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BLUE LETTER

October 2020

No. 3822



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Making an Impact

The struggle is real. Most folks that I talk to are suffering from COVID fatigue or are just “over the whole mask thing.” Unfortunately, cases remain at a level too high across the Natural State to resume business as usual. It is very refreshing, however, to see some of these same people, Extension employees, who then mask up and continue pressing forward with our mission and their efforts to create some kind of normal for our clientele.

One of the greatest examples this month is our 4-H staff. I cannot help but feel that it is so important right now to give our 4-H youth some semblance of “normal” at a time when many youth cannot even attend classes. To be able to showcase their work at O-Rama, the National Equine Show, livestock shows and through the many other opportunities 4-H provides will make a difference in their lives. On Oct. 16, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the groundbreaking of the Arkansas 4-H Center. I do not believe this is a somber celebration. I think it will be looked back on as time when, as one would expect, 4-H rose to the challenges created by COVID-19.

One thing that has become clear during the pandemic is that our virtual presence is here to stay. Our virtual field days have been successful, and we have learned a lot going forward. The overall responses were positive, and we

have learned from surveys that we are asking the right questions and covering pertinent material. In addition, we know we are making an impact. More than half of those surveyed reported that they will make changes based on information they learned. Finally, we know that virtual field day type offerings will probably not go away, and many attendees stated that a combination of virtual and in-person meetings would be nice going forward – pandemic or not. Many of those who attended virtual field days had not attended in-person field days in the past; this is a potential new audience for us. There is also good evidence that our specialists and agents gain more regional and national exposure when things are posted online for the world to see! Many are getting national and international opportunities based on their online presence. County or regional programs are going “viral” and growing beyond their intended scope. An example of this is the Day-to-Day with Diabetes statewide support program organized and hosted by Family and Consumer Science agents Pamela Luker from Pope County and Rachel Chaney from Yell County.

I want to give a shout-out to Kristin Higgins and everyone involved with our 2020 Arkansas Ballot Issue Voter Guide. This has been a tumultuous political year, and our guide has been extremely helpful to voters. Many of you may not realize the effort made to ensure that

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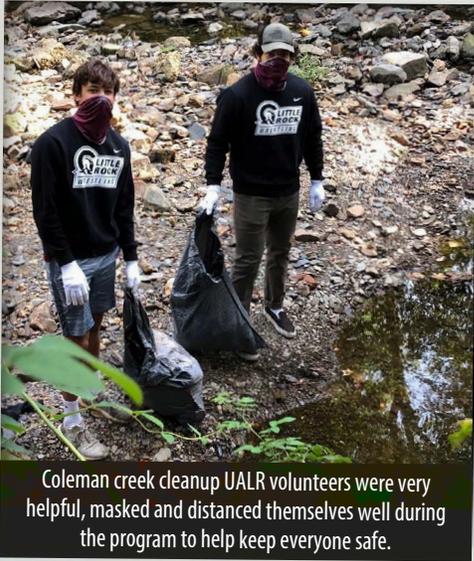
Litter Cleanup Program Achieves Multiple Goals

A crew of 49 volunteers from Extension, UA Little Rock, Central Arkansas Master Naturalists and Forest Heights STEM Academy removed about 750 pounds of trash from Coleman Creek during the most recent creek clean-up on Oct. 3.

