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BLUE LETTER

July 2019

No. 3807



Thankful in July

It is July, with some of the characteristics that make it such a pleasant month in Arkansas. However, it has not been as hot as we expect so far, which is disappointing. But the weather is what it is.

We made it through another state fiscal year and we are working hard to close the books – making sure the budget is finalized and we are getting year-end financial reports done. Our financial staff probably wants me to look up the word “we” at this point, but I truly commend all of our colleagues in the support units for working long and hard to make sure all this gets done. A daunting task each year, but this group is up to the task. Thanks to all.

As evidenced in this and previous Blue Letters, we are all working tirelessly to improve things, many in spite of weather patterns that I often refer to as weird but seem to be the new normal. This issue contains many examples of our work and impact, and illustrates the comprehensive nature of the Division of Agriculture. Our mission is transformational, a word thrown around a lot currently, but one we have lived for more than 100 years.

A few observations and aside ... some new and novel probably, and some likely repeats of things before that I have remembered again, but that I now think are actually new and novel ... it happens.

Back in June, I attended the grand opening of the new building

in Searcy hosting our county extension offices, and provided by White County. I commend the entire staff and thank the White County officials who made this possible. It's an outstanding show of support for local extension at this event. Behind the building are the county fairgrounds, where we went back the other day to witness the 4-H State Horse Show and incredible dedication of young persons, parents and volunteers and county extension professionals who make it work. I also met the Animal Science interns, who impressed with their work ethic, can-do attitude and knowledge.

I was fortunate to attend an agent training hosted by Dr. Gus Lorenz and staff at the Lonoke Center, focused on recent research about new biocontrol viruses of certain insect pests in crops. This is a very interesting development to help production agriculture, and improve sustainability. Participation and enthusiasm was high at the meeting, and several specialists shared updates on crop progress as well. Interesting and good day, thanks Gus and all.

Recently, several of us attended the summer meeting of the Association of Counties in Hot Springs, an entertaining and educational event if there ever was, thanks to their staff.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

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

Arkansas 4-H Teams Place High at Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest

Arkansas 4-H Grassland Evaluation teams placed high at the Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest held in Springfield, Mo. on June 5. Arkansas students took 3rd and 5th high 4-H individuals and took second and third place 4-H team honors. The contest included a field of 15 teams from three states including Arkansas, West Virginia and Missouri. Randolph County 4-H, coached by staff chair Mike Andrews,

took second place 4-H team. Team member Taylor Donner took 3rd place individual honors. Madison County 4-H coached by Jerry Jo Hamm, administrative assistant, took third place 4-H team. Team member Cody Ogden took 5th place individual honors. Fulton County 4-H, coached by CEA Cory Tyler, also competed in the event. Andrews coached the Pocahontas FFA team that competed in the contest as well. ■



Randolph County 4-H team – Second place 4-H team and 3rd high individual at the Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest.



Madison County 4-H team – Third place 4-H team and 5th high individual at the Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest.

Miller County 4-H Hosts Inaugural Southwest Arkansas Agri Academy

Four Miller County 4-H members participated in the Southwest Arkansas Agri Academy, a weeklong leadership and agribusiness experience designed to showcase industries and career opportunities in the southwest Arkansas region.

The academy kicked off with ice breakers, leadership initiatives and group discussion to determine the goals and expectations for the week. The rest of the academy consisted of tours and visits across the bi-state area totaling over 275 miles traveled. Highlights of the week included stops at the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Hope, the Texarkana branch of Farm Credit of Western Arkansas, C&C Packing Company in Stamps, the Domtar paper mill in Ashdown and a lands tour provided by Weyerhaeuser.

The Southwest Arkansas Agri Academy,

a project of the Miller County 4-H program, was made possible by its partners SWEPCO, the Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation and Contech Contractors, Inc. ■



Randy Camp, owner of C&C Packing Co., shows the attendees the various meat products they offer in the store.



4-H members Kyleen H., Emily F., Ashlynn B., Colton H. and 4-H agent Hanan Douglas at the Domtar paper mill in Ashdown.



Forester Walt Smith with Weyerhaeuser explains the production history of this plot of land to academy attendees.

ANNIE'S PROJECT

Hot Spring and Clark Counties

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Annie's Project is a six-week program designed for women in agriculture. The program focuses on risk management in the areas on legal, financial, marketing, production and human resources.



