

BL

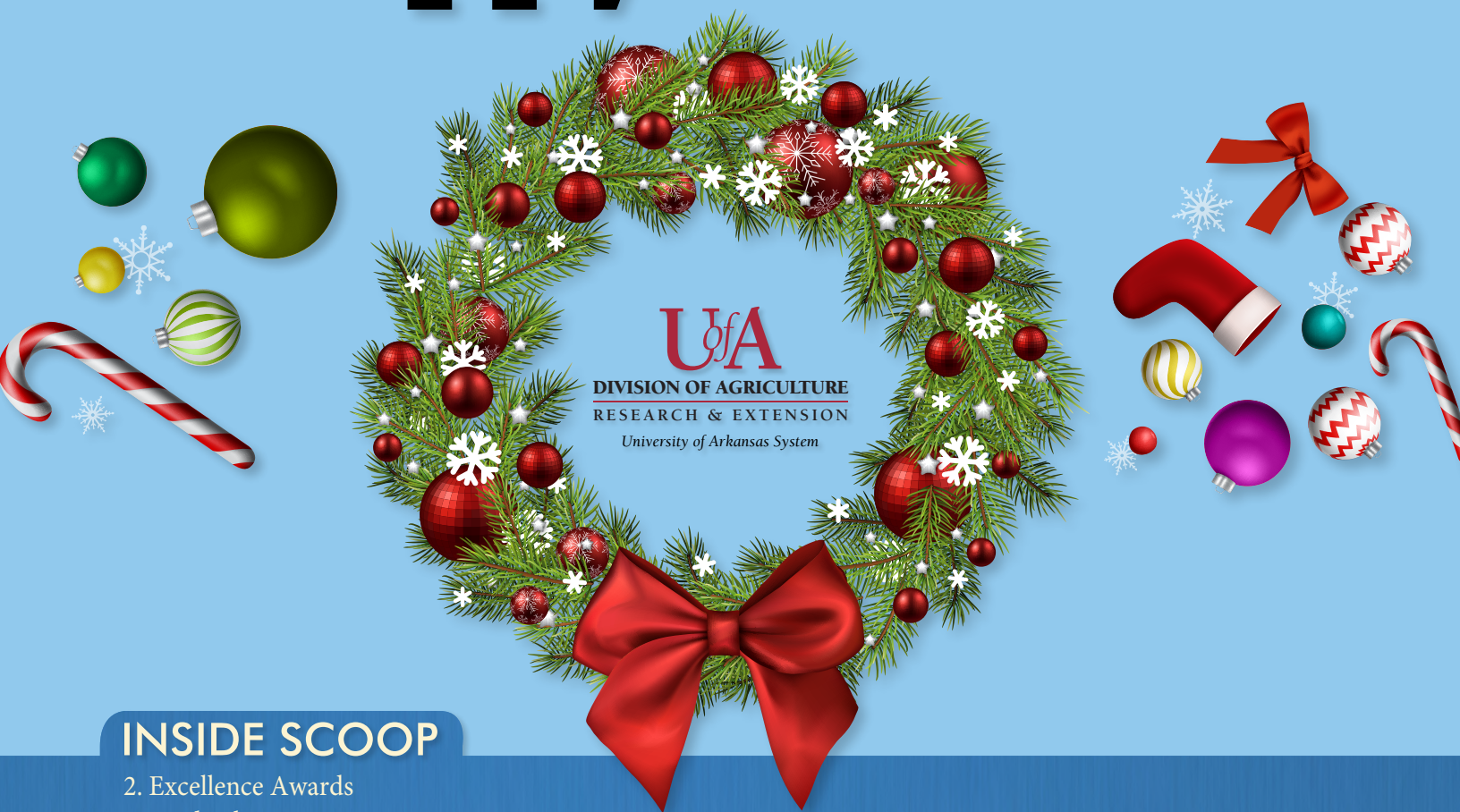
BLUE LETTER

December 2023

No. 3860



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

INSIDE SCOOP

2. Excellence Awards
3. Leadership Log
4. Delta Rides: A Rural Transportation Network
5. 4-Her Delivers Gifts to Emergency Workers
6. Tech Corner...And much more!

2023 Extension Employee Conference Excellence Awards



Faculty and staff at the Cooperative Extension Service reached thousands of Arkansans in 2023 through innovative programs such as cooking schools and nutrition education for adults and youth, expanded opportunities for youth through 4-H, and community development to help Arkansas communities thrive.

