

BLUE LETTER

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Monthly Letter

No. 3731 • March 2013

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The 2013 Galaxy Conference at the Rockefeller Institute on Petit Jean Mountain is just around the corner. Thanks to the Galaxy planning committee, chaired by Pia Woods, a broad offering of workshops, displays, activities, and speakers have been planned. In addition, it's a great opportunity to network with your Extension peers.

Workshops range from measuring and reporting program successes, to methods of instruction, to a demonstration of our new content management web site, which we are beginning our migration toward.

The Thursday, March 28 luncheon has been set aside to recognize Extension's retirees and to award two employees CES Retiree Scholarships. For retirees attending part or all of Galaxy Conference, workshops are free. There will be a cost for lodging and meals, except for the Retiree Luncheon. Retirees and their spouse attend the Retiree Luncheon for free. If you know an Extension retiree, invite them to attend and offer them a ride.

During Friday's luncheon, Dr. Mark Cochran will bring you up to date on what is happening at the national and state level that will affect the Division and Extension in the near future.

If you haven't made plans to attend this year's Galaxy Conference, I encourage you to do so.

I look forward to seeing you there.

– Tony Windham

New employee ID system to be implemented

As many are aware, Extension has been reviewing options for a new employee ID system for more than a year. The primary motivation for considering a new system was driven by county Extension agents involved in local disaster circumstances and their need to be easily recognized as a part of the professional network associated with disaster recovery. With that beginning, we also identified a need for a more secure access system for the state Extension headquarters facility (LRSO).

After review of numerous options, we decided on a combination of access control and employee ID system. Implementation of the new system began last week with final designs for the employee ID and the support team needed to put the system into place. Team members representing the Communications, Facility Maintenance

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**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System

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

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DR. TONY WINDHAM
Associate Vice President for
Agriculture - Extension and
Director, Cooperative Extension Service

Hall of Fame Inductees



Proud family members were on hand to see **Margaret Alexander** and **Lanny Ashlock** inducted into the **Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame** at the 25th annual induction luncheon March 8 at Little Rock's Embassy Suites Hotel.

So many ballot proposals, so much whittling

Arkansas legislators must whittle down their 37 ballot proposals to no more than three in coming months.

Feb. 14 was the deadline for legislators to file proposed ballot issues that could appear on the 2014 ballot.

They submitted Constitutional amendments touching on election law, Congressional ethics and powers over court-ordered compensation. The list also includes proposals on making highway commissioners an elected position and eliminating the position of constable.

Not all 37 proposals will end up on the 2014 statewide ballot. State law limits the Legislature to three

ballot issues each general election. Many times, proposals don't make it out of a legislative committee or are combined with another proposal.

Some of the bills are placeholders that don't contain much information about what the amendment would do. Legislators typically go back later and flesh out the details.

Only one citizen group has come forward publicly with plans to circulate a petition to put an ethics issue on the ballot. ■



New employee ID system *(Continued)*

and Information Technology units will work together to provide necessary implementation support. The system will include the following:

- An encrypted badge pass photo ID for each non-classified Extension employees statewide and all employees headquartered in the LRSO;
- A photo ID for all other Extension employees not headquartered in the LRSO;
- Lanyard or badge reel for all employees headquartered in the LRSO (for employees required to wear and use IDs daily);
- A new entry and motor pool access system;
- New door installations at the LRSO.

The system includes access control between the reception desk and the Credit Union, making the workplace area ID or visitor badge access limited. The vendor's engineers are working on a transition plan to minimize down time. Non-classified employees from outside of LRSO will have electronic access to the headquarters facility using their personal ID. Access

without ID support will require registration as a visitor and a visitor pass. The transition will work something like the following:

- Completion and issue of ID's-including pictures taken, final design, etc.
- Once ID cards are completed, the vendor begins the system transfer and re-wiring, programming of doors and buildings. This will be done for each building separately, with each requiring about a day of on-site labor for the existing electronic access doors.
- The new access controls and doors follow as the project is completed. Training regarding the access control, ID production and system management will occur as the components of the system are in place.

We understand that this new system will require adjustments. Given the recent circumstances, the access controls and picture ID value to employees make this an important investment in the wellbeing of our entire Extension family. ■

Dr. Trace Peterson joins Aquaculture/Fisheries Center at UAPB

Dr. Trace Peterson has joined the Aquaculture/Fisheries Center at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff as an assistant professor of fish pathology. In this position, Dr. Peterson will provide Extension diagnostic and research support for Arkansas aquaculture. He will oversee the four-lab diagnostic system in the state, including fish inspections necessary for certification.

Dr. Peterson will also develop an Extension educational program focused on fish health and biosecurity. He will develop a research program aimed at more effective diagnosis, treatment and prevention of fish health problems on fish farms. His responsibilities

also include teaching and mentoring students.

Dr. Peterson, who holds a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Louisiana State University, earned a doctorate degree in microbiology from Oregon State University while holding the National Institutes of Health Aquatic Animal Models Postdoctoral Fellowship. He also has a bachelor's degree in poultry science from the University of Arkansas. ■



Dr. Trace Peterson

Fact sheets describe two laws

Have you been asked whether a poultry farm was a nuisance? Or whether written leases were better than a handshake?

The Public Policy Center now has fact sheets on land leases and Arkansas' right-to-farm law. The February publications, FSPPC117, *Arkansas' Agricultural Land Leasing Laws: An Overview*, and FSPPC118, *Arkansas' Right-to-Farm Law: An Overview*, were authored by former University of Arkansas graduate student Paul

Goeringer, who is now a research associate at the University of Maryland's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Goeringer specializes in legal risk management as it relates to agriculture.

