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## BLUE LETTER

March 2020

No. 3815



# Communicating in the Time of COVID-19



**TRACY COURAGE**  
Director of CES Communications

Since our last issue of the Blue Letter, the way we live and work has changed. Many of us are entering our second full week of telecommuting while others employees are the sole employees holding down the fort at their respective sites.

While our mission remains the same, social distancing has forced us to rethink how we communicate and interact with each other and with those we serve. In a very short time, we've found our way around many hurdles. Please continue to share with and learn from each other as we find best practices navigating this new learning curve.

In addition to the monthly "Conversations with Cartwright", Dr. Cartwright is now hosting a weekly chat via Zoom meeting for any employees who want to attend. This is a casual time for employees to ask questions, express concerns and stay plugged in with what's happening.

By now, we are all Zoom ninjas as videoconferencing

has replaced our face-to-face interactions. Just last week, Drs. Vic Ford, Shane Gadberry, Mike Looper, and John Anderson connected online with nearly 200 cattle producers who tuned in to an webinar to discuss impacts of the coronavirus on the cattle industry.

Social media has ramped up as we try to maintain connections and find ways to engage our clients. JoAnn Vann, Katie Cullum, and Heather Jackson started a new Facebook page "[At Home with UAEX](#)" where they post schedules of activities happening, such as online exercise classes. A new Quarantine Life page on the Division website offers a sampling of how we are keeping our mission moving forward in a digital world.

Lots of resources are available to keep you in the know. Karen Watts DiCicco has customized a COVID Chat-Bot for our website. Viewers can use the bot to quickly connect with Division resources as well as frequently visited sites such as the U.S. Centers for Disease

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# Get Moving with Walk Across Arkansas

Extension's eight-week exercise program kicked off March 6, but if you haven't registered, there's still time, <https://walk.uaex.edu/>.

For eight weeks - from now until May 10 - participants will log the amount of time they spend exercising. This year's event focuses on minutes, not mileage, and all forms of exercise count.

Last fall, more than 500 people participated. Many of

them reported more energy, slept better, controlled stress, strengthened their relationships, lost weight or inches, and improved their blood panels and blood pressure.

Research shows that physical activity can lower the risk of early death, coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome and some cancers, according to the CDC. Exercise also helps with weight loss, reduces depression and improves energy. To sign up, visit at <https://walk.uaex.edu/>. ■



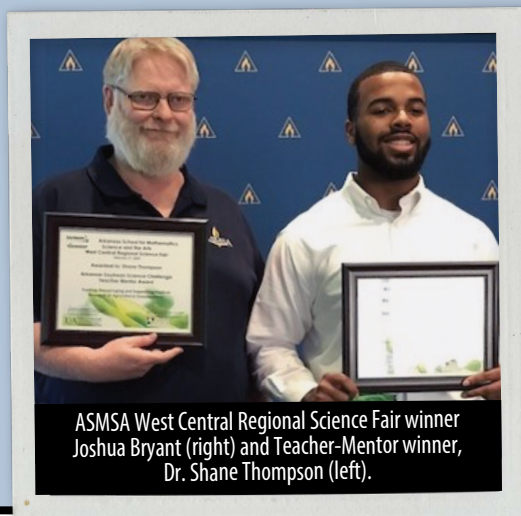
## Soybean Science Challenge Participates in ASMSA Science Fair

The Soybean Science Challenge attended the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts West Central Arkansas Science Fair in Hot Springs on Feb. 27. Joshua Bryant won the Soybean Science Challenge Award and received a \$300 cash award provided by the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board at the awards ceremony on Feb. 28. Joshua's teacher, Shane Thompson, won the Teacher Mentor Award and received \$200.

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 program is a partnership between the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and the U of A Cooperative Extension Service.