Bob Scott, extension director, commended this year's winners for their dedication and commitment to the Division of Agriculture's mission of strengthening agriculture, communities and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices. This year's winners, who were nominated and selected by their peers, include the following:

Employee of the Year – Phyllis Scurlock

Phyllis Scurlock, an administrative specialist for 4-H, was named Extension Employee of the Year. Scurlock started her career with extension's federal credit union in 2015 and then worked for Animal Science before moving into her current role at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center.

"I'm so honored to work for UADA and with dedicated coworkers that are like none I've ever worked with," Scurlock said. "I truly love my job. I love extension."

State Team Award – EFNEP Cooking Schools

The Cooking Schools, developed by the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) staff, help individuals, families and youth with limited resources get the knowledge and skills they need to maintain nutritionally sound diets and increase physical activity.

The team includes Josh Phelps, Keith Statham-Cleek, Katie Reid, Cynthia Martin, Vivian Okanume, Cathy Love, Jacqueline Silva and Kierra Mendez-Ward.

Early Career Award for County Extension Faculty — Blake Erbach

As Perry County's agriculture and 4-H agent and staff chair, Blake Erbach has made a big impact in just two years.

"Blake's desire to offer strong educational programs for his producers was shown within the first six months," Scott said.



Early Career Award for State Extension Faculty – Hunter Goodman

Hunter Goodman joined extension in 2021 as assistant professor for Community, Professional and Economic Development. She uses asset-based community development and consensus organizing as strategies for local community change.

Early Career Award for Program Technician/ Associate – Ryan Keiffer

Ryan Keiffer is a program associate in the horticulture department's Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

program. "The diversity of projects and activities that Ryan has involved himself in and excelled at since he started exemplifies both initiative and excellence," Scott said.

Early Career Award for Project / Program Administrator – Ben Aaron

Ben Aaron, extension videographer, works with faculty and staff to produce videos that show the impact of extension outreach through Agriculture, 4-H, Family & Consumer Sciences and Community Profession and Economic Development programs. "Ben's efforts help our agents convey research-based information to their county clients and help position our agents as experts in their fields," Scott said.

County Team Award – Clark County Kid Chef Challenge

The Clark County Extension team of Amy Simpson, Cassidy Reeves, Cindy Ham and JoAnn Vann created the Kid Chef Challenge curriculum, which teaches youth healthy eating and cooking skills. "During the contest, youth participate in educational activities designed to enhance understanding of healthy eating, increase cooking skills, and deepen their view of nutrition, agriculture, 4-H and career opportunities," Scott said.

To read more details about these winners, the scholarship winners and the service milestones go [here](#). ■



iLEAD III Dances Around Conflict Resolution

Our third virtual iLEAD session commenced on Nov. 17, delving into the intricacies of conflict resolution and the potential for leaders to evolve through challenging situations. This session was led by our expert facilitators Vanessa Lewis, program associate, and Dr. Steve Siegelin, associate professor—professional development in the UADA Community, Professional and Economic Development (CPED) unit. Read full story [here](#).

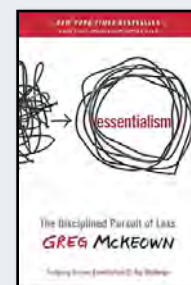
LeadAR Class 20 - Local Foods, Art, and All Things Chicken

In November, LeadAR Class 20 attended the final LeadAR seminar for the year 2023 in northwest Arkansas with the theme “Agriculture - Livestock, Poultry and Local Food.” The first day of the seminar focused on

regional food systems and art while the second day focused on the poultry industry. Read the full story [here](#).

Leadership Lunch and Learn: Book Review, Essentialism-The Disciplined Pursuit of Less

What are you doing that is moving you toward your goals? Maybe you should be doing less. In the November Leadership Lunch and Learn book review series, Dr. Lauen Griffeth, leadership specialist at the University of Georgia, shared insights into the book *Essentialism-The Disciplined Pursuit of Less* written by Greg McKeown. Read details [here](#). ■



Estate Planning in the Ozarks

Estate planning is something many people either put off until it is too late or never think about at all. Agents in Carroll and Marion Counties recognized the need and teamed together with Dr. Laura Hendrix, assistant professor, and Program Associate, Megan Wells to host estate planning workshops in August and October.

Everyone who owns property has an estate that will have to be distributed at their death. The more than 50 participants

who attended the three-night workshops learned that “property” means much more than just land.

