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BLUE LETTER

November 2023

No. 3859



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy Holidays!

First, I want to wish everyone happy holidays. I hope you have some time off planned to spend with family and friends and to do activities you enjoy. It has been my pleasure to serve the Cooperative Extension Service as director for the past three and a half years, and I deeply appreciate all of you who have supported me and our efforts.

I am proud of our many accomplishments. For example, instructors now have a promotion policy and process whereas before they did not. I am also pleased that we hired an assistant vice president for Family and Consumer Sciences and one for 4-H. I believe this will help ensure robust futures for these program areas. With the movement of our positions that were formally classified into the non-classified category, and the implementation of the GRO program, we have insured that employees can be rewarded for growing in their positions throughout their careers. We have also increased starting salaries to make our jobs in the counties more competitive with other positions.

Throughout my tenure as director, I've tried to focus on county programs. I still believe that the long-term success of extension depends on the strong presence in all 75 counties.

For me personally, I look forward to my return to my chosen field of weed science, and I know that I'm leaving the extension service in good hands with Dr. John Anderson, who will be moving from his current role as head of the Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness department into the director's role. I've had the pleasure to work with John, and I know that he will be a strong advocate for extension. Again, I wish everyone a happy holidays, and I wish you continued success in your program areas. ■

INSIDE SCOOP

2. Valor Quilt Project
 3. Check In & Tune Up
 4. Soybean Science Challenge STEM Fest
 5. Human Resource and Hiring Workshop
 6. Tech Corner
 7. Horticulture Demonstration Completed
- ...And much more!

Valor Quilt Project



A group of 4-H Sewing Club members in Izard County thanked their local veterans by presenting red, white and blue handmade lap quilts in a ceremony at Ozarka College in Melbourne on Nov. 9.

Elizabeth Daigle, Izard County family and consumer sciences agent, said the 4-H Sewing Club started three years ago as a collaboration with Redbud Extension Homemakers Council members.

“When I first discussed this idea with the EHC ladies, it was about joining the older generation with the youth to teach them a trade they could always use,” Daigle said. “I think it’s awesome that we’ve connected these two groups, and that they get to work together.”

Julie Praytor, a member of the Redbud Extension Homemakers Council, said she brought the idea for the valor quilt project to Daigle both as an act of community service and as an activity for youth to practice their sewing skills.

Fourteen members of the 4-H Sewing Club each worked on a lap quilt measuring 45 inches by 64 inches using a take-home kit designed by EHC members. Isabella Bray, 11, has been a member of the Izard County 4-H Sewing Club for three years and presented her lap quilt to Jack Yancey, a veteran and former sheriff of Izard County.

“I think this was a really good project to work on because the people that died for our country and served for us are very important,” Bray said. “Our quilts are American flags, so I feel like it’ll remind them about all the good things they’ve done for our country.”

Contact Elizabeth Daigle at vdaigle@uada.edu for more info. ■



4-H members in Izard County said thank you to their local veterans with a presentation of red, white and blue handmade lap quilts.

Fun, Food, and Phantastic Halloween Costumes

The Arkansas Association of Cooperative Extension Specialists (AACES) Fall Festival brought together more than 50 extension staff and AACES members in LRSO’s Canteen area on Oct. 31. The decorations — from the selfie station to the large life-like skeleton — oozed Halloween spirit. Halloween-themed snacks food were plentiful, and gift bags with treats, not tricks, were available to participants.

4-H Center Director JJ Pitman emceed the PHANTASTIC Halloween Costume Competition. Boisterous clapping and shouting erupted from the crowd as participants displayed their costumes for the various competition categories. The length and level of the clamor decided the winners.

Competition categories and winners included:

- Sparkliest Costume (Gretchen Skinner – Lady Bug with Wings)

- Most Original (Vanessa Lewis – Rainbow Over Clouds)
- Funniest (Shannon Baker (Batty Coda from FernGully) and Makenna Mezier (Alan Parrish from Jumanji)
- Scariest (Andrea Griffith – Queen of Hearts)
- Best Costume (Rebecca Simon – Mrs. Doubtfire)
- Coolest Costume (Kayla Machen – Dad from The Birdcage)
- Best Group Costume (Alice in Wonderland – Human Resources and Office of Inclusion, Access, and Compliance Staff Members)

AACES presented gold skeleton trophies to the costume contest winners. Both group costumes were outstanding – a Robin Williams tribute to various characters from his movies (FCS Department) and Alice in Wonderland characters (Human Resources Staff).