For more information, contact Dr. Julie Robinson, [jrobinson@uaex.edu](mailto:jrobinson@uaex.edu) or Diedre Young, [dyoung@uaex.edu](mailto:dyoung@uaex.edu). ■



ASMSA West Central Regional Science Fair winner Joshua Bryant (right) and Teacher-Mentor winner, Dr. Shane Thompson (left).



# LeadAR Co-founder, Verification Innovator Inducted into Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame

Two longtime extension employees of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture were inducted March 6 into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame and recognized for their contributions to the state's largest industry.

World War II and Korean War veteran Thomas Vaughns of White Hall, a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, was recognized for his long career in agriculture which included farming, working 20 years as a Crittenden County extension agent and

4-H leader, 14 years as a horticulture specialist at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, and co-founding the LeadAR program.

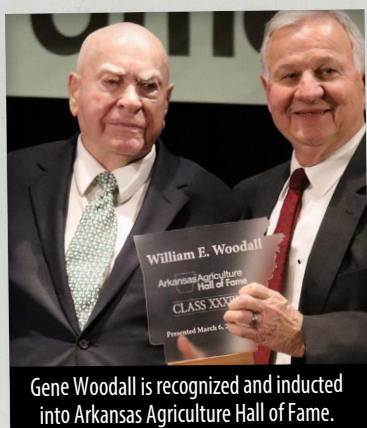
William E. "Gene" Woodall of Little Rock was recognized for creating the Cotton Research Verification Trials which helped cotton farmers find efficient and profitable production methods. His 26-year career with the

Cooperative Extension Service included serving as an agent

in Pulaski, Yell and Monroe counties and later as a cotton specialist at extension's state office in Little Rock.

Vaughns and Woodall, who are both 99 years old, were among the six people inducted March 6 during a ceremony at the Embassy Suites in Little Rock. The event, attended by Gov. Asa Hutchinson, was sponsored by Arkansas Farm Bureau and the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce.

Read the full story: <https://www.uaex.edu/media-resources/news/March2020/03-10-2020-Ark-Ag-Hall-Fame-inductees.aspx>. ■



Gene Woodall is recognized and inducted into Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame.



Thomas Vaughns speaks and is inducted into Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame.

*(Communicating in the Time of COVID-19  
...continued from Page 1)*

Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, the Arkansas Department of Health, and the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University which curates COVID news updates from around the world.

Here are just a few links to keep handy.

- Employee COVID-19 website includes information on travel, cases and other guidance: <https://division.uaex.edu/Coronavirus.aspx>.
- Public information on COVID-19 for a variety of audiences including individuals and businesses: [www.uaex.edu/covid19](http://www.uaex.edu/covid19).

- Gov. Asa Hutchinson' daily media briefings on YouTube. Sign up to get notifications at <https://app.e2ma.net/app2/audience/signup/15894/9419.448476363/>.
- UAMS free online COVID screening: <https://uamshealth.com/healthnow/>.
- Quarantine Life page: [https://division.uaex.edu/quarantine\\_life.aspx](https://division.uaex.edu/quarantine_life.aspx).
- IT telecommuting resources: <https://employees.uaex.edu/information-technology/telecommuting-resources.aspx>.
- The Office of Communications video help. Request help at <https://bit.ly/VideoHelpRequest>. ■

# Woodruff County Share Grounds Hosts 'Local Conversations'

Dr. Amanda Philyaw-Perez and the Food Systems and Food Safety team along with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, the Woodruff County Extension Office, and the Three County Fair Grounds Board hosted Local Conversations at the fairgrounds in McCrory on March 5 to highlight the new Woodruff County Share Grounds facility and the farm-to-school movement.

In addition to showcasing the food hub space and promoting farm-to-institution programming, the event brought together various agriculture community stakeholders to discuss challenges, successes, and the future of local foods in the state. Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward attended along with

more than 35 participants including farmers, produce distributors, school food and nutrition directors, and

small business owners. Guests heard from two panels of speakers, networked and toured the Share Grounds kitchen and workspace. They also learned about the Market Maker program from Ron Rainey, and economist with the Division of Agriculture's Center for Agriculture and Rural Sustainability. Overall, the event was a great success, and many relationships were created and strengthened. ■



Sarah Lane, Angela Gardner and Karen Reynolds participate in a panel discussion on local foods programs.



