



Keeping you connected

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
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Greene County Extension celebrates new home

The Greene County Cooperative Extension Service has a new home - a stand-alone building that is more accessible, spacious and visible to the residents that extension serves.

More than 130 city, county and state leaders and supporters celebrated the grand opening and dedication of the new building at 4410 Fairview Road in Paragould on Oct. 29. Attendees toured the building and celebrated extension's century-long presence in Greene County. They also enjoyed lunch in the spacious community room and learned about resources and services related to 4-H, agriculture, food and nutrition, and community and economic development.

"This building dedication today is due to the direction, purpose and vision of this great community in which we live," Greene County Judge Rusty McMillon said. "Community-minded people who collaborate, share ideas, work, serve and partner demonstrate that our community is great — because of her great people and because of the many things going on. You can see these partnerships among neighbors, school districts, and city, county, state and federal governments."

The 8,000-square-foot building houses administrative offices for three county agents as well as an administrative assistant, an Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) assistant, soybean and wheat verification coordinator and room for future growth. The facility has a commercial kitchen, laboratory, conference room, lobby, board room and a large community room that can hold up to 300 people.

"The future is bright for Extension programming because of the investment made in this facility, the continued need for the information we provide, and the ongoing support from the county and city," Greene County Extension Staff Chair Lance Blythe said.

Several groups are already using the facility regularly. 4-H clubs, Master Gardeners, and Extension Homemakers Clubs — all outreach organizations of Extension — use the community room



Greene County leaders and residents join Cooperative Extension Service personnel for a ribbon cutting at the new Greene County Extension Office on Oct. 29, 2024.

for their meetings. Farm Bureau had its annual banquet on site, and extension has hosted several meetings and conferences since August. The commercial kitchen is also being used for nutritional education classes offered through EFNEP.

Extension has had a presence in Greene County since 1912 - even before the Smith-Lever Act established a system of cooperative extension services associated with land-grant institutions. Since 1979, the extension office had been located in the Federal Building, which houses a U.S. Post Office.

In April 2023, extension broke ground for the new center. During construction, the extension staff worked out of a nearby house until they moved into the new building in August 2024.

"The foot traffic we have picked up just being on a ground floor was a pleasant surprise," Blythe said. "The accessibility for the public has significantly improved. We're on a main street and have signage which has increased our visibility. Having a conference area means we don't have to go all over the county looking for places to conduct programs, and that's a game-changer." ■

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Izard County 4-H members present Quilts of Valor to local veterans

To recognize veterans for their sacrifice and service, Izard County 4-H Sewing Club members worked with Extension Homemakers Council members to create 16 Quilts of Valor. They presented the lap quilts to local veterans in a ceremony at Ozarka College on Nov. 1.

“This project for 4-H is all about community service,” said Elizabeth Daigle, Izard County extension family and consumer sciences agent for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “This group of kids improved their basic knowledge by learning to sew better, they had a good time with their friends and at the end of the day, they made this gesture of honor and recognition to local veterans, showing how much 4-H appreciates our community.”

Daigle said the process of designing and creating the quilts spanned several months. Sewing club members assembled kits containing red, white and blue fabric along with sewing instructions, and they worked closely with Izard County EHC members to create them.

“For our Extension Homemakers, this is their passion,” Daigle said. “They want to educate the kids and show them how you can have a skill and make it grow. The EHC members showed the kids, ‘Let’s try to make this a little straighter, let’s iron this, let’s pay attention to how we lay our colors out,’ so there was a lot of hands-on demonstration of knowledge.”

Members of the sewing club range in age from six to 15 years old. During the ceremony, each club member presented a Quilt of Valor to a veteran nominated by the community. Daigle said five men shared stories of experiences during their service, including during the Vietnam War.

“One of the gentlemen said that all he could think about was getting home to make sure his family was safe,” Daigle said. “I think these children got to see an important perspective from



Charles Voyles, a local veteran, stands with Rory Weston, a member of the Izard County 4-H Sewing Club, who sewed Voyles' Quilt of Valor.

these gentlemen. Through this meaningful project, they learned the importance of service and respect for those who have sacrificed for our freedom.”

Veterans honored in the Quilt of Valor ceremony include Victor Dann, Darrell Douglas, Rayburn Finley, Larry Garner, Larry Lee, Ronny Loggains, Harold Marlin, Michael McSpadden, Gary Morrison, Kerry Sharp, Greg Tate, Charles Voyles, Donald Walker, Darrell Webb, James Wood and Alvin Wooten.