Thanks to CPED Assistant Professor, Frank Seo, for taking photos and creating a video! View more photos [here](#) and see the video [here](#). ■



Check In & Tune Up

Forty-five new employees attended Check In and Tune Up on Nov. 8 at the state office. The event was coordinated by new professional development specialist Steve

Siegelin (also an event participant) and program associate Vanessa Lewis, with other CPED staff assisting.

Twenty vendors participated in the event –

a record number.

Dr. Bob Scott, extension director, welcomed employees and shared the purpose and mission of extension as part of the land-grant university system and how we meet the needs of Arkansans by using reliable science-based information to help people improve their lives. He introduced key leaders in the

organization who explained their missions, roles and responsibilities.

Participants were able to engage in organic conversations, foster connections and build relationships to pave the way for future collaborations and support. Peer-2-Peer sessions were available in the afternoon so participants could meet, learn, and discuss their roles and responsibilities. Information Technology, Human Resources and Communications staff also provided tips from the experts.

Snacks, lunch, snacks, then door prizes wrapped up the day. New employees who may have missed this event can enroll in Learn for the next Check In and Tune Up on May 8, 2024. ■



Cooperative Extension Service Director Bob Scott introduces some extension history during new employee orientation.



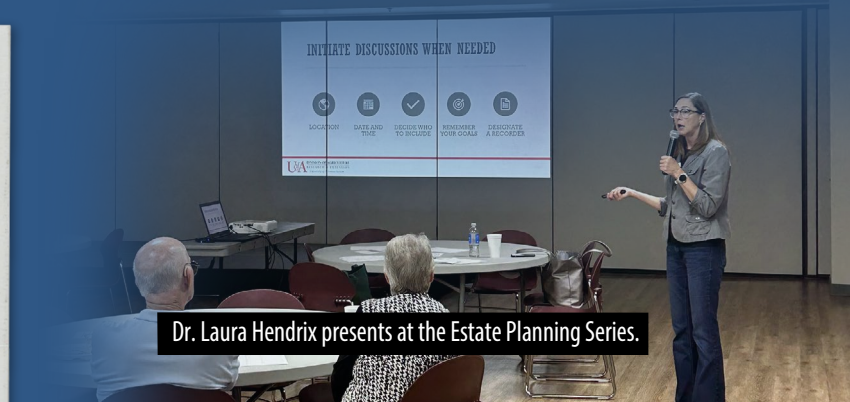
Nina Roofe talks about extension's family and consumer science initiatives.

Estate Planning Series

Little River County Extension's Ag Agent and Staff Chair, Jennifer Sansom, presented an Estate Planning Series the last several weeks. Meetings were held Oct. 30 and Nov. 6 and the final meeting was held Monday, Nov. 13. Guest speakers were Rusty Rumley, senior staff attorney for the National Agricultural Law Center, and Dr. Laura Hendrix, Associate Professor – Personal Finance and Family Resource Management. A Q&A panel included attorneys, bankers, insurance agents and title company owners, and other experts. ■



Rusty Rumley, senior staff attorney, speaks at an Estate Planning workshop in Little River County.



Dr. Laura Hendrix presents at the Estate Planning Series.

Soybean Science Challenge

Roars into STEM Fest



The Soybean Science Challenge hosted a table for the Thunder Over the Rock Air Show and STEM Fest at the Little Rock Air Force Base on Oct. 20. The event celebrated science, technology, engineering, and math for grades K-12. Over 5,000 students and 600 teachers, plus more than 60 exhibitors attended the event held in the central hangar. The event’s purpose was to connect students and educators with role models and future career paths in the STEM area.



Diedre Young and Rita Watson play “Where’s the Soy?” game with students at Thunder Over the Rocks event.