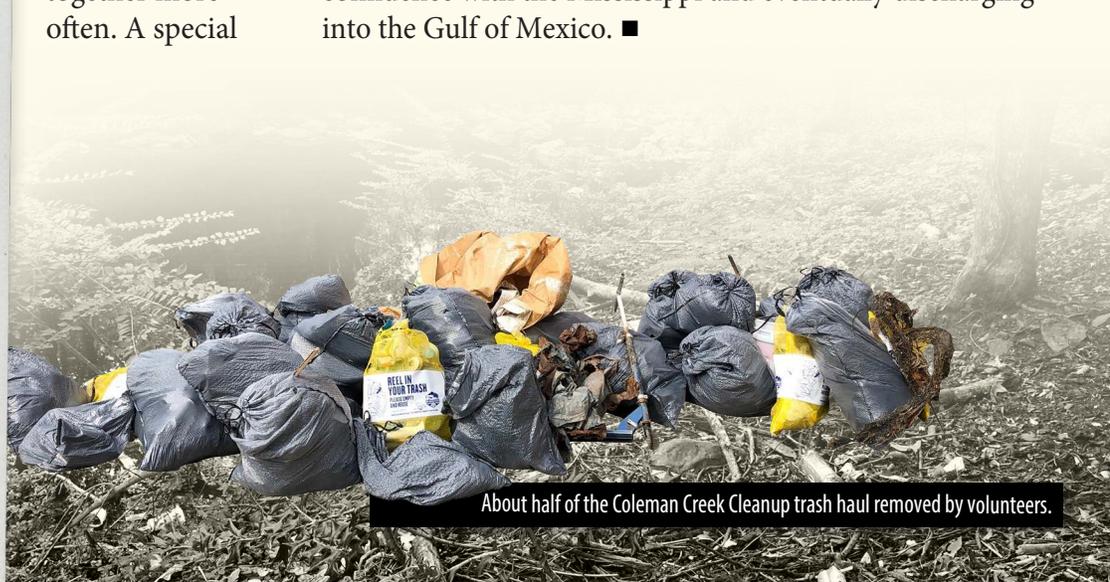
This effort carried on a joint tradition set forth by UA Little Rock and Extension campus administrations to seek opportunities to work together more often. A special

thing about this type of event is that it accomplishes multiple goals at once - community service, exercise and outdoor recreation, leadership development, strengthening partnerships, visibility, beautification, and improvement to environmental quality.

The impact continues as Coleman Creek is a tributary to Fourche Creek which flows to the Arkansas River before confluence with the Mississippi and eventually discharging into the Gulf of Mexico. ■



Coleman creek cleanup UALR volunteers were very helpful, masked and distanced themselves well during the program to help keep everyone safe.



About half of the Coleman Creek Cleanup trash haul removed by volunteers.

New Podcast Spotlights Rural Business Owners

The Create Bridges Arkansas team, part of Extension's Community, Professional & Economic Development unit, started a new podcast series for and about rural small business owners. The first two episodes of "Arkansas Small Business: Big Rural Impact" are available at uaex.edu/createbridgesresources.

The podcast episodes showcase business owners from the Ozark Foothills region (Izard, Sharp and Fulton counties) and the Cosstatot Community Connection region (Little River, Howard and Sevier counties.)

Muriel Wiley, Hazelle Whited and Brandon Mathews, program coordinators with Create Bridges Arkansas, co-host the podcast, which focuses on businesses in the retail, tourism, accommodations and entertainment sectors. Guests will include business owners, community leaders and local officials. ■



Equine Team Takes Nationals by Storm



Craighead County 4-H members recently returned from their biggest 4-H adventure yet.

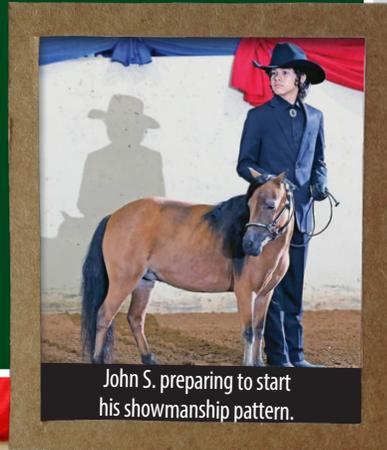
Six members, coached by Hannah and Joy Estes, competed at the American Miniature Horse Nationals in Tulsa. They brought home one National title, one Reserve Grand National title, 11 Top Five placings and seven Top Ten placings.

Callie C. brought home the National Championship title for 7 years and under Youth Showmanship. Maleigh S. brought home the Reserve National title in the 8-12 year showmanship, with Kyla C. placing third and Levi C. in fourth place.

In the Halter class, John S. placed eighth in the Mare halter class. Maleigh and Macey S., Callie C., and Levi

and Kyla C. also took Top 5 placings in their classes.

