willing and eager to help you get there.

View the recorded session [here](#). The next LLL session will be Jan. 26, 2022. [Register now](#). ■

iLEAD Cohort 1 Learns About

Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Styles

iLEAD Cohort 1 participated in their third virtual session last month. The topics were Emotional Intelligence, sometimes referred to as EQ, and leadership styles.

The session kicked off with Jared Morrison, organization development consultant at Ohio State University. He defined EQ as a set of emotional and social skills that collectively establish how we:

- **Perceive and express ourselves,**
- **Develop and maintain social relationships,**
- **Cope with challenges, and**
- **Use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way.**

After hearing from Morrison, iLEAD participants brainstormed methods to incorporate their EQ learning in their work and discussed opportunities for UADA

to embrace EQ ideologies as an organization.

Emily Smith, program associate in the Community, Professional, and Economic Development unit, also led the group through learning about different leadership styles. Participants were divided into breakout groups to define leadership styles and asked to create a skit/scenario to help the cohort understand the various styles.

The iLEAD program enhances interpersonal skills through virtual and in-person sessions, providing participants with knowledge, skills, and opportunities for growth. ■





Rules for Purchasing Software

IT must evaluate and approve all software/services to ensure it meets all legal procurement and security criteria. [Software and Cloud Services Purchase/Acquisition: Policy.](#)

Software purchases must go through IT unless an exemption has been given. Exemptions are granted only in advance of a purchase and only for a select few approved softwares. All software purchases and renewals must go through the [Software Request Form.](#)

IT will notify the person who submitted the software request if the request is approved. You will either be assigned the license and any expense will be charged to your department, or you may be given a one-time exemption to purchase the software with your PCard or by PO, which can be submitted within Workday.



IT offers the TurningPoint hardware, software, and licensing for use by all of Extension.

You will have access to this easy-to-use live polling system with the option to choose between a desktop or no-install platform for creating the content.

There will be two options available for responding to interactive questions:

- 1) Mobile devices (requires internet access).
- 2) QT2 full-featured devices that collect even more meaningful polling data than traditional response clickers.

The mobile licensing and QT2 clickers will be available for check-out through the mobile training lab. Each kit will require the included receiver and will come with 25 QT2 clickers or mobile licenses. Six kits are available, and they can be combined for larger groups.

Anyone wanting to reserve the TP kits will be required to complete online training first. This training is offered through Learn. After training, you can get started by signing up for a TP instructor account using your UADA email address. For more information, visit <https://www.uada.edu/employees/information-technology/it-software/turningpoint/default.aspx>.

If you have questions or need help with the system, contact the Call Center. Phone: 501-671-2255 or 866-779-3375
Email: callcenter@uada.edu.

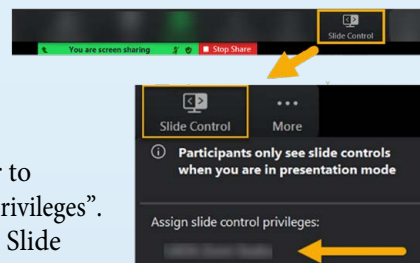
Get Your Essential Accessibility Checklist

Confused about how to make your documents accessible? Download our one page “[Accessibility Essentials Checklist](#)” to ensure you’re doing your part to make your Division files accessible. Remember, everyone is responsible for producing accessible content even if it’s not posted to the website.

Zoom Pro Tip

“Slide Control” Zoom’s Newest Update is a Game Changer! “Next slide, please”. Never hear or use these words again in a Zoom meeting with Zoom’s enhanced slide control. “Slide Control” is now available in the latest Zoom update that allows you to share a presentation and then select one or more people to control the movement of slides for that presentation. How does it work?

1. Share your screen.
2. Select “Slide Control” on the Zoom Toolbar.
3. Choose the presenter to “Assign slide control privileges”.
4. Presenter will see the Slide Control icon with areas to advance the slides, in the lower left corner of their Zoom window. The keyboard arrow keys may also be used to advance the slides. NOTE....presenter must be using the current version of Zoom. ■



2021 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

Register and join us for the January 11, 2022 Tech Tuesday webinar, “Trick Out Your PowerPoint”.

Take a look at the previous 2021 Tech Tuesdays. Check out the blog posts [here](#).



