



Keeping you connected

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UofA
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RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

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Register for Walk Across Arkansas, free group-based exercise program

Arkansans can now register for the spring session of Walk Across Arkansas, a free, group-based exercise program that encourages participants to develop healthy habits and get moving.

The competition is hosted each spring and fall by the Cooperative Extension Service, the outreach arm of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. Participants can sign up as individuals or in groups of three to eight people. Throughout the competition, participants log their minutes of physical activity each day.

Registration is open through **March 8**, and the eight-week program runs from March 9 to May 3. Register and learn more at walk.uada.edu.



Bryce Daniels, extension assistant professor of health for the Division of Agriculture, said Walk Across Arkansas is a “simple way to feel better, build healthy habits and stay connected with others.”

“The spring session is a fresh opportunity to reset after winter, get moving as the weather warms up and enjoy the motivation that comes from being part of a team,” Daniels said. “Even small steps add up, and participating can help you feel more energized, less stressed and more connected to your community. If you’re looking for a fun and supportive way to be more active, this is the perfect time to join.”

In the fall 2025 session of Walk Across Arkansas, 732 participants from 50 Arkansas counties reported more than 1.6 million minutes of physical activity. Of 75 participants who responded to a follow-up survey after the session, 95 percent reported being more physically active during the program.

Daniels said that a unique element of Walk Across Arkansas is its emphasis on group participation.

“Aside from the well-known physical and mental benefits of being active — such as improved overall health and better stress management — Walk Across Arkansas also strengthens social connections by encouraging people to be active together,” Daniels said. “It creates a sense of community at the individual, county and even state level.

“The friendly competition makes being active more interactive, but my hope is that everyone finishes the program feeling the positive impact of living a more physically active life,” he said.

Anyone can participate in Walk Across Arkansas. Division of Agriculture employees must use a personal email address, not their work email address, to register. Visit walk.uada.edu to learn more and register, or contact your local county extension agent.

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Extension financial expert: What to know about 2025 tax changes

The passage of the One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act last year will mean significant changes for some taxpayers this season.

Laura Hendrix, extension professor of personal finance and consumer economics, said the changes include no tax on tips, no tax on overtime and an enhanced deduction for seniors age 65 and older.

Increased standard deduction amounts for tax year 2025:

- \$31,500 for married couples filing jointly.
- \$15,750 for single filers and married individuals filing jointly.
- \$23,625 for heads of household.

Deduction for seniors:

- Effective from 2025 through 2028, individuals age 65 and older may claim an additional \$6,000 deduction in addition to the standard deduction for seniors available under existing law.
- This applies per eligible individual (or \$12,000 for a married couple if both spouses qualify).
- This phases out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$75,000 (or \$150,000 for joint filers).
- Filers must be 65 or older on or before the last day of the tax year.

- This is available for both itemizing and non-itemizing taxpayers.

Read more [here](#).



Retirement Services Online

Important update: Change to 1099-R delivery

Based on IRS Bulletin 2025-30 and the 1099-R consent statement, OPM is changing how retirees will receive their 1099-R.

Starting this January, retirees will no longer receive their 1099-R by mail. Instead, they will receive an email notification with options to [securely access their 1099-R online](#).

Retirees can review or change their 1099-R delivery preference in the Profile section of Retirement Services Online.

**For support or help, contact OPM at 1-888-767-6738
Monday–Friday, 7:40 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET**

Extension offers tips to combat seasonal affective disorder

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is a common effect of winter's cold temperatures and short daylight hours. While sunlight, exercise and healthy eating can help, more serious cases may warrant a trip to the doctor.

SAD is a common type of depression linked to a particular season, indicated by long-lasting feelings of fatigue and moodiness. Studies “primarily point to a disruption in circadian rhythm caused by decreased sunlight,” said Brittney Schrick, extension associate professor and family life specialist. “People who live at more northern latitudes are more likely to experience seasonal depression. Serotonin levels, which affect mood, sleep and digestion, tend to be lower during the winter... There also appears to be a slightly higher risk for people who have experienced depression before, or who have other psychiatric or physical health conditions related to serotonin levels or mood.”

SAD symptoms include: sad, anxious or “empty” feelings; hopelessness or pessimism; irritability; loss of interest or pleasure in activities; fatigue; difficulty concentrating; oversleeping; changes in weight; social withdrawal.

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Schrick said if SAD is “interfering with your ability to cope with daily interaction, work, or family responsibilities,” you should

visit your doctor. They may suggest a counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist, antidepressant medication, light therapy, or a combination.

Light therapy has strong support. Schrick said, “The light could be natural sunlight from spending time outdoors, or you could use a light therapy box... Some benefit can be experienced from just having brighter light in

your space, but to receive the full benefit, you may need to sit very close to the light or sit with it for a longer period of time. Light boxes are UV-free, so they do not have the same risks as tanning beds or sunbathing.”

For less severe seasonal depression, light therapy, exercise, and healthy foods that boost serotonin—salmon, turkey, cheese, tofu, eggs, pineapple, nuts, oats and seeds—can enhance mood. Read more [here](#).



Arkansas Public Policy Center offers voter education

Along with presidential and congressional candidates, Arkansas' 1.7 million voters in most years have statewide issues to decide, and in some cases, local issues dealing with taxes or community needs.

Because candidates dominate most election season coverage, it is very possible voters walk into the voting booth with little knowledge of the ballot issues before them.