Magen Allen of JA Farms Feed explains feed stuffs and the feed mixing process during a tour. Participants include Leann Welch, Teresa Phillips, Phyllis Jackson, Dianna Davidson, Sara Brandon and Chaundelle Burch.

agriculture tourism operation, feed mill and processing facility. They also covered topics such as managing farm stress, retire ment planning, farm taxes and much more. This was the second year the program was conducted in Hot Spring County.

One participant reported learning, "my role is important as part of the farm business plan." Another reported that through this program she had already started to "analyze specific needs and act on them," in their own operation. Not only does this program educate our women in agriculture, but it also

Hot Spring and Clark counties hosted the program this spring. Participants were trained on everything from hands-on artificial insemination, tire tank, trailer backing, social media marketing, tours of an

provides resources and empowers them to be active partners in their own farming operations.

For more information or to plan a local Annie's Project, email Laura Hendrix at lhendrix@uaex.edu or call her at 501-671-2170. Dr. Hendrix serves as the state coordinator for Annie's Project. ■



Left: Josh Garrick, owner of CR Custom Processing, leads a tour of his processing plant and explains the procedure of processing meat to Phyllis Jackson, Leann Welch, Sara Brandon, Dianna Davidson, Teresa Phillips and Chanduelle Burch.

Below: Annie's participants learn to thread reproductive tracts and had the opportunity to ultrasound a pregnant uterus. From Left: Dianna Davidson, Sara Brandon, Sherry Kindy, Sheila Gesing and Phyllis Jackson. Right: Leann Welch.



Participants practice backing a trailer. Sheila Gesing is driving while Michelle Riggan and Phyllis Jackson are helping.



(Continued from Page 1)

I really appreciate Brian Helms, Beth Phelps, Sharon Reynolds, Jerry Clemons, Stacey McCullough and other colleagues for working with the association and fostering our relationships with county officials statewide. And I certainly thank our county staff for developing and nurturing local relationships in each respective county. This makes our partnerships work well in good and bad times.

Recently, I was honored to welcome the Breakthrough Solutions Conference in Little Rock on June 26, thanks to Mark Peterson, Stacey McCullough and staff. I have done this a couple of times and am always surprised to be invited back. While it takes a village to pull these off, and do this work, I commend Dr. Peterson for his inspirational leadership in community development. I also learned I cannot compete in storytelling, which many say I really needed to learn.

I would be remiss to not mention recent 4-H District O'Ramas and the upcoming state O'Rama in Fayetteville the week of July 22. I attended the Ouachita District O'Rama in Hot Springs and it was outstanding, and it ran like a machine. While I thank the many staff, parents, volunteers and school officials who supported this effort, one name kept coming up about the success of 4-H events – Priscella Thomas-Scott.

Getting out and about is cathartic, and reminds me that while the reality I read about in the news every morning is depressing and negative, that is not the reality I witness – that we live – in the Cooperative Extension Service. In our reality, people and life is good, and getting better through your hard work and dedication. So, thanks.

HAVE A GREAT JULY AND SUMMER!

Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trips Start

On July 3, the first Virtual Field Trip, VFT, in the Soil and Water Conservation series was broadcast live from the field in Northeast Arkansas. The VFT highlighted the Judd Hill Foundation Farm with a welcome and overview by Mike Gibson.

Other subject matter experts presenting during the VFT included Dr. Michele Reba, USDA-ARS; Dr. Arlene Adviento-Borbe, USDA-ARS; Mike Hamilton, Irrigation Specialist; Robert Goodson, Phillips County Agriculture Extension Agent, and Charolette Bowie, USDA-NRCS. The VFT gave an in-depth look at farm irrigation and discussed

various technological advancements that are being used today in agricultural fields across the state of Arkansas to increase irrigation efficiency and maintain sustainability.