Kyla took home a Top 10 placing in Youth Pleasure Driving, and Maleigh and Kyla received Top 5s in Hunter in Hand and Obstacle Trail. ■



John S. preparing to start his showmanship pattern.



Callie C. showing her way into a National Title!



Maleigh S. jumping her way into the top 10!



Craighead Team members pose at their team trophy table!

Making an Impact from page 1 continued...

only the facts are presented and that both sides of each issue are given equal weight. Our voter education outreach effort represents the epitome of Extension's charge with being an unbiased source of information, and I can think of no where else in Extension that it is put more to the test.

This is also the season for reporting. Documenting your efforts in AIMS and recording your impact statements are the way we justify our existence. This effort is especially important this year, and many have questioned everyone's ability to work from home and online. We are making contacts and putting forth the effort, but we must make sure we report that effort. I used to tell my program associates that

if we do not take pictures and collect data, then we are just farming, so I encourage you all to report your efforts!

Finally, I want to recognize everyone who has submitted a plan under COVID-19 Stage II guidelines and hosted in-person events. From finding a venue large enough, to figuring out transportation, and enforcing PPE rules, it really requires going the extra mile. From where I sit, the effort has been worth it in the feedback that I have received from various groups. This is not easy, and I figure this is where a lot of COVID fatigue sets in. But I thank all of you who are doing it anyway. Most plans are coming through fully formed and compliant, making my job and those of our district directors easy, so keep fighting the fight. ■

2020 4-H O-Rama Event had G.R.I.T!



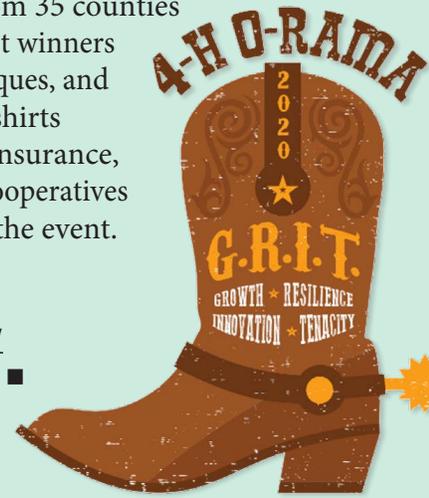
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4-H Members showed they had G.R.I.T and enjoyed the 2021 4-H O-Rama.

4-H members from across the state showcased their project work by participating in the 2020 Arkansas 4-H O-Rama. This year's theme was G.R.I.T. — for Growth, Resilience, Innovation and Tenacity — which encapsulated 4-H activities and events during the pandemic. Events took place virtually July 22-23 and in-person on Oct. 1 at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center. More than 170 4-H members from 35 counties competed in events. Contest winners received backpacks and plaques, and all participants received t-shirts and masks. Farm Bureau Insurance, Farm Credit and Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas all supported the event.

For a list of winners, visit <https://4h.uaex.edu/youth/opportunities/orama.aspx>. ■



Virtual Fall Forage Conference

Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council Conducting

The Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council Fall Forage Conference (AFGC) will be offered online on Nov. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

AFGC is offering free registration and one-year membership to those who register for the conference. Topics include best cover crops for grazing, strategic hay feeding to increase fall and winter grazing, actual grower costs of producing hay, new herbicides options for controlling crabgrass and foxtail in Bermuda and Bahia fields, and quick forage tips for winter and spring forages. Register at <http://bit.ly/AFGC-Conference>. ■

Departmental Notables

- **Jeremy Powell**, faculty member in the Department of Animal Science, was part of a research team that recently published a manuscript on drug delivery patches for cattle. The manuscript was a collaborative effort between animal science, the U of A College of Engineering and researcher Lauren Greenlee. The published manuscript is available online at ScienceDirect at: <https://bit.ly/3db30Vy>.
- The **U of A livestock judging team** competed twice this month. Their first event was the Flint Hills judging contest where the team finished ninth in reasons and 10th overall. Mesa K. tied for 11th place in reasons and finished 16th overall as an individual. The team's second stop was Dallas for the Texas state fair judging contest. The team placed second in cattle and third in every other category, finishing third overall. Carson H. ranked ninth as an individual in cattle, while Alex T. placed as the high individual in cattle and fifth in reasons. Mesa K. placed fourth in reasons. ■



Jeremy Powell

Soil And Water Conservation VFT

The Soil and Water Conservation Virtual Field Trip (VFT) series hosted its eighth live broadcast on Sept. 10, offering information about improving water quality and reducing water use with surge irrigation.