Topics covered during the workshops included how to get started, non-titled property, funeral preplanning, advanced directive and power of attorney, probate, trusts, land transfers, how to continue your farming legacy and the importance of life insurance. Participants were sent home with homework after covering the basics of how to get started on an estate plan the first night. The homework allowed participants to think and prepare questions for the second and third nights. Each county partnered with a local attorney and a State Farm Bureau associate to address the legalities of estate planning.

More than 95 percent of participants surveyed reported they would use the information learned. ■



Attendees learned about various different Estate Planning topics.

Delta Rides: A Rural Transportation Network

Some Phillips County residents travel more than 60 miles, one-way, to their nearest grocery store. Beginning in the fall of 2022, the UADA FCS Health Team and Phillips County FCS Agent Julie Goings gathered idea from community members to design a new transportation service for Phillips County. A partnership between UADA and the Phillips County government, the Delta Rides project is a fixed-route transportation solution that services all of Phillips County. Route stops focus on

destinations that address social determinants of health such as grocery stores, community centers, low-income housing, elderly/disabled living centers, health care facilities, pharmacies, and food pantries. With funding from the Federal Transit Administration and the National Center for Mobility Management, Delta Rides piloted this solution Nov. 14-16 and transported 30 residents from Helena, Elaine and Marvell to everyday destinations.



FCS Health Team the morning of the Delta Rides launch (left to right) Bryan Mader, Jessica Vincent, Mishanna Lanes, Darby Treat, Heather Wingo.



Three Phillips County residents enjoying Delta Rides.

Pending grant funding due to be awarded by the end of 2023, a year-long Delta Rides pilot will be launched for 2024 with plans to hire a permanent mobility manager/project coordinator and professional drivers. ■

Howard County 4-H



First Annual Block Party

More than 250 people participated in Howard County 4-H's first Block Party, hosted by Howard County's Extension Office, 4-H, Extension Homemakers and county volunteers. During the event, youth experienced what it is like to be in a 4-H program by participating with drones, the 4-H Lego challenge, archery, and many other 4-H activities. 4-H members ran the activities, which gave them leadership experience, and talked with youth about the county program.

4-H members also provided face painting, and Extension Homemakers hosted a cake walk. Free hot dogs, cotton candy, popcorn, snow cones, and drinks were provided. Howard County 4-H plans to continue this event yearly. This event will become a major recruitment opportunity and a way to give back to our local community which provides support for projects throughout the year. ■



Back left and right: Sara O'Brien (parent volunteer) and Anna Kate McKinnon (4-H member) hand out cotton candy.



Brayden W. (left), Ace M. (Clover), Guy Cooper Kroll (right). All three are 4-H Members.

Lonoke County

Master Gardeners Grows Membership

Lonoke County gained 15 new Master Gardeners in 2023. Earlier this year, the Lonoke County Master Gardeners Recruiting subcommittee conducted three Meet the Masters educational events to get information to the public about the Master

Gardener program and its link to UADA, answer questions about the program and membership requirements, and recruit new Master Gardeners. The meetings, held in Lonoke, Carlisle and Cabot, were well-attended and resulted in 19 individuals enrolling for the training sessions conducted in October.



2023 Lonoke Co. Master Gardeners Graduating Class: From left to right: (Back) Gail Moore, Beverly Jones, Sheila Thurmond, Ronya Hammonds, Pam Mosley, Karen Banks, (Middle) Becky Cheatham, Glenda Eversole, Melissa Cohen, Chloe Cunningham, (Front) Cliff Chandler, Jessica Chandler, and Amanda Rae Hugo. (Billie Barnes and Stephanie White, not pictured)

On Nov. 15, after having completed the 40-hour training, 15 joined the ranks of Lonoke County Master Gardeners. Each of these new members were assigned a mentor to guide them throughout the first year, and beyond if needed. We are so pleased to present to you Lonoke County Master Gardeners' Class of 2023. ■



Meet the Masters attendees were given the opportunity to visit Lonoke County Master Gardeners Project Row to gather more information and ask questions about the projects.

Hot Spring County

4-Her Delivers Gifts to Emergency Workers



Jase Shepherd delivering gift bags to LifeNet to show appreciation!

Hot Spring County 4-H member Jase Shepherd collected and delivered 100 holiday gift bags to EMTs, police officers and firefighters in Malvern and Hot Springs. Jase enjoys doing community service projects, especially during the holidays. His mother, Brandi Grisby, was also a Hot Spring County 4-H member as a child. They collected items from local donors, and then Jase invited his friends to help assemble together gift bags, which included snacks, drinks, hand sanitizer and calendars. ■



Jase Shephard (Hot Spring County 4-H Member).