Diedre Young, Soybean Science Challenge coordinator, Rita Watson, Dr. Lynn Wilson, and Ashlyn Ussery spoke with over 1,500 students and teachers. “Where’s the Soy” game was the star feature at the table. Students guessed what items (chick feed, foam pillow, premium dog food, chicken soup, caulking material, newspaper print and a high

protein shake) shown by extension staff contained soy. Over 1,000 sunglasses along with hundreds of other soybean-related and agricultural materials were distributed. Science teachers received information about the Arkansas regional and state science fairs and the free educational resources available through The Soybean Science Challenge program. ■



Rita Watson hands out sunglasses and other soybean-related materials at Thunder Over the Rocks STEM Fest at the Little Rock Air Force Base in Jacksonville.

soup, caulking material, newspaper print and a high

EHC Delta District

Ice Cream Social

The Clay County Extension Homemakers Council hosted a Delta District Ice Cream Social at the First General Baptist Family Life Center in Piggott. The event was a 1950s music theme which included an ice cream bar. Jeanette Hall, Piggott-Hamlet’s Service EHC Club president, and Stewart Runsick, Clay County ag agent/staff chair, opened the event, followed by Clay County FCS Agent Christin Holmes.

Guest speaker Autumn Turner, director of the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum, shared history about the museum. The EHC members socialized and enjoyed Diamond Dot Art with Gosnell EHC members Rhoda and Alicia Yost and Butterfly Origami by Cody Begemann from Clay County. Several participants toured the Hemingway-

Pfeiffer Museum. Clay County EHC is thankful for all the planning our new Delta District EHC President Rhonda Bogoslawski put in to make this an amazing and fun time! ■



From left to right: Charles Geyer, Barb Owen, Jeanette Hall, Cody Begemann, Stacey Corona, Clay County FCS Agent Christin Holmes.

First ever Soy Chef Competition in the U.S.

The first Soy Chef competition in the United States featuring whole soybeans took place Nov. 3 at the University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical College's Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Institute (CAHMI).

The new event provides an opportunity for the next generation of culinary leaders to conduct research in their labs to create healthy food options for the American palate using vegetable soybeans. The event was in partnership with the Mid-South Soybean Board, B&B Legacy Farms, and the UAPTC-CAHMI.

Soybean Science Challenge Program Assistant Dr. Lynn Wilson and Russell Wilson, IT network administrator, hosted a soy tasting table. The Soybean Science Challenge Program serves as a collaborator for educational outreach and education support. B & B Legacy Farms is a multi-year partner with the UADA Soybean Science Challenge.

They were among 60-plus participants, who sampled spinach dip, made with soy sour cream, salsa made with black soybeans, and roasted soybeans. Other soybean food samples included soy hummus, Mexican Chicken with black soybeans, soybean appetizers, Soylicious Chicken Chili and turtle cheesecake made with soy cheese. All recipes were prepared by UAPTC-CAHMI staff and student chefs.

Nine student chefs competed in three categories: appetizers,

main dishes, and desserts.

- **Appetizer entries included:** Elizabeth Gomarga's Soybeans Amuse; Georgia Daniel's Soybean Stuffed Mushrooms; and Cassidy Perry's Spicy Black Bean Tostados.
- **Main entrée entries included:** Cooper Blough's Tofu Fish and Chips with poutine; Dylan Cruz's Crispy Fried Tofu Sandwich with a sauce and vegan mac and cheese; and Georgia Daniel's Black Soybean sliders.
- **Dessert entries included:** Cassidy Perry's Twisted Bananas Foster; Creighton Ward's Cream Puff Flight; Janaiya Richardson's Soy Milk Pudding Trio; and Louis Cummings Soy Panna Cotta.

Dylan Cruz won the 2023 Soy Chef competition. Cruz received a gold medal and a \$500 prize. Silver medal winners received a \$500 cash prize for each category. Category winners were: Appetizer-Cassidy Perry; Entrée - Dylan Cruz; and dessert - Creighton Ward.

To learn more about the competition and value of whole soy foods to a healthy diet, go [here](#).

To access whole soy food recipes and additional educational information once a month, sign up for the newsletter [here](#). ■



From left to right: Mandie Smith, Chef Alicia Watson, Karen Ballard, Leigh Ann Bullington and Keith Cleek.

Human Resource and Hiring Workshop

UADA Extension hosted Glenda Caton of Caton Consulting on Nov. 7 as part of the Arkansas Business Navigator program for a day-long workshop on human resources and hiring.