The one-hour free tour included talks by father and son team Mike and Derek Wood, Discovery Farmers; Mike Hamilton, soils instructor; and Dr. Mike Daniels, professor, who discussed how the Arkansas Discovery Farms Program is helping to improve water quality and reduce water use by using computerized irrigation management, soil moisture sensors, and surge valve irrigation. Crop, Soil & Environmental Sciences Program Associate Lee Riley served as host.



From left to right: Host, Lee Riley (UADA) and speakers: Mike Wood (Discovery Farmer), Mike Hamilton (UADA), and Dr. Mike Daniels (UADA).

A total of 238 people from seven states and three countries — Egypt, Nigeria and Uruguay — attended. The VFT recording can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/EMp8WmYeDI0>. ■

Cattle Marketing Webinar Held

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s Departments of Animal Science and Agricultural Economics and Agri-Business hosted a webinar Sept. 29 focusing on cattle marketing for producers across the state. The hour-long webinar addressed current market conditions, factors that affect cattle prices, calf management and supplemental feeding for preconditioned calves. It also gave the committee the opportunity to introduce Dr. James Mitchell, assistant professor of livestock marketing and management, to producers across the state.

representatives, cattle buyers, industry representatives and Extension employees.

After the webinar, 70 percent of producers reported that they planned to precondition calves in the future. Of those, five producers reported plans to precondition 470 calves in 2021.

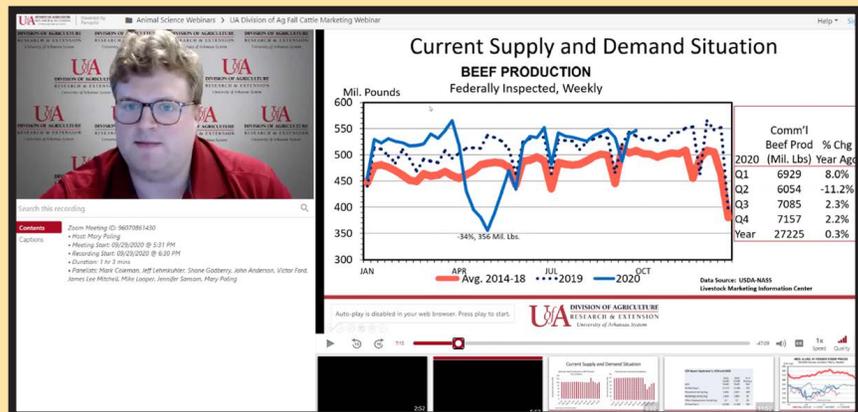


Shane Gadberry

Dr. Mitchell reported the added value of preconditioning is around \$7/cwt. This could be a major profit margin for Arkansas producers.

One producer noted the most valuable thing in the webinar was “the market explanation coming from Arkansas, not just [an industry representative]. We need that to improve our producer’s education.”

Kudos to Shane Gadberry and the GoGREEN steering committee for an informative webinar. A recording of the webinar can be viewed at <https://uada.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=6ac31260-0b42-4880-8826-ac4600c9547>. ■



The webinar had 131 attendees from nine states and 66 counties. They included mostly producers along with sale barn



Tech Corner

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A “Constant Contact” Course for You



Interested in using e-newsletters for your clients or program area? Check out the new LEARN course, Getting Started with Constant Contact!

In the course you will:

- learn best practices.
- get tips to reach clientele more effectively.
- learn how to see who’s reading your emails using the analytics tools.