UADA Annual Cybersecurity Awareness Training

Don't forget your 2023-2024 Annual Cybersecurity Awareness training. All full-time employees are required to take the training. You will be required to log in using your UADA credentials. [UADA KnowBe4 training platform.](#)

There are 5 training modules:

- 2024 Kevin Mitnick Security Awareness Training – 15 minutes.
- Do you Like Candy? Be Wary of USB Devices – 2 Minutes
- USB Drives: Convenient and Compromisable – 2 Minutes
- Double Trouble Trivia: Social Engineering Game- 8 Minutes
- Top 5 Phishing Fundamentals

Business Office personnel are assigned 2 additional modules:

- Handling Sensitive Information Securely, Part 1
- Handling Sensitive Information Securely, Part 2

Division IT Security Team
division-it-security-team@uada.edu

Is it Time to Update Your Email Signature?

Here are some things to look for:

- Our domain change was several years ago, you no longer need to inform people of your “new” email address.
- Remove any old program logos still showing in your signature and update them to the newest ones.

- Your work email address is not the proper platform for you to promote personal agendas or include inspirational quotes. Save that for your personal email.
- If you want to continue using the Covid graphic, make sure you are using the latest one.

A good email signature for new emails should include the following elements:

- First name and last name
- Title and department
- Company logo and company name
- Company physical address
- Telephone number

Need help creating a good email signature? Check out Communication's Email Signature Generator application.

Visit our [webpage](#) for more tips and information about email signatures. You can use this QR code for quicker access.

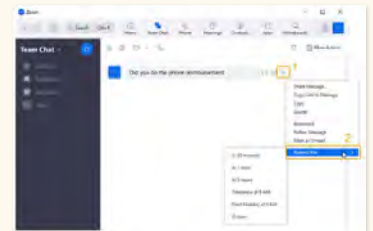


Zoom Pro Tip Remind Me

Get a lot of Zoom chat messages and can't remember which ones you wanted to follow up on?

You can [set a reminder for messages](#) you don't want to forget. Zoom will send a notification at the

time you specify. Zoom will also let you edit that time, cancel the reminder, or mark the reminder as "Done" all from the Reminders tab on the left sidebar.



Hacks from Hump Day



Hump Day Hacks will return on January 24, 2024. [Register for Hump Day Hacks.](#) ■

2023 TECH TUESDAYS WEBINARS

Have you missed any past Tech Tuesday webinars or want to join future webinars? Check out the recordings and other resources on the [Tech Tuesday Blog](#) page. More Tech Tuesday topics coming soon! Did you miss November's [Division of Agriculture Social Media Policy](#) Tech Tuesday? Check out the recording and resources.



Celebrating the Spirit of Giving:

Nursing Home's Annual Santa Sale

The Randolph County Extension Homemaker's Clubs came together in a heartwarming display of generosity and community spirit for its annual Santa Sale at the Randolph County Nursing Home.

Throughout the year, EHC members collect items ranging from cozy lap quilts and shawls to puzzle books, stuffed animals, and more. These treasures are used to create a special store where the residents could choose their favorites.

The Santa Sale offered residents a unique shopping experience. Each resident received \$5 in Santa Bucks to explore the store and purchased items priced at \$1. This not only allowed them to select items they loved but also gave them the joy of making

their own choices. For those selecting gifts for loved ones, the EHC members offered gift wrapping.



From left to right, back row EHC members Connie Trublood, Judy Downs, Mary Ann Carroll, Mary Billeaudeau, Brittany Luttrell (4-H Agent), Alene Gaus, Skyler Ray (4-H member) Front row, left to right: Pamela Ray (FCS Agent), Diane Cote, Janet Wells, and Veronica Rose.

Randolph County 4-H members played a pivotal role in this event, generously volunteering their time and energy to assist the residents in the store. Their dedication, enthusiasm, and genuine care made a significant difference and added an extra layer of joy to the Santa Sale.

The Santa Sale is a testament to the power of generosity and community support. Through the collective efforts of the Randolph County Extension Homemakers Clubs and

4-H members, this event continues to spread joy and make a meaningful difference in the lives of the nursing home residents. ■

Arkansas State Farm Bureau Convention

The Soybean Science Challenge hosted an educational booth at the Arkansas State Farm Bureau Convention in the Little Rock Convention Center Nov. 29-30. SSC Coordinator Diedre Young handed out soybean promotional items, lesson plans, resource guides and educational brochures to more than 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 teachers' jobs easier and that The Challenge has all the resources needed to make that happen!