Subject Matter Experts from left to right: Dr. Michele Reba (USDA-ARS), Mike Hamilton (Irrigation Specialist), Charolette Bowie (USDA-NRCS), Robert Goodson (Phillips Co. CEA), Dr. Arlene Adviento-Borbe (USDA-ARS)

Subject matter experts also took questions from participants. There were 67 participants that joined the VFT from 10 states. If you were not able to join the live VFT, you can view the recording [here](#). Funded by NRCS, the VFT on July 3 was the first in a series. It was coordinated by Rita Watson, virtual education specialist in the program and staff development department. The next VFT will be a two-part virtual experience featuring the Arkansas Discovery Farms program. For more information, email Rita Watson at rwatson@uaex.edu. ■



Aerial View of a segment of the Judd Hill Foundation Farm.

Sebastian County 4-Hers Help Nebraska Flood Victims

“My Club, My Community, My Country, My World,” was the pledge three 4-H members from Sebastian County Teen Leaders lived by to raise \$650 for Nebraska flood victims.

Emily D., Jenna F. and Kimber C. saw the destruction of the Nebraska flooding on the news and wanted to help. They decided to guide the Teen Leaders and raise money for the flooding as a part of their leadership project. “That’s what 4-H’ers do, help our community,” Emily said. They sold and delivered cupcakes and doughnuts from April to June when 4-H’ers headed to Grand Island for the National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational.

Arkansas experienced severe flooding in May, and residents in the area are still



From left to right: Jenna F., Elizabeth Troyer-Miller and Emily D. Arkansas 4-H members presenting the donation to the Hartland United Way Director in Grand Island, NE.

working toward rebuilding their damaged houses, businesses and lifestyles. “You see people whose businesses are gone. Houses are gone. People are devastated,” Campbell said.

Because Emily and Jenna qualified in air pistol performance for the shooting sports competition in Grand Island, they reached out to the Heartland United Way and delivered the \$650 check to its disaster recovery group. “We’ve just been so impressed with the outpouring of support both locally and nationally,” United Way Director Elizabeth Troyer-Miller said. ■

Cross County Nature Camp Promotes Learning

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Cross County 4-H recently held its one-day nature camp at the Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center in Jonesboro.

4-H'ers got a chance to watch films showing how Crowley's Ridge was developed by rain and other natural disasters over the years into the beautiful land it is now.

They also learned about alligators and the different species of snakes including the differences between venomous and non-venomous snakes. The day was completed with lunch at CiCi's Pizza.

Attending was Mrs. Cindy Ball, 4-H volunteer, University of Arkansas Extension FCS Agent, Millie Collins, and 4-H Program Assistant Linda Stegall.

For more information on joining 4-H please call your local Extension Office. ■



Cross county 4-H'ers attend Nature Camp

Soybean Science Challenge Presents at the June National AG in the Classroom Convention

Soybean Science Challenge Coordinator Diedre Young presented a one-hour workshop titled 'Soybeans are a touch of classroom' on Wednesday, June 19 at the National AG in the Classroom Convention. The Convention was held at the State Convention Center in Little Rock. Young's workshop featured her Next Generation Science lesson highlighting using soybeans in classroom experiments. This lesson focused on using forensics to discover what happened to Fido the dog who disappeared in the soybean field.

Young also hosted a Soybean Science Challenge booth where she interacted with numerous teachers and agriculture organizations from the United States, American Samoa and Puerto Rico.

She encouraged them to use soybeans in classroom research by using the free resources available on Extension's 'soywhatsup' website.



Soybean Science Challenge Coordinator Diedre Young visits with teachers at the National AG in the Classroom Convention.

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 U of A Cooperative Extension Service.

For more information, email Dr. Julie Robinson at jrobinson@uaex.edu or Diedre Young at dyoung@uaex.edu. ■

Animal Science Participates in Dairy Days

Animal science faculty and graduate students participated in the 30th annual 4-State Dairy Days at the Benton County Fairgrounds from June 21-23. Participants from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri attended the three-day event which consisted of a cattle show and several youth activities including a dairy products contest, showmanship, quiz bowl, dairy judging, skill-a-thon and fitting contest.

Animal science graduate students conducted the quiz bowl events which consisted of five junior and three senior teams who were competing for a trip to the National Dairy Quiz Bowl. The winning Arkansas team, 'Dairy All-Stars,' will attend the national event held at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, KY.

The 4-State Dairy Days event is hosted by the Benton County Dairy Industry Association. ■



Animal Science graduate students ask questions of quiz bowl contestants.

Livestock Judging Camp



Bryan Kutz and Chelsey Kimbrough host UA Livestock Judging Camp.