Small business owners attended the event and received a copy of "Hiring Your First Employee: Human Resource Information for Small Businesses" which included templates and best practices.

Caton is the 2023 Small Business Impact Award recipient for the Arkansas Small Business and Technology and Development Center and the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce. She is also part of the inaugural Arkansas cohort for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Fellows. ■

Glenda Caton, presenting to workshop attendees at LRSO Auditorium Nov 7.



New Hack at Your Fingertips



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.

As per the above policy - IT must purchase all software unless an exemption has been given. All software purchases and renewals must first go through the [Software Request Form](#).

IT will notify the person that submitted the software request if they are 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. Exemptions are only granted in advance of a purchase and only for a select few approved software.

Zoom Pro Tip Out of Office Message and Status

Taking some time off soon? Let your coworkers know you will be unavailable with the Out of Office status and by setting a Status Message. With a Status Message in the Zoom client, you can set a message that will display when others try to send you a chat message. The Zoom Support site has [instructions for setting your Status Message](#) from the desktop client or a mobile device.



Hacks from Hump Day

- [Introduction to Bing Chat](#)
- [Accessible Color Combinations for Websites](#) ■

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 October's [An Effective Impact Statement: What is it? How to Prepare or Write one Tech Tuesday?](#) Check out the recording and resources.



Ozark Foothills Eclipse Landing Page

As the [CREATE BRIDGES](#) program winds down, communities are seeing some of their planning and ideas come to fruition. The Ozark Foothills (Fulton, Izard, and Sharp Counties) recently launched an eclipse landing page for the region to attract visitors and inform locals about the April 8, 2024 Solar Eclipse. The center line of the eclipse runs through communities in the



area such as Cave City (Home of the Watermelon Festival) and Hardy (Spring River town). The [website](#) will continue to be updated with community information as plans solidify over the coming weeks and months. CREATE BRIDGES grant funds were used with community resources to develop the website and eclipse logo for the region. ■

Brooks Presents ABCD to Extension Health Ambassadors

Dee Brooks, co-founder and director of Australia's Jeder Institute, spent a week in Arkansas with Dr. Hunter Goodman, associate professor for Community, Workforce, and Economic Development, and Tabatha Duvall, program Associate, presenting seven sessions for Extension employees, partners and volunteers.

Jeder, named for the German word for "everyone," operates across Australia and throughout the world to create positive change for individuals and communities, specifically through Asset-based Community Development and Participatory Community Building.

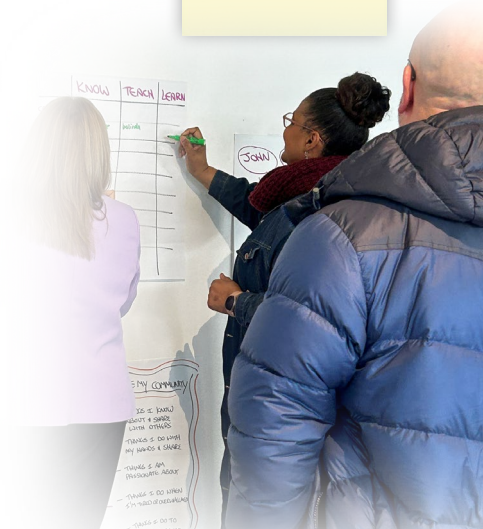
During her visit, Brooks presented sessions on The Essence of Asset-based Community Development and How to Use ABCD for Inclusive, Connected Leadership. The workshops were designed to help take relationships with those served from "client" to "community member." CPED project manager Lynn Wilson said "Dee's challenge resonated



Dee Brooks

with me: To start where I am; use what I have; and do what I can. It's simple, proactive and produces positive results. It is paramount to good leadership to lead by stepping back. Everyone is in a leadership position whether we realize it or not. In all things, listen to the community: find out what the community wants - not what we think they need."

If you are interested in learning about incorporating Asset-based Community Development in your work, contact Dr. Goodman. ■



Community Partners use New ABCD Framework for Inclusive Leadership.

Horticulture Demonstration Completed

Thirty-six agents investigated pumpkin varieties of varying colors (Justify, Spicy Mocha, and Moonshine) and assessed potential varietal resistance to melonworms and powdery mildew as part of the statewide horticulture demonstration orchestrated by specialists Aaron Cato and Amanda McWhirt.

Many specialty crop growers in the state are planting pumpkins to capitalize on the fall agritourism market and this demonstration aimed to give both growers and agents insight on new varieties to enhance grower profitability. Pumpkin starts were raised at the Southwest Research & Extension Center with help from their staff then delivered to the state office and other locations for agents to pick up. Yield, the number of pumpkins per plant, and percentage of pumpkins they thought they could sell were recorded.

In terms of pests and diseases, the agents scouted for melonworm and powdery mildew. Differences were observed in powdery mildew abundance on the three varieties, with this disease being most prevalent on 'Moonshine'.

Melonworm was not observed at any location and agents were able to showcase the importance of scouting prior to using insecticides. Statewide, agents harvested 397 pumpkins for a weight of 1,842 lbs.! We were thrilled to see agents working with their growers and enriching their communities. ■



Sherri Sanders and other agents shared updates and results on X using the hashtag #uaexHORT or posted updates to Facebook.



Teachers and students collect data on the pumpkins.

AG Day

Poinsett County elementary students were treated to lots of hands-on learning at AG DAY 2023 held Oct. 10 at the Main Street Learning Park at the Poinsett County Extension office.

More than 250 second- and third-grade students from across Poinsett County attended the event with their teachers to learn about agriculture in an informal field trip setting. The student rotated through 10 learning stations to complete a two-hour, hands-on experience.

Community volunteers and industry leaders staffed the stations:

- Station 1: Getting Down on the Farm
- Station 2: Arkansas Rice
- Station 3: Nature Walk
- Station 4: Barnyard
- Station 5: Wildlife Conservation
- Station 6: Poinsett Row Crops
- Station 7: Drones in Agriculture
- Station 8: Water Pollution
- Station 9: Dairy Cows
- Station 10: Camp Lancaster



Main Street Learning Park in Poinsett County Ribbon Cutting.

State Rep. Dwight Tosh, Poinsett County Judge J.C. Carter and Harrisburg Mayor Justin Kimble attended along with many other county, community and industry leaders.

Each child took home goodies donated by Eagle Seed Company, Riceland Foods, Poinsett Conservation District, Arkansas Game and Fish, Farm Bureau, and US Dairy. The Extension office provided each student and teacher with information about 4-H and project opportunities from the 4-H Curriculum Hub.

The Harrisburg Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony for MAIN STREET LEARNING PARK to welcome us to the neighborhood. Many neighbors and passersby stopped by to greet our staff. By the end of the event, more than 320 people visited the Main Street Learning Park.

Follow their [Facebook page](#) to find out more and see photos. ■

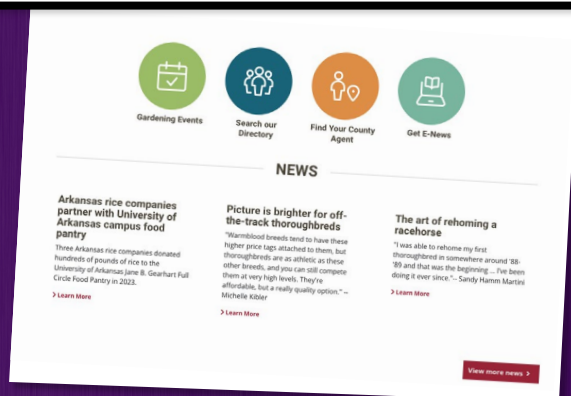


Students enjoy a drone presentation.

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.uada.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@uada.edu and Communications will add you to the distribution list. ■





LEADERSHIP LOG

LeadAR Class 20: Arkansas Ag Econ 101 and State Public Policy Prep

LeadAR's October virtual session focused on two topics:

1. The economics of agriculture in Arkansas presented by Dr. John Anderson, department chair in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at the University of Arkansas, and beginning in January 2024, the new senior associate VP – Extension, better known as Cooperative Extension Service director.
2. Preparations for the upcoming public policy and media seminar led by Kristin Higgins, a program associate in the [Public Policy Center](#). Read the blog post [here](#).

iLEAD III Sees Diversity of Operations in Northeast Arkansas

On Oct. 19, our second face-to-face iLEAD session brought us to Poinsett County, between Jonesboro and

Harrisburg. We were warmly greeted at the new Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center (NERREC) by Dr. Tim Burcham, director of the center, Ashlyn Ussery, instructor for youth education, and Greg Simpson, farm manager. iLEAD III also visited the Jackson County Extension Center and the Livestock and Forestry Research Station in Batesville. Read the details [here](#).