Secretary Ward addresses guests.



Dr. Amanda Perez gives a tour of the Woodruff County Share Grounds facility.

## Workday Readiness: Be Zoom Ready

Workday launches July 1. One way to prepare now is to be familiar with Zoom video conferencing features which employees will use for assistance. The "Chat" (Instant Messaging) feature in the Zoom desktop app is the fastest way to get impromptu assistance without sending an email and waiting for a response. Use the following checklist to be Zoom ready:

- ☒ Download, install, and pin the latest version of Zoom Client for Meetings to computer taskbar:

[https://uaex.zoom.us/download#client\\_4meeting](https://uaex.zoom.us/download#client_4meeting).

- ☒ Sign into UAEX Zoom account Zoom Desktop App using "SSO" (Single Sign On): <http://bit.ly/uaex-Zoom-sign-in-SSO>.
- ☒ Recommended Zoom Desktop App Settings: <http://bit.ly/Recommended-Zoom-App-Settings>. Sign into Zoom account on Mobile Device using "SSO." (Single Sign On): <http://bit.ly/SSO-Zoom-Mobile-Device>. ■



## UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

- Tuesday, April 14: Excel – Basics (Game On – Workday Ready Topic) ■ Tuesday, May 12: Intro to Podcasts
- Tuesday, June 9: Game On – Intro to Workday ■ Tuesday, July 14: Game On – Making Workday Work for You
- Tuesday, August 11: Game On – Workday Topic TBA

Second Tuesday of every month, starting at 9 a.m. Did you miss Workday Ready topics on New for You in 2020! (MFA & Microsoft A3 Licensing) and Zoom Ready (Zoom Chats, SSO, Equipment, Group Messaging and Projects), Computer Efficiency. To view the recordings, visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays>



# U of A Animal Science Faculty Present at State, Regional Conferences

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Four University of Arkansas Department of Animal Science faculty members presented at various conferences, meetings and during the 2020 ASAS Midwest Section in February and March.

John Jennings discussed techniques for managing nitrogen in grass/legume systems at the Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council meeting Feb. 13 in Conway. Shane Gadberry spoke at the River Valley Beef Conference on Feb. 18 in Ozark. He discussed GoGreen and other value-added programs.

Jiangchao Zhao presented on early pig health and nutrition at the inaugural Charles Maxwell Appreciation Club Symposium during a joint meeting of the American Society of Animal Science and American Dairy Science Association March 2-4 in Omaha, Nebraska. Zhao discussed how early-life modulation of the gut microbiome has long-term effects on swine health and production.

Michael Looper, head of the Department of Animal Science, spoke at the first Arkansas Cattlemen's Association's area conference on March 3 in Batesville. He provided information about the division, the statewide heifer sale and the struggles of producers that the university is conducting research around. The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Department of Animal Science is a sponsor for the nine ACA spring conferences. ■



Michael Looper spoke at the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association Conference.



John Jennings spoke at the Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council meeting.

## 4-H Center Recognized for Sustainability Efforts

The Little Rock Sustainability Commission has named the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center one of its five 2020 Sustain the Rock award winners, recognizing the center for its "approach to business and daily living that balances environmental responsibility, economic prosperity, and community equity."

"The 4-H Center hit every mark," said Lennie Massanelli, recycling and sustainability program educator for the City of Little Rock. The center's success was due to a combination of physical upgrades and the efforts of its employees.

"We've made it a priority," said J.J. Pitman, director of the Vines Center. "The employee contribution to sustainability is critical. One example is turning off heat/air and lighting in the lodging rooms as soon as a guest checks out."