Each year, the Department of Animal Science hosts a livestock judging camp where youth from across the state and surrounding states learn about the priorities in livestock selection, receive updates on the current industry trends and improve their communication skills through the presentation of oral reasons. A total of 24 students, ranging in age from 9-17, participated in this year's camp which was held from June 26-28.

Students were divided into three divisions dependent upon their knowledge and level of experience. Students worked tirelessly to learn all they could about sheep, cattle, hogs and goats and acquired knowledge about the reasons and terminology that accompany each species. The second day ended with some fun activities in which students wore themselves out at the Altitude Trampoline Park. On the final day, kids were tested on what they learned in the form of a judging contest that consisted of six classes with three sets of oral reasons. The camp concluded with an awards presentation to the following students:

Beginner

1st – Chloe T.
2nd – Jewels S.
3rd – Rylie B.

Intermediate

1st – Sutton N.
2nd – Abi K.
3rd – Madalyn J.

Advanced

1st – Baden H.
2nd – Selby B.
3rd – Erica C.

The Department of Animal Science and Bryan Kutz would like to thank all those who contributed to make this camp a success: Dianna and Butch Watson; Chelsey Kimbrough; interns Dixie Miller and Mesa Kutz; and present and future U of A judging team members, Cheyanne Fogg, Brittany Luttrell, Nate Davis, Alexa Wandry and Alex Theodore. ■

NETC Conference is a Big Success

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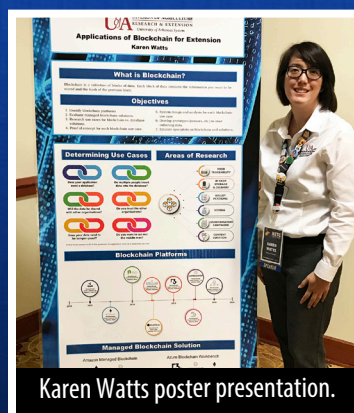
Digital Media Program Director Amy Cole received the NETC Award for Individual Excellence during the NETC Conference held at West Virginia University the week of June 24-27.

During the presentation, NETC board president, Jennifer Sykes, shared a quote from Amy's award nomination: "Amy's passion for Extension, her efforts to communicate Extension's mission, programs and resources, and her positive attitude, match the definition of individual excellence. In a field that changes daily, Amy Cole continually works to stay abreast of the latest trends and developments in the world of digital media and communications. From social media to mobile application development, Amy's pursuit is relentless."

Karen Watts, Amy Cole, Diana Morian and Mary Poling gave NETC attendees the opportunity to build their own IT support chatbot. Their session *BYOB: Build Your Own Bot* enabled participants to get their feet wet building artificial intelligence for Extension support services.

Amy Cole and Karen Watts also presented posters during the conference. Amy Cole's poster was titled, "How Should I Reach You, Choosing the Right Digital Media to Reach your

Audience" and Karen Watt's poster was titled "Applications of Blockchain in Extension." Diana Morian was invited to be part of a panel named "Survivor: Edge of Extension" where IT directors from across the nation fielded questions on the future of IT and the role technology plays in navigating the changing landscape of Extension programming. ■



First Round of OFRRs Come to a Close

As the summer heat kicks in, the Produce Safety Team is wrapping up the first round of On Farm Readiness Reviews, OFRRs. The first group of farms subject to inspection by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture under the FSMA Produce Safety Rule were farms with produce sales over \$500,000. To help our large produce farmers prepare for their inspections this year, we visited their farms to discuss produce safety. Because this process is new, the team learned several lessons.

The biggest takeaway was that shifting away from a checklist mentality in regard to food safety is more challenging

than we thought. Most of these large farms already participate in a third party audit. Therefore, adding another inspection just seems to add another task to their list. Our goal with this process is to change the culture to where growers are doing food safety risk assessments throughout every step of their farm operation. It needs to become as second nature to them as managing their soil fertility or running a pest management program.

Though we have not seen this shift yet, we continue to promote the importance and simplicity of food safety practices and are hopeful that change is coming. ■

Breakthrough Solutions Awards Presented

The Breakthrough Solutions SOAR Awards were presented to one partner and two communities during the Breakthrough Solutions Conference on June 26 at the Four Points Hotel by Sheraton in Little Rock.