LeadAR Class 19

Journeys to the Golden Triangle Area

LeadAR Class 19 recently visited the Golden Triangle, an area in south Arkansas comprised of Camden, El Dorado and Magnolia and rich in cultural heritage, natural resources, and southern charm. The seminar began in Camden with two tours. The first was of General Dynamics by Eric Perrin, operations director, and the second was of Camden by Mayor Julian Lott and Ben Wooten, Camden building inspector-code enforcement.

In El Dorado, the class learned about El Dorado and Standard Lithium from El Dorado Chamber of Commerce President Bill Luther, and about the natural resources of south Arkansas from Robert Reynolds. Mayor Veronica Smith-Creer welcomed the class to El Dorado and joined the group for dinner.

In Magnolia, the class was welcomed by Mayor Parnell Vann and County Judge Denny Foster. There they learned about local companies Amfuel and Albemarle

Corporation, visited Anthony Oak Flooring, and toured Southern Arkansas University. ■



Walk Across Arkansas

Congratulations to the Top 10 teams who logged the most exercise minutes during Walk Across Arkansas! ■



WALK ACROSS ARKANSAS
SEPTEMBER 13 - NOVEMBER 7

RANK	TEAM	COUNTY	MINUTES
1	Recess Racers (8)	Prairie	6,053
2	Leftovers (7)	Prairie	6,040
3	Steptember Crew (6)	Faulkner	5,884
4	YetiCorn Kennels (2)	Crittenden	5,694
5	The Running Warriors (8)	Crittenden	5,596
6	Farmington Get Fit (7)	Washington	5,296
7	White Hall Willing WALKERS (5)	Jefferson	4,754
8	GIRLS ON FIRE (8)	Crawford	4,557
9	Hogfans (1)	Washington	4,354
10	EvansFitness (9)	Crittenden	4,322

Small Ruminant Production Conference

Cleburne, Independence, Searcy, Stone, and Van Buren counties conducted a multi-county small ruminant conference Nov. 30 at the Stone County Fairgrounds in Mountain View. Thirty attendees from nine counties learned about small ruminant management including forage production, fencing, health, marketing, and FAMACHA and Fecal Egg Count training for parasite control. County agents, extension specialists, and a local producer teamed up to deliver the program. ■



Former county agent and now full-time farmer, Carey Robertson, visited with our group on marketing of small ruminants.



Kenny Simon, extension forage program associate, presents a hands-on program to producers on fencing techniques for goats and sheep.

County Agent Receives Forestry Award

Jaret Rushing, staff chair of Calhoun County, received the Technology Transfer Award from the Ouachita Society of American Foresters for his work in forestry and wildlife promotion through social media. Jaret made more than 80 posts in 2020/21, specifically highlighting attributes of forestry and wildlife management such as general tree ID, wildlife species ID, vegetation management, cultivation, reptile encounter safety tips, feral hog control, forest edibles and white-tailed deer antler scoring and aging among many others. ■



Jaret Rushing receives the Technology Transfer award from OSAF representative and Associate Vice President - Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Vic Ford.

Pike County Courthouse Christmas Tree



Pike County 4-H members recently participate in a long-standing tradition of decorating the Pike County courthouse Christmas tree. Members made decorations that fit their "Adventure Awaits" theme. These included ornaments made at their November monthly meetings, two vintage leather suitcases with items that hint at adventure, and a sign with a compass that reads: "Your Adventure Awaits in Pike County 4-H." ■



Pike County 4-H members proudly take a photo with the Pike Co. Christmas Tree.

Columbia County 4-H Assist with

Operation Christmas Child



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Columbia County 4-H clubs — including Bethlehem 4-H, Roaring Tigers 4-H, Teen Leader 4-H and Unity 4-H — stuffed 74 Operation Christmas Child boxes in November! The Columbia County Extension Office hosted a countywide contest to boost 4-H participation. Roaring Tigers 4-H turned in the most boxes and will receive \$100 in 4-H merchandise. Teen Leaders 4-H helped deliver the boxes to the collection truck. The 4-H collection was the second largest in Columbia County for 2021. ■



Columbia County 4-H Teen Leaders assisted with the final packing and delivery of 74 Operation Christmas Child Boxes to the 2021 collection truck at Central Baptist Church.