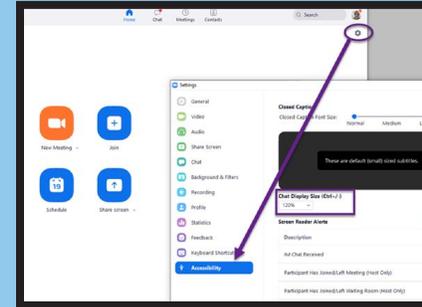
Already have an account?

This course can help answer your questions and concerns so you can start taking full advantage of this dynamic communication tool.

Zoom Game Changer – Increase Chat Font Size

Are you tired of squinting to read Zoom chats in your Zoom app or the chat in a Zoom meeting? Change the font size for chat. Open the chat box. Hold the Ctrl key and click “plus” (+) to increase the font size or “minus” (-) to decrease the size.

To set a permanent font size, in your Zoom Desktop App, go to “Settings” > “Accessibility” and select the Chat Display Size desired.



TECH ME SERIOUSLY

Check out the latest TECH ME Seriously vlog posts:

1. How to Embed Panopto Videos into the Website.
2. How to use the OneDrive Mobile App for P-Card Receipts.
3. Best Practices in Panopto (Folder, Video, and Share Video Settings).

Visit <https://employees.uaex.edu/techmeseriously> to view vlogs.

Telework Tuesday



Join IT for their weekly open office drop-in session for answers to your software/hardware questions. Anything from Workday, Box, Zoom, Panopto, Outlook, OneDrive, Teams and all other techie stuff.

When? The first, second and third Tuesday of each month from 2 – 3 p.m. Look for the link to join in the Weekly Tech Talk newsletter delivered to your inbox on Monday afternoons. ■

UPCOMING TECH TUESDAY WEBINARS

- Tuesday, November 10: Beyond Doodle - Taking Your Surveys to the Next Level.
- Tuesday, December 8: The Best of Telecommuting

Did you miss the “Foxit PDF Pro - The Game Changer Tech Tuesday?” Visit <https://uaex.edu/techtuesdays> to view recordings.



Arkansas Shines at National NEAFCS Meeting

The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences held its virtual national meeting Sept. 14-16. Forty members of the Arkansas affiliate attended. The meeting was filled with multiple professional development opportunities and great speakers, such as Dr. Dave Schramm from Utah State University who spoke on “Happy Hacks for Positivity & Productivity.” Terrie James ran for a national office this year and represented Arkansas well.



Keith Statham-Cleek

Arkansas members received several regional and national awards:

Keith Statham-Cleek – Arkansas 2020 Distinguished Service Award

NATIONAL WINNERS

- Newsletters, 2nd Place, **Heather Jackson.**

- Human Development/Family Relationships, 3rd Place **Joy West.**

REGIONAL WINNERS:

- Newsletters, 1st place, **Heather Jackson.**
- Human Development/Family Relationships 1st place, **Joy West.**
- Internet Education Technology, 2nd place, **Amy Monk and Team.**
- Internet Education Technology, 3rd place, **Katherine Frizzell and Team.**
- SNAP-Ed EFNEP Education, 3rd place, **Charla Hammonds.**
- Family Resource Management, 3rd place, **Joy West.**
- Social Media Education, 3rd place, **Katherine Frizzell. ■**



Joy West



Amy Monk

4-H Center Staff Offer UAMS Students Teambuilding Time

The UAMS Department of Pediatrics has been sending residents to the C.A. Vines Center for a fall retreat for more than a decade. The annual retreat gives residents time to pause their busy work schedules and enjoy some professional development. This year, due to COVID-19, an overnight retreat wasn't possible.

Instead, Luke Nipper, the ExCEL Program coordinator, and Shannon Caldwell, 4-H Center programs director, delivered a three-hour program of physically distanced and COVID-19 compliant teambuilding for the pediatric residents at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

“Next to bringing our group to the Vines Center, this was the best thing that could have happened,” Emily Stotts, pediatric



residency coordinator, said. “Our residents got to do a retreat and participate in ExCEL.”