The Breakthrough Solutions SOAR Awards are given to communities, regions or individuals who best exemplify the breakthrough solutions principles and spirit in their community development work. This year the SOAR Partner award was awarded to Tandee White, with Entergy Arkansas, for her exemplary service to the Breakthrough Solutions Program and the people of Arkansas. Our Breakthrough Solutions SOAR Community Awards were awarded to Kickstart Sheridan and Baxter County Forward for their exemplary vision and accomplishments.

With the theme "This is Our Time," Kickstart Sheridan successfully completed its strategic blueprint and action plan with a launch event on May 7. A collaboration between the University of Central Arkansas' Center for Community and Economic Development and the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service's Breakthrough Solutions Program, Kickstart Sheridan was formed after a team of Community Development Institute graduates interacted with Sheridan, Grant County and the

Sheridan School District representatives last summer. Following a community survey, action teams formed which included Downtown Development Recreation, Things to Do, Education and Economic Development, Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship and Infrastructure.

In a separate program, initially sponsored by the Mountain Home Area Chamber of Commerce, the Baxter County Forward Steering Committee was formed to engage the Breakthrough Solutions development process, leading to a strategic blueprint and action plan. The county is beginning to lose population was major catalyst for this initiative, as population loss has a negative impact on businesses, non-profits and local governments. After a community survey, the following actions teams emerged: Drugs, Business and Industry, Education and Workforce

Development, Quality of Place, Tourism, Marketing, Branding, Retirees and Retiree Attraction and Funding and Finance.

Learn more about these impressive initiatives and people by visiting these sites: [Kickstart Sheridan](#), [Baxter County Forward](#). ■



From left to right : Baxter County Forward SOAR Community Award Winners: Shelly Short, Jeff Pipkin, Angela Broome and Dr. Mark Peterson



UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

Tuesday, August 13: Cloud Based Storage and File Recovery
(Mary Poling & Terrell Davis)

Tuesday, September 10: Social Media Analytics for AIMS, FSR, Impact, and Visualization
(Amy Cole, Diane Mashburn, Karen Watts)

Second Tuesday of every month, starting at 9:00 a.m. To view the recordings, visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays>

John Marcy Named Industry Leader of the Year

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John Marcy, extension poultry processing specialist and professor at the Center of Excellence for Poultry Science, has been named the Industry Leader of the Year by The Poultry Federation.

Marcy is well recognized on a national level within the food industry and “is one of TPF’s ‘go-to-persons’ when we begin planning the Food Safety Conference, the Live and Processing Symposium or any other educational program we sponsor,” said Marvin Childers, president of The Poultry Federation. “I have never received a ‘no,’ when we ask him to help the federation or anyone else in the poultry industry.”

Marcy said the honor was humbling and showed the industry’s appreciation for education and professional development. “It is a huge honor for an educator to be recognized by an industry group, especially one as large as the poultry and egg industry with many extraordinary leaders, for contributing to their success over a career in public service,” Marcy said.

TPF has presented this award since 1955 to recognize the outstanding achievements of poultry and egg executives and their contribution to the industry. Childers and the TPF board presented the award June 14 during the 60th annual Poultry Festival. The Poultry Federation is the industry organization for Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Marcy joined the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in 1993. ■



Marvin Childers, president of The Poultry Federation, shakes hands with John Marcy (middle). Marcy was named the Industry Leader of the Year by TPF. (Photo by Samantha Beitia)

First State Bank in De Queen has chosen for the third year in a row to spotlight Sevier County’s 4-Hers. The billboard is located on Highway 70 in De Queen. So not only do all our hometown people see it, but everyone traveling through also gets to see some of Sevier County’s finest!

New Publications:

(You know you want to look.)
uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx



Chi Epsilon Sigma's Summer Cereal Drive

Chi Epsilon Sigma Beta Chapter participated in THV11 and Arkansas Food Bank's Summer Cereal Drive by collecting donations. The Summer Cereal Drive provides non-perishable breakfast items that are both nutritious and kid-friendly for children and families in Central Arkansas who would otherwise go without the most important meal of the day – breakfast.