Pitman said he and other administrators have worked to increase the 110,000-square-foot facility's efficiency over the past five years. These efforts include replacing a majority of the center's heating and air conditioning units, upgrading refrigeration and walk-in freezers and switching about 95 percent of all lighting to lower-wattage LED lighting.

From 2014 to 2019, the center decreased its annual usage of electricity by about 57 percent and its water usage by about 74 percent. Efforts to further improve efficiency are ongoing as the center prepares to mark its 40th anniversary. In 2019, the center began a bidding process for installation of a 170-kilowatt solar array on the campus to help reduce reliance on energy generated by fossil fuels. ■



# Calhoun County 4-H Hosts Annual Forestry Contest



Calhoun County 4-H hosted the 10th annual Hogskin Forestry Contest on Feb. 21, bringing together more than 90 youth from 18 schools across the state to test their knowledge in tree identification, tree volume determination, forest products identification, forest equipment identification and forest pest/disease identification.

Although blistering cold, teams from Harmony Grove, Hermitage and Hampton, respectively, continued their hot streak with top three placements. Hope C. (Hermitage), Evan B. (Hampton), and Chase S. (Harmony Grove) took home top three high point individual accolades as well. ■



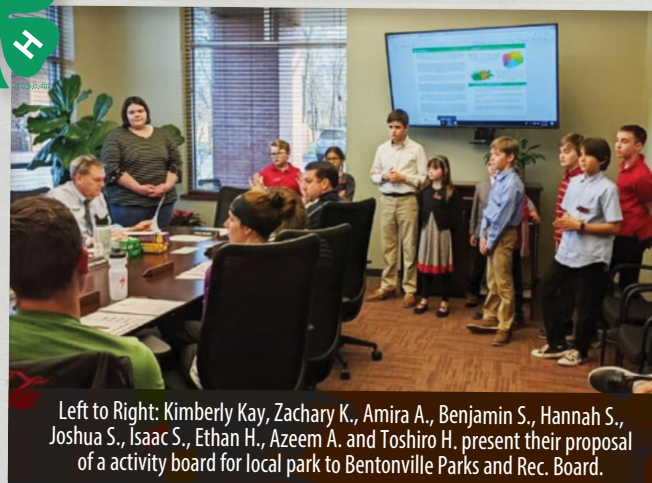
Students compete in the area of forest equipment identification by properly identifying 25 random pieces of equipment used in every day forestry practices.

## 4-H Lego League Team Works to Solve Community Problem

Members of First Lego League Flame team from CrossChurch Community 4-H Club in Benton County are making a difference in their community.

Each year, the team identifies a real-world problem and develops a solution around the given theme. The theme for the 2019-20 year is "City Shaper." The youth found that they and many of their friends get bored at playgrounds and parks after visiting the site more than once. They researched online, read studies, and met with park and city planners to better understand the problem. Then they created a board with inspirational games, challenges, and art for children who are looking for more to do when visiting a park.

The team presented their board at the Bentonville Parks and Recreation board meeting and got to see parliamentary procedure firsthand as their proposal was unanimously agreed upon. ■



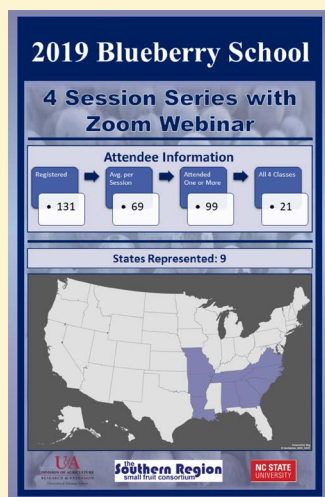
Left to Right: Kimberly Kay, Zachary K., Amira A., Benjamin S., Hannah S., Joshua S., Isaac S., Ethan H., Azeem A. and Toshiro H. present their proposal of a activity board for local park to Bentonville Parks and Rec. Board.