Stotts also took to Facebook and encouraged past residents to share memories from their retreats and to donate to the Arkansas 4-H Foundation. By the end of day, the foundation had received several donations. ■

Rebecca Simon Appears On Agcast

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Rebecca Simon, family life program associate in Family and Consumer Sciences, appeared on Farm Bureau's AgCast with Keith Sutton recently to discuss prevention of heat-related illnesses, tips for coping with stress and farming, and suicide prevention. With more than 3,500 views, the videos have reached a broad audience to raise awareness of mental and physical health concerns for farmers and ranchers. The video links are available on the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation website and social media accounts.

Rebecca works on the Managing Farm and Ranch Stress program with Family Life Specialist Dr. Brittney Schrick.



This program is available to agents to use with county audiences to increase awareness of stressors associated with agricultural work and how to improve healthy coping. ■

Grants and Contracts

PROJECT TITLE	AWARD AMOUNT	PI	GRANTING AGENCY
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program 2019	11,111	Amanda McWhirt	Board of Regents of the University of Georgia
Utilizing Carcass Ultrasound and Genomic Testing to Predict Quality Traits in Direct Marketed Beef from Farm to Consumer	11,500	Charles Looney	Arkansas Beef Council
African Poultry Farmer Training Videos	8,977	Fred (Dustan) Clark	ASA/WISHH
Determining the Impact of Non-target Applications of Herbicides on Bee Forage and Integrating Strategies to Minimize Negative Effects on Bee Health	48,500	Gus Lorenz	USDA - ARS
Drew County 4-H United Way	2,000	Hazelene McCray	Heart of Arkansas United Way
Protocol No./Entitled 2020-01-39-11 (Service Order No. 119)	6,650	Jason Kelley	Monsanto Company (Bayer CropScience LP)
To address the conservation education gap.	480,170	Julie Robinson	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
Enhancing Soil Health Technical Assistance with a Soil Ecologist	278,246	Michael Daniels	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
Expand efforts to establish a "Poultry Litter for Row Crop Discovery Farm" in NE AR	455,937	Michael Daniels	Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
Southern Risk Management Center at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service	910,080	Ron Rainey	NIFA
Southern Plant Diagnostic Network (Amendment Number 4)	39,500	Sherrie Smith	University of Florida
TOTAL AWARDS FOR SEPTEMBER 2020: \$2,252,671			

New Publications:



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

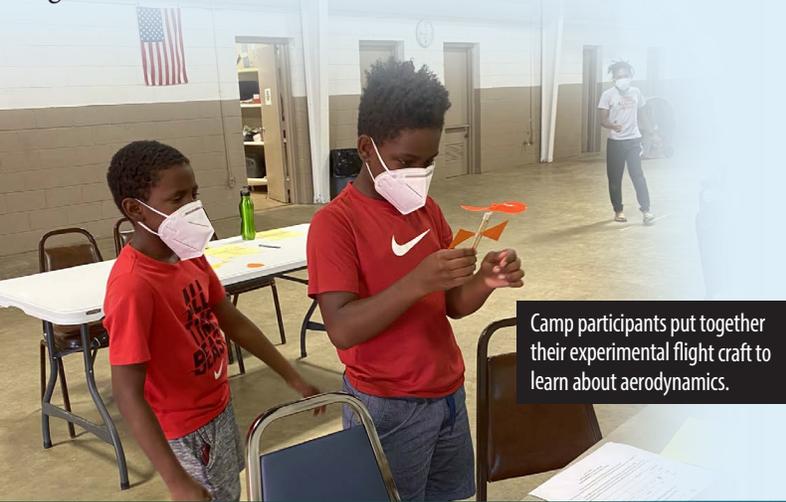
Learning To Fly With Drone Workshops

Youth from Saline, Pulaski and Grant counties learned about drones during workshops hosted by Saline County agents Nicole Nichols and Megan Maulden.

The workshops were held at the Saline County Fairgrounds in August and September. Each workshop was broken down into three parts: learning terminology, practicing the scientific method with aerodynamics and learning to fly. Youth played games to learn about the science behind drones and some

of the terminology involved. They also did a step-by-step experiment using the scientific method to learn how different aircraft shapes affect flight distance. Finally, the workshop culminated in spending some time learning how to fly the drones and getting some flight time in before cruising through a timed obstacle course.