Thank you to everyone who generously donated cereal, breakfast items and money through the donation portal online allowing Chi Epsilon Sigma to donate 556 boxes! ■



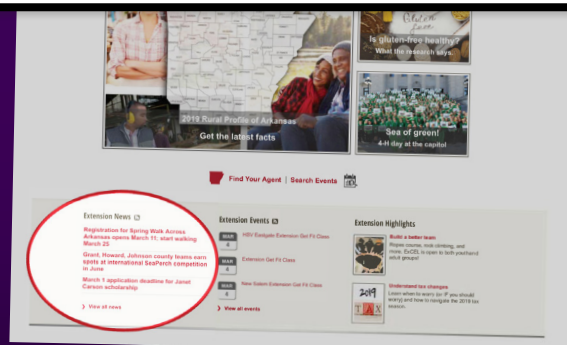
Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Appendix A-5 Service Order	1,400	Amanda Greer	Syngenta Crop Protection, Inc.
Cotton Research Irrigation Verification and sustainability demo	15,000	Bill Robertson	Cotton Incorporated
Evaluation of New Dicamba Formulations to Understand Factors Contributing to Volatilization and Ways to Best Minimize Off-Target Movement of the Herbicide	236,000	Tom Barber	Arkansas State Plant Board
FY19 UAS-Bait Spreaders for IFA:Soybean	25,801	Kelly Loftin	USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Hempstead County 4-H United Way Support	5,000	Terrie James	United Way of Hempstead County
Monitoring Potassium in Runoff from Arkansas Discovery Farms	13,346	Michael Daniels	Agriculture Experiment Station
Near Commercial Material Trial	4,000	Travis Faske	Dow AgroSciences LLC
NTR-BCE InGrain-OS 2019	18,200	Jarrod Hardke	Valent U.S.A. LLC
Polk County 4-H Program	3,000	Carla Vaught	Vanguard Charitable
Provision, Evaluation and Calibration of SolaRid Insect Control Devices	20,000	Gus Lorenz	Agriculture Experiment Station
TOTAL AWARDS FOR MAY 2019: \$341,747			

Front Page News You Can Use

Looking for a news story to use in your local paper? Look no further than the front page of uaex.edu. And if you click on view all news, you'll see all of our archived news stories back to 2014.

If you want to be on the email list to receive our news stories, email Mary Hightower at mhightower@uaex.edu and Communications will add you to the distribution list. ■



Benefits Corner

UA HEALTH PLAN CHANGES EFFECTIVE JULY 1

- Be sure to review your July 15 paystub for rate changes effective July 1.
- You may access your Pay Stub through Banner.
- Login to Banner 9 via <https://uaex.edu/links>, see: Employee Dashboard > Pay Information > Latest Pay Stub.
- No changes to UA Dental, Life and Disability Insurance premiums or coverage July 1.

LIFE CHANGING EVENTS

Normally changes to benefits occur during open enrollment. However, significant life events can affect an employee's benefits or benefit eligibility, which could

create a need for a change at other times during the year. Examples of such qualifying life events include marriage, divorce, birth, adoption or changing employment status from full-time to part-time.

Most benefit changes are effective the first of the month after the appropriate completed forms are received and processed by human resources. Forms must be received within 31 days of an eligible qualifying event to be considered for processing. Should you experience a significant life event, please review <http://uaex.edu/support-units/human-resources/life-changing-events.aspx> for details and necessary forms. ■

Personnel Changes



Welcome aboard:

Laura Balis - Assistant Professor – Health, Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock

Renae Blackmon - Administrative Specialist, Community and Economic Development, Little Rock

Rollins Elam - Program Technician – Soybean, Crop, Soil & Environmental Science, Lonoke

Isaac Gauvey - County Extension Agent – 4-H, Washington County, Fayetteville

Cody Salmon - County Extension Agent – 4-H, Boone County, Harrison

James Vincent - Program Assistant – Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Phillips County, Helena

Farewell to:

Gerard Degbedji - Fiscal Support Specialist – Financial Services, Little Rock

Laura Goforth - Associate Designer/Editor – Office of Communications, Little Rock

Katherine Hurd - Program Technician – Plant Pathology, Lonoke

Terrence Kirkpatrick - Southwest Research & Extension, Hope

Josh Newton - Government Affairs and Legal Counsel – Office of Legal Counsel, Little Rock