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network	145,497	Brittney Schrick	The University of Tennessee
Trees for Water Quality Green Parking Lot Demonstrations	11,305	John Pennington	Arkansas Agriculture Department
Urban Stormwater Education Program	212,473	Katie Teague	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
Arkansas ARP ESSER III Afterschool and Summer Learning	150,000	Shannon Caldwell	Arkansas Out of School Network
Take Action Multi State Herbicide Resistant Crops and Weeds Educational Program	15,000	Tommy Butts	Purdue University
SCN Coalition: Reinforcing and Maintaining Local Efforts and Sustainable Yields	14,000	Travis Faske	University of Kentucky Research Foundation
TOTAL AWARDS FOR NOVEMBER 2021: \$548,275			

Is Your PDF Accessible?

Learn how to fix it on January 25.

Whether you use Adobe Acrobat or Foxit, we have training opportunities to show you the ins and outs of making a PDF file accessible. Our accessibility team will cover adding metadata, image descriptions, and heading levels to your PDF files. Each element improves accessibility and makes your content accessible to clientele with disabilities. Join our PDF Accessibility Remediation team on January 25 for two training opportunities; 10 a.m. (Adobe Acrobat) and 2 p.m. (Foxit). We will record the session for anyone who can't attend live.

10 a.m.
Adobe Acrobat Pro remediation demo
[Register here](#)

2 p.m.
Foxit remediation demo
[Register here](#)



Soybean Science Challenge Attends Arkansas State Farm Bureau Convention

The Soybean Science Challenge (SSC) hosted an educational booth at the Arkansas State Farm Bureau Convention in the Little Rock Convention Center Dec. 1-2. SSC Coordinator, Diedre Young, handed out soybean promotional items, lesson plans, resource guides and educational brochures to over 200 participants. Young encouraged attendees to tell teachers to use soybeans in classroom research by using the free resources available on Extensions 'soywhatsup' website. Young emphasized that her job is to make the teacher's job easier and that The Challenge has all the resources needed to make that happen!



The Soybean Science Challenge is a farmer-funded, statewide, high school education program that seeks to increase student knowledge about the value of Arkansas soybeans to the Arkansas economy, to the labor force, and ultimately to feed and fuel the world.

The Soybean Science Challenge is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the UofA Cooperative Extension Service.

For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson at jrobinson@uada.edu or

Diedre Young at dyoung@uada.edu. ■

Arkansas Extension Homemakers Rally

Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council enjoyed their annual district rallies this year. Though the number of attendees was limited due to COVID guidelines, each rally was successfully at capacity. Each district hosts a rally every fall for members to gather, enjoy a speaker, fellowship, hold silent auctions, and discuss current organizational matters. This year, Stacey Gorman, director of communications for The Cotton Board, spoke about volunteer recruitment that left members inspired and excited to try some new things for their clubs and counties. ■



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Benefits Corner

Quick Reference Chart

- **UMR Medical Coverage:** 1-888-438-6105 (Classic, Premier, or Health Savings plans). **List of providers:** www.umar.com. Click on "Find a provider," "Medical," "UnitedHealthcare Options PPO," and "Medical."
- **MedImpact Prescription Drugs:** 1-800-788-2949
- **Flexible Spending Account (FSA):** UMR Benny Card / 1-866-868-0145.
- **Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield (AR BCBS):** 1-888-223-4999. List of Dentists: <http://www.blueadvantagearkansas.com/portal/uasidental/Default.aspx>.
- **Superior Vision:** 1-800-507-3800. **List of providers:** 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). Ending 12/31/2021
- **Eye Med:** 1-866-800-5457. www.eyemed.com. Starting 1/1/2022. *Cards have been Mailed out for those that are enrolled.



- **Retirement Issues:**
Fidelity – 1-800-343-0860

TIAA – 1-800-842-2776

APERS – 1-800-682-7377.
(Not Available for new enrollments)

ATRS – 1-800-666-2877.
(Not Available for new enrollments).

UA Employees eligible for retirement should provide the Benefits Team with a minimum of ninety (90) days advanced notice and are urged to retire on the last working day of the month.

- Human Resources Benefits: yourbenefits@uada.edu. ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome Aboard:

Juanita Sherman – Grants Analyst - Office of Sponsored Programs, Little Rock

Farewell to:

Gus M Lorenz – Associate Department Head - Extension Entomologist, Lonoke Agricultural Center

Henry Michael Chaney – Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator - Faulkner County

Brandi M. Davis – 4-H Program Assistant - Crawford County

Terrika Edwards – Administrative Specialist II - Family & Consumer Sciences

Emily Burgess – 4-H Program Assistant - Lawrence County