# Blueberry School Finds Innovative Ways to Collaborate and Teach

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Last fall, 99 county agents from nine states learned the basics of blueberry production through a four-week webinar series. The Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium provided funding for the program, which served Extension agents who may not have easy access to small fruit production training. The webinar series demonstrated how technology tools such as Zoom, Box, Camtasia and Qualtrics can be used to collaborate across regions and still make personal connections with audiences.



Five team members from Arkansas and one from North Carolina collaborated to plan and deliver the four-part series of one-hour webinars. Zoom video conferencing was used to broadcast the webinars; Camtasia was used to edit recordings; Files were shared through Box; and Qualtrics was used to test participants' learning and to collect feedback.



The webinars were recorded and posted on YouTube, where they have had more than 1,500 views. Polling in Zoom was used to engage participants, and an open Q-and-A at the end of each presentation helped clarify and reinforce the topics covered. The evaluation results revealed that the webinar series was effective at teaching agents about blueberry production. Of the agents surveyed, 94% said the webinar series either had a "good" or "excellent" impact on their ability to answer questions related to blueberry production.

The blueberry webinar was led by Amanda McWhirt, Lizzy Herrera, Mary Poling, Ryan Neal and Samantha Barker. ■

## Congratulations!

**Keith Statham-Cleek** received recognition at the National EFNEP Conference in Washington DC for fifteen years of service to Arkansas EFNEP. ■



The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) recently received the state Award of Excellence in Diabetes Prevention from the Diabetes Advisory Council. Receiving the award from Arkansas Department of Health/DAC chair Susan Weiss is **Debie Head**, master lifestyle coach trainer for the DPP. ■



# Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following FCS Agents who recently completed Lifestyle Coach Training for the Extension Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP): **Pamela Luker, Dianna Bowen, Crystal Johnson, Kristal Draper, JoAnn Vann, Kris Boulton, Alison Crane, Elizabeth Daigle, Joy West, Debbie Baker, Katie Cullum, Katrina Causey and Millie Collins.**

The AR Cooperative Extension DPP is a CDC recognized, award-winning program that helps participants make changes for life to prevent Type 2 diabetes. Groups meet for 16 weekly sessions and six month, follow-up sessions with a trained Lifestyle Coach. ■



L to R front row: Pamela Luker, Dianna Bowen, Crystal Johnson, (back row) Kristal Draper, JoAnn Vann, Kris Boulton, Alison Crane. (not pictured) Elizabeth Daigle, Joy West, Debbie Baker, Katie Cullum, Katrina Causey and Millie Collins.



Dr. Karen Moldenhauer accepts award for Distinguished Service.

**Dr. Karen Moldenhauer** accepted the Rice Technical Working Group's Award for Distinguished Service from Event Co-Host Dr. Jason Bond in Perdido Beach, AL, on Feb. 26.

Karen has worked for the Division for 38 years at the Rice Research and Extension Center and her rice varieties have been planted on over 20 million acres throughout her career. She released 4 new lines this past spring. Dr. Moldenhauer has announced her retirement in June. ■

# Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Determining the Impact of Early and Late Summer Broad Mite Infestations and Evaluating New Products for Potential Registration	5,000.00	Aaron Cato	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Developing a Southern Small Fruit Podcast	5,000.00	Aaron Cato	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Poster Calendar of Annual Plasticulture Strawberry Production for the Southeast	5,000.00	Amanda McWhirt	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
Rotating Cross Arm Trellis for Southeastern Blackberry	5,000.00	Amanda McWhirt	Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium
U of A Strawberry Research Trials 2019-2020	5,000.00	Amanda McWhirt	Mid-American Strawberry Growers Association
4-H Military Partnership Grant FY20	10,000.00	Angie Blacklaw-Freel	Kansas State University
Arkansas 4H Shooting Sports 2020	768.00	Jesse Bocksnick	NRA Foundation
Arkansas Discovery Farm for Sustainable Rice Production	80,000.00	Michael Daniels	Anheuser-Busch Foundation
CREATE BRIDGES: Celebrating Retail, Accommodations, Tourism, and Entertainment by Building Rural Innovations and Developing Growth Economies	260,231.82	Stacey McCullough	Mississippi State University
MS4 Storm Water Education for Jefferson County 2020-2022	6,067.65	Stacey McCullough	Jefferson County
TOTAL AWARDS FOR FEBRUARY 2020: \$382,067.47			