The Soybean Science Challenge is a farmer-funded, state-wide, junior high and 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 Cooperative Extension Service.



The 4-H Officers sport their Soybean Science Challenge glasses.

Soybean
science challenge

For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, jrobinson@uada.edu or Diedre Young dyoung@uada.edu. ■

4-H Livestock Teams Compete at the NAILE



In November, Arkansas' State Champion Livestock teams competed in the National 4-H Livestock Contests at the North American International Livestock Exhibition in Louisville, Kentucky. Arkansas was one of only nine states to have teams compete in all three of the National 4-H Livestock Contests.

The Hot Spring County Livestock Skill-a-thon team consisted of Jack B., Atlanta N., Emma E., and Cash N. and was coached by Morgan Taylor. This team placed 14th overall and 9th in Quality Assurance. Additionally, Jack B. was the 4th High Individual in Quality Assurance and Atlanta N. was the 9th High Individual in Quality Assurance.

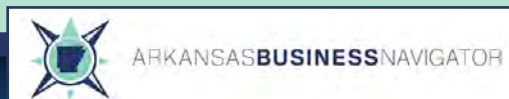


(Left) The Arkansas State Champion Livestock Quiz Bowl team from Washington County 4-H. Front row: Hannah A., Sicily B., Lydia A., Lauren H. Back row: Coach Ronnie Horn, Allison Harman. (Right) The Arkansas State Champion Livestock Judging team from Greene County 4-H. Front row: Thompson P., Cadence S., Ellisa V., Dillon P. Back row: Coach Blake Davis, Allison Harman.

coached by Blake Davis. This team placed 19th overall. Dillon P. was the 8th High Individual in Swine Evaluation, and Cadence S. was the 20th High Individual in Sheep and Goat Evaluation.

The Washington County Livestock Quiz Bowl team consisted of Hannah A., Sicily B., Lydia A., and Lauren H. and was coached by Ronnie Horn. This team made it to the Top 8 of the double-elimination bracket. ■

The Greene County Livestock Judging team consisted of Thompson P., Cadence S., Ellisa V., and Dillon P. and was



Business Navigator Program: Year in Review

November 30 marked the end of UADA-Extension's involvement with the [Arkansas Business Navigator](#), a pilot program of the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC) hosted by UA Little Rock, funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). This program sought to expand SBA resources and services to small business owners and entrepreneurs across Arkansas with a particular focus on entrepreneurs who had never used SBA resources or had very limited access. Brandon L. Mathews and Kamelle Gomez, program associates of economic development in the Community, Professional and Economic Development Unit, had the following successes:

- Served 51 unique clients
- Accessed \$1,417,233 funding for clients
- Secured \$556,384 in funding for clients

- Delivered 279 one-on-one counseling hours
- 41 unique training hours, 28 events, and 127 participants
- Generated 309 podcast downloads over 28 episodes
- Assisted in creation or retention of 33 jobs
- Client Success: opening a health food store in a rural community with no grocery store; creation of a pet supply/boutique with self-grooming; and opening paramedical tattoo and removal in a rural community with closest access to similar services more than 2 hours away. ■



Brandon L. Mathews



Kamelle Gomez

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
The BAAND Project	249,966.00	Amanda Philyaw Perez	Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA AMS)
Determining an Economic Threshold for Tarnished Plant Bugs on Thryvon Cotton	25,000.00	Ben Thrash	Cotton Inc.
Arkansas 4H Camping Program	50,000.00	Creenna Bocksnick	Arkansas Out of School Network
SRDC Digital Volunteer Initiative	4,500.00	Hunter P. Goodman	Mississippi State University
Using the Arkansas Watershed Stewardship Program to Achieve State Nutrient Reduction Goals	76,232.00	John H Pennington	Arkansas Agriculture Department
Management Strategies for Southern Root-Knot Nematode	13,598.00	Terry N Spurlock	Cotton Inc.
TOTAL AWARDS FOR NOVEMBER 2023: 419,296			

Benefits Corner



Benefits 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," "Provider Network" - select "University of Arkansas System"
- 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/uasental/Default.aspx>

- Eye Med: 1-866-800-5457 www.eyemed.com
- Retirement Issues:
 - Fidelity – 1-800-343-0860
 - TIAA-CREF – 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. ■