The fact sheets explain the legal language behind the two laws and how they've been used in Arkansas courts. Copies have been sent to every county, and the fact sheets can be found on the uaex web site. ■

More than 80 cattle producers attend conference

The second Annual Delta Beef Cattle Producer's Conference was held Feb. 15 at the Craighead County Extension Office.

The program included presentations from Arkansas Cooperative Extension livestock faculty on grazing strategies and hay/pasture management.

Dr. Derrell Peel from Oklahoma State University's Agricultural Economics department discussed the beef cattle market for 2013. Adam McClung, executive director of the Arkansas Cattleman's Association talked about critical issues facing cattle producers from Capitol Hill.

Conference attendance doubled since last year, with more than 80 producers representing 12 Arkansas counties and from three different states. ■



Dr. Derrell Peel giving his presentation.

What's new in publications? Find out at:

http://www.uaex.edu/depts/Administration/blue_letter/Monthly_Publications_Report.htm

Meet the *new* employee!



James Mahan
County Extension Agent -
Agriculture
Arkansas County

- **What's your background?**

I just graduated college at College of the Ozarks in Branson, Missouri, with a degree in agriculture business this past December. I grew up in Ozark, Arkansas, and was actively involved in 4-H. I'm more familiar with livestock but am excited to learn about the other side of agriculture.

- **What knowledge, skills and experience are you bringing to Extension?**

I am coming in with a strong background in 4-H and am excited to be able to work with the 4-H youth in my county. Since not a lot of people are very familiar with livestock in this county, I hope to bring some new knowledge to this area and encourage the 4-H youth to raise livestock for their 4-H projects.

- **What are one or two things you would like your colleagues to know about you?**

I was a Teen Star and State 4-H Ambassador, and I raised goats and hogs for about 5 years as my main 4-H project.

- **What would you like to accomplish your first year with Extension?**

I want to gain an understanding of Extension and its programs and learn how to apply them so I may make an impact in my community.

- **What brought you to Extension? What was it about Extension that you value?**

Being in 4-H and watching what my extension agents got to do for a job was always an attraction for me and seeing that I would have an opportunity to help people in many different ways. I value the closely knit network that Extension has and the passion Extension has in taking care of its people.

- **What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?**

Playing sports and being involved in a church. ■

BENEFITS CORNER

2012 Flexible Spending Account Reimbursement (Health Care Participants Only)

University of Arkansas employees who participated in the Health Care FSA in 2012 and who still have account balances will have until 3/15/2013 to incur expenses that can apply to their 2012 FSA balances.

All requests for reimbursement from your 2012 FSA accounts must be received by QualChoice no later than 3/31/2013.

Your QC Flex Benefit Card (Health Care Reimbursement only) will continue to work through 3/15/2013 for expenses that you want to apply to your 2012 balances.

Remember, any FSA expenses incurred through 3/15/2013 that you want to apply to your 2012 FSA plan must be sent to QualChoice and not UMR.

The QualChoice Health Care FSA Claim Form may be located by visiting SPOT/Benefits/Employee Benefits Templates.

Health care reimbursement expenses include co-insurance, co-payments and physician charges that exceed medical plan limits or "reasonable and customary" fees, annual physicals, routine lab exams and x-rays, dental work not covered by a plan, eye exams, glasses and contact lens, hearing exams and hearing aids, guide and service animals, specially designed shoes, guide for a handicapped individual, medical data maintenance and retrieval, legal fees required for commitment to an institution or hospitalization.

Grants and contracts

for Month Ending January 31, 2013

Project Title	Award Amount	Principal Investigator	Granting Agency
Audubon NATIVE Project	3,500.00	Becky McPeake	Audubon Arkansas
4-H National Mentoring Program	82,000.00	Noah Washburn	National 4-H Council
U.S.-China Partnership for Strengthening Research, Education, and Extension	3,143.00	Jim Robbins	Texas Agri. Extension Service
Economic Contribution of the Soybean Industry to the Arkansas Delta Region	19,585.00	Wayne Miller	Soybean Promotion Board
Grow for the Green Yield Inspection	9,000.00	Rick Cartwright	Arkansas Soybean Assoc.
Evaluation of Big A as a Water Sanitizer	18,180.00	Susan Watkins	Chore-Time Poultry Production Systems
Herbicide Tolerance of DGT Germplasm	9,760.00	Tom Barber	Monsanto Company
Competitive Public Speaking	10,000.00	Lana Warfield	Bob White Memorial Foundation
North Central Health Network Diabetes Grant	14,000.00	MaLinda Coffman	North Central Health Network
Lockheed Martin 4-H Robotics	15,000.00	Noah Washburn	National 4-H Council
TOTAL JANUARY 2013 AWARDS	\$184,168.00		

Personnel changes

Please welcome the following:

Benjamin G. Hancock

Application Developer, Bio and Agricultural Engineering, effective February 4, 2013.

James David Mahan

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Arkansas County - DeWitt, effective February 4, 2013.

Extension says goodbye to:

Pearl Leigh Daniel

Program Technician - Discovery Farm, Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences, effective February 28, 2013.

Rosalind Marie Donson

County Extension Agent - Family and Consumer Sciences, Nevada County, effective February 7, 2013.

Keith F. Martin

County Extension Agent - Agriculture, effective February 8, 2013.