Collective Genius Reviewed by Rita Watson in October Leadership Lunch and Learn

The October Leadership Lunch and Learn book review series was spearheaded by Rita Watson, program associate-virtual education. She reviewed the book: *Collective Genius: The Art and Practice of Leading Innovation* written by Linda A. Hill, Greg Brandeau, Emily Truelove, and Kent Lineback. Watch the recording [here](#). Read the blog post [here](#). ■

Benefits Corner

UMR Programs

Work with a Health Coach

Program coaches help you create health care goals and adhere to your diabetes and healthy heart treatment plan. If you are identified as high-risk, you may be invited to work with a health coach to bring these and other health conditions under control. You can also self-enroll by calling UMR Care Management at 866-575-2540.

Disease Management

UMR—the medical plan administrator—offers disease management programs to help you and your family



members deal with chronic conditions. If you or a covered family member has a chronic condition, like diabetes or hypertension, speak with a UMR representative about

your options at 866-575-2540.

Maternity Management

Navigating infertility treatment can be overwhelming, but if you are enrolled in University medical coverage, you can contact the UMR Maternity Management Program for assistance. Speak with a dedicated nurse, who can guide you through pre-approvals and inform you of your options. Call 844-604-6244 to get started. ■

Grants & Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
AR High Tunnel & Urban Ag	378,565.00	Amanda L McWhirt	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS)
Blackberry Discovery Farm: Expanding Berry Crop Research and Grower Support in Arkansas	115,839.50	Amanda L McWhirt	Arkansas Agriculture Department
Economic Budget Calculator for Conservation Practices Producer Education	100,000.00	Breana Jordan Watkins	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS)
University Center at UADA-Extension	130,000.00	Hunter P. Goodman	Economic Development Administration (DOC EDA)
Service Order 06 USA-23-175 TVE29/CLZ tolerance of commonly planted rice cultivars to PRE and POST applied TVE29 on heavy soils	34,000.00	Jarrod Hardke	FMC Corporation
Analysis of Farm Populations & Credit Utilization	119,999.99	Ron L Rainey	United States Department of Agriculture, Office of the Chief Economist (USDA - OCE)
Hypobaric Research	130,000.00	Sara Katherine Orłowski	Cobb-Vantress Inc.
Identifying herbicide-resistant Italian ryegrass and developing best management practices for control	23,785.00	Tom Barber	Cotton Inc.
Integrating Multiple Tactics into Cotton Weed Management Programs to Target the Palmer Amaranth Soil Seedbank	31,359.00	Tom Barber	Cotton Inc.
Evaluate Corn Seed Treatment	19,000.00	Travis Faske	BASF Corporation
TOTAL AWARDS FOR OCTOBER 2023: 1,082,548			

Personnel Changes



Welcome Aboard:

Eva Langley – County Extension Agent - Staff Chair, Pike County
 Sherry Filadelfia – Administrative Specialist III, Greene County
 Anna Wilson – Institutional Services Assistant - 4-H, Vines Center
 Bethany Leonard – Program Associate - 4-H & Youth Development, Little Rock
 Trapper Padgett – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Lonoke County
 Alexandria Salisbury – County Extension Agent - 4-H, Crittenden County
 Sarah Bakker – Food Systems & Food Safety Program Associate - Horticulture, Little Rock
 Benjamin Holcomb – County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Clay County
 Crystal Strain – County Extension Agent - Family & Consumer Science, Scott County
 Heather Goins – Administrative Specialist III, Stone County

Farewell to:

Kamelle Gomez – Program Associate - Community, Professional, & Economic Development, Little Rock
 Kishan Mahmud – Post Doctoral Fellow - Crop Soil & Environmental Science, Soil Health Ecologist, Fayetteville