# 25% discount

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Extension Employees

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For more info contact Mike Simmons:  
(501) 821-6884 or [daycamp@uaex.edu](mailto:daycamp@uaex.edu)  
or go to [www.uaex.edu/daycamp](http://www.uaex.edu/daycamp)

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## New Publications:

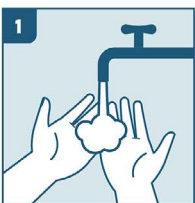
(You know you want to look.)

[uaex.edu/publications/  
new.aspx](http://uaex.edu/publications/new.aspx)



## PLEASE WASH YOUR HANDS

Help stop the spread of germs  
like Coronavirus (COVID-19)



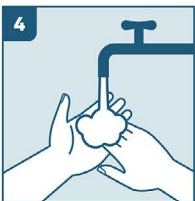
**WET HANDS  
WITH WARM  
WATER**



**APPLY SOAP**



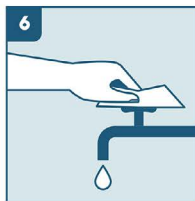
**WASH FOR  
20 SECONDS**



**RINSE HANDS**



**DRY HANDS**



**USE PAPER  
TOWEL TO TURN  
OFF FAUCET**

**U of A** DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
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**COVID 19**  
CORONAVIRUS  
DISEASE

## STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue,  
then throw the tissue  
in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Clean and disinfect frequently  
touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick,  
except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap  
and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

CS14915A

# Benefits Corner

## Important Flexible Spending Account Information:

March 31 is the deadline to submit documentation to UMR for eligible expenses incurred through Dec. 31, 2019.

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, and legal fees required for commitment to an institution or hospitalization.



During this difficult time, please know that your Benefits Team is still here to help you. The members of the Benefits Team are as follows:

**Del Johnson, Benefits Manager:** [dejohnson@uaex.edu](mailto:dejohnson@uaex.edu), (501) 671-2055.

**Sandra Baker, Benefits Analyst:** [skbaker@uaex.edu](mailto:skbaker@uaex.edu), (501) 671-2353.

**Nyalya Salter, FMLA & Wellness Specialist:** [nsalter@uaex.edu](mailto:nsalter@uaex.edu), (501) 671-2017. ■

## Personnel Changes

### Welcome aboard:

**Darby Treat** - Reg Program Associate – Obesity Reduction, Phillips County, Helena  
**Danielle Kurz** - County Extension Agent – Agriculture, Drew County, Monticello  
**Laura Robertson** - County Extension Agent – FCS, Crittenden County, Marion  
**Andrew Gibbons** - Program Associate-Horticulture IPM, Horticulture, Little Rock

### Farewell to:

**LaJoy Montgomery** - Early Childhood Program Associate-BCC – Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock  
**Kimberly Wiedower** - Credit Union Manager, Finance & Administration, Little Rock  
**Esmeralda Peña** - Program Assistant – EFNEP, Little Rock  
**Amy McClane** - Program Assistant – EFNEP Hempstead County, Hope  
**Paula Seago** - Administrative Specialist III – Crop, Soil & Environmental Science, Little Rock  
**Christine Cooley** - County Extension Agent – Urban Stormwater, Jefferson County, Pine Bluff  
**Robin Bridges** - County Extension Agent – Staff Chair, Ouachita District, El Dorado