Decisions might be based on the memory of the last campaign sign they saw or voters end up skipping the ballot issue all together because they don't want to vote on something they don't understand.

The [Public Policy Center](#) helps Arkansans better understand the financial, social or policy implications of a proposed law by publishing research-based fact sheets and by offering educational programs at the county level. Our goals are to increase voter participation and help Arkansans feel confident in their vote.

Visit the [Arkansas Voter Education page](#) to read up on Arkansas ballot issue information.

2026 Election Dates

- **March 3 — Preferential Primary & Nonpartisan General Election**
 - March 31 — General Primary(Runoff)
- **Nov. 3 — General Election & Nonpartisan Runoff Election**
 - Dec. 1 — General Runoff Election



Gresham Farms named Arkansas Century Farm

Retired extension agent Keith Gresham and his family farm were inducted into the Arkansas Century Farm Program by Gov. Sarah Sanders.

Gresham Farms includes 451 acres devoted to cattle, hay and timber production in Calhoun County. Gresham Farms was also the 2025 Calhoun County Farm Family of the Year.

The Arkansas Century Farm Program recognizes Arkansas's rich agricultural heritage and honors families who have owned and farmed the same land for at least 100 years. The program is administered by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture.



Keith Gresham's Family pictured (L to R): Darcey Gresham (granddaughter), Hannah Gresham (daughter), Clay Gresham (son), Betty Joyce Gresham (mother - 91 years old), Suzie Gresham Iveland (sister), Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Scott Iveland (brother-in-law), Keith Gresham, Debbie Gresham (wife), Katie Gresham Gerard (daughter), Trey Gerard (son-in-law), Wes Ward (Secretary of Agriculture).

March Birthdays

Ralph Tyler Jr. - March 1	Mark Cochran - March 11	Chris Russell - March 18	Kathy Rawlinsong - March 25
Lynn Whitlock - March 1	Dorothy Rodgers - March 12	Nina Boston - March 19	Ocsie Barnes - March 26
Janet Hill - March 3	Danny Allen - March 14	Juanita Sherman - March 19	Thomas Moody - March 27
Glenda Rushing - March 5	Sue Seevers - March 14	Danny Walker - March 21	Debbie Henry - March 28
Sandra Schlinker - March 5	Katie Reddick - March 14	Steven Seideman - March 22	Celia Shireman - March 29
Barbara Tompkins - March 9	Judy Drewrey - March 14	Charlie Parsons - March 23	Eddie Hubbell - March 29
Bobbie Floyd - March 10	Dorene Wills - March 16	Mary Barrentine - March 23	Patsy Hall - March 29
Alene Bates - March 10	Lydia Guffey - March 16	John Robinson - March 24	Shelly Johnson - March 30
Bonita Mueller - March 10	Doris Markle - March 17	Ronnie Bateman - March 24	Karen Fite - March 31

Message from the director



I had several opportunities in February to get out and about in the state, attending a few of the production meetings that have been running fast and furious since early this year. I know I am not an objective observer, but I don't see how anyone couldn't be impressed with the quality of work that our Extension professionals are doing for Arkansas stakeholders. It is truly impressive.

One of my more recent trips was to the Ag Expo hosted by Lawrence and Randolph counties at the old Clover Bend High School, which is now a historic district. The venue was fantastic. Walking into the old gym, I felt like I was stepping back into the 1970s – made me want to lace up a pair of Chuck Taylors and start a pick-up game. Of course, I couldn't do that. In addition to my physical limitations for a game of hoops, the gym floor was absolutely covered with the tables of vendors and sponsors. Lawrence and Randolph county agents and staff did a tremendous job promoting the program, and it showed in the level of stakeholder and industry support for the event. Educational programs were held in the old high school building. There were programs across all program areas for crop and livestock producers, homesteaders and homemakers, and high school students considering college and career options. I sat in on several sessions led by our specialists and agents, and the content was exceptional: timely, relevant, accessible to all levels of producers, and clearly grounded in solid research.

I left Clover Bend in time to make the afternoon production meeting at the Jackson County Extension Center. While the information presented at that meeting was great, I have to say that I don't think our county agents and our specialists in Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences and Entomology and Plant Pathology have gotten enough credit for the work they have done this year on emerging pests and diseases. The amount of actionable information on cotton jassid and rice delphacid that was developed and put in the hands of producers in just a few months is hard to believe. No other organization could have done what UADA has done in response to these threats, turning what could have been a catastrophic problem into a manageable one.

I have said before — paraphrasing a well-worn line — if Extension didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent it. This season's production meetings have provided a good reminder of why that is so true. And I realize that I am only really scratching the surface of the outstanding work that has been going on around the state so far this year. These are illustrations of the much broader and deeper body of work being carried out across our program areas in Arkansas. For what it's worth, that work is being noticed. I was in Washington, D.C., last week with the rest of the UADA leadership team and UA System President Jay Silveria for a meeting with Arkansas' congressional delegation and their staffs. All six members of the state's delegation dropped by for the event, a rare occurrence. They commented specifically on the vital importance of Extension's work to the state. So, keep up the good work. I know it doesn't always seem like it, but people are watching, and they like what they see.

Save the Date!

The **2026 Spring Retiree Meeting** is Tuesday, March 31!

10 a.m.-1 p.m. | C. A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center

1 Four-H Way, Little Rock, AR 72223