“This project, fostering community service and civic engagement, is a testament to the mission of 4-H in nurturing responsible, compassionate citizens,” Daigle said.

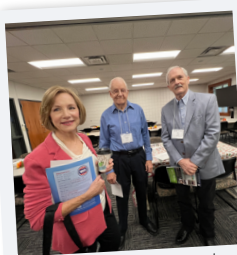
Daigle said the EHC members are the backbone of the project, which began in 2023.

“I’m hopeful we can continue this next year,” Daigle said. “I just feel like it’s such a community-minded event. Our service men and women are often overlooked, and they’ve given everything they’ve got.” ■

Scenes from the 2024 Extension Retiree Regional meetings

Cooperative Extension Service employees gathered at the state office in Little Rock on Oct. 21, 2024, during the first of three regional retiree meetings. Retirees heard program updates from extension director John Anderson and other department heads, and learned about the 2024 Voter Guide, a publication of Extension's Public Policy Center. Other regional retiree meetings were held Oct. 24 at Mermaids Restaurant in Fayetteville and Nov. 8 at the Greene County Extension Office in Paragould.

[View more photos here.](#)



Sharon Reynolds, George Davis, and Tom Troxel



Eddie Hubbell and Stan Chapman



James Geisler, Ella Geisler, Ora Lee Yates, and Diane Jones

Tips for mindful eating this Thanksgiving

The Thanksgiving holiday brings family and friends together to celebrate gratitude, but the festivities can be difficult for people with concerns about food or eating. It's important to approach the day's meal mindfully and aim for a "middle ground" between overeating or being too restrictive.

Quad Whitson, extension culinary nutrition program associate for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, said the Thanksgiving holiday can be a challenging day for many.

Whitson suggested people keep the following tips in mind:

Eat a good breakfast. "Getting into the habit of 'saving room for a big meal' can lead to showing up to Thanksgiving dinner overly hungry," Whitson said. "This can make us be less mindful when eating and we end up eating past the point of comfort, then we're miserable for the rest of the day." Instead, Whitson said starting the day with a bowl of oatmeal and fruit or Greek yogurt with granola can help one "make more intentional choices throughout the day."

Plan ahead. "Every family has the foods they traditionally prepare on Thanksgiving," Whitson said. "By keeping those foods in mind, you can better organize your plate to model the USDA's MyPlate recommendations, which organizes half of the plate with colorful fruits and vegetables and fills the rest with whole grains and protein of your choice."

Save room for dessert. "It is possible to enjoy desserts without going overboard," Whitson said. "Holiday foods highlight another integral portion of healthy eating, which goes beyond nourishing us physically — cultural traditions and foods nourish the soul and are just as beneficial. Remember, one slice of sweet potato pie isn't going to make or break the progress you've made on your health."

Remember why you're there. "When all things are said and done, remembering why you and your loved ones come together on this day is the most important," Whitson said. "Take time to enjoy the day and focus on your relationships with the people you care about." ■

HOW LONG TO THAW A TURKEY		
WEIGHT	IN FRIDGE	IN WATER
4 lbs	1 Day	2 hours
8 lbs	2 Days	4 hours
12 lbs	3 Days	6 hours
16 lbs	4 Days	8 hours
20 lbs	5 Days	10 hours

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Associate district directors announced



Ouachita District

Kris Boulton

currently serves as county extension agent - staff chair in Saline County. She will assume the role of associate district director of the Ouachita District Jan. 2, 2025.



Ozark District

Brad Runsick

currently serves as county extension agent - staff chair in Baxter County. He will begin his role as associate district director of the Ozark District starting Jan. 2, 2025.



Delta District

Pia Woods

currently serves as county extension agent - staff chair in Jefferson County and will begin her role as associate district director of the Delta District Jan. 2, 2025.

December Birthdays

Becky Mulhollen - Dec. 1	Shirley Lewis - Dec. 11	Cindy Golden - Dec. 19	Mitch Crow - Dec. 26
Dena Malone - Dec. 2	Jerry Foley - Dec. 11	Maureen Rose - Dec. 21	Liz McKay - Dec. 26
Paul Martin - Dec. 3	Ann Behnke - Dec. 12	Suzanne Hirrel - Dec. 21	Sandra Smith - Dec. 27
Holly Berry - Dec. 4	Millie Henson - Dec. 13	Gayla Taylor - Dec. 22	Judy Bloesch - Dec. 27
Linda Thompson - Dec. 6	Jerry Markham - Dec. 