Many of the youth said that they look forward to attending more advanced drone workshops in the future and want to learn more about aeronautics. ■



Camp participants put together their experimental flight craft to learn about aerodynamics.



Participants learn about their drones before the first flight.

Drew County Teens Take Demos Virtual



Drew County Teen Leaders are sharing their skills and interests online by recording videos of craft demonstrations, science experiments, and life hacks for others to use.

page and used by a local online newspaper. This will be an ongoing project for the Teen Leaders. ■

Some teens created how-to videos for painting a sunset and making paper flowers. Other teens videoed their experiments putting Mentos in Coke and making Oobleck. Another teen demonstrated how to cook a meal on an open fire. The videos will be posted on the Drew County 4-H Facebook



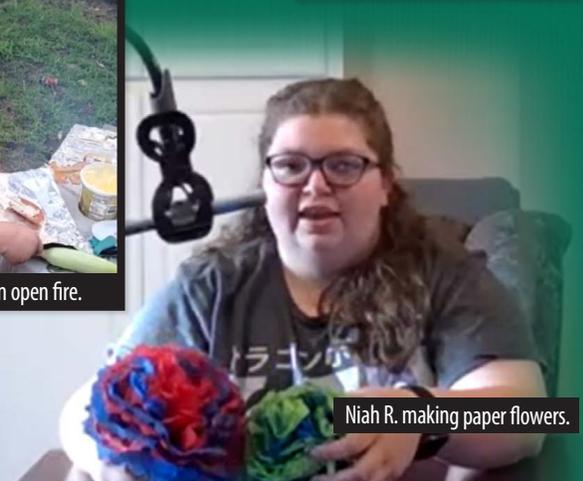
Bentley S. with Mentos in Coke.



Sy cooking on an open fire.



Sam M. painting a sunset.



Niah R. making paper flowers.

Benefits Corner

Benefits Open Enrollment: Nov. 1–30

Open Enrollment is your once-a-year chance to add, drop or change your benefits coverage. Be sure you and your family have the coverage you need for the coming year. Open Enrollment is also your once-a-year chance to elect contributions to a Healthcare and/or Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account—your contribution elections don't roll over year to year.

Read all about Open Enrollment and your benefit options on the benefits website. The enrollment deadline is Nov. 30.

New Enrollment Process

This year, you must make any benefit changes or elections through Workday. During Open Enrollment, you will also

be required to complete your Tobacco Pledge and Notice in Workday to avoid the monthly \$50 tobacco surcharge. While in Workday, check your contact information and make any necessary updates.

Online benefits fairs offer benefit summaries, vendor contact information and additional resources such as videos, flyers, recorded presentations and live presentation links.

*To view the virtual benefits fair specific to the Division of Agriculture: At the righthand top of the screen, click the “change campus” button and select “Division of Agriculture” and then click “Let's Go.” ■

Personnel Changes

Welcome aboard:

- **Leah Cribbs** - Administrative Specialist III, Crawford County
- **Amy Cofer** - Program Associate - Early Childhood Professional Development, Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock
- **Crystal Bowne** - SNAP PSE Coordinator, Family & Consumer Science, Little Rock
- **Celeste Chmura** - Administrative Specialist I, Garland County
- **Ebony Wallace-Morrow** - 4-H Program Assistant, Pope County
- **Camille Murphree** - County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Searcy County
- **Priscilla Rowland** - 4-H Program Assistant, Montgomery County
- **Meghan Post** - County Extension Agent - Water Quality, Washington County
- **Lisa Davis** - Program Associate - Leadership, Community, Professional & Economic Development, Little Rock
- **Lynnette Rancifer** - Program Technician - Arkansas PTAC, Community, Professional & Economic Development, Little Rock

Farewell to:

- **Shawn Lancaster** - County Extension Agent - Agriculture, Mississippi County
- **Angelia Anderson** - Program Assistant - EFNEP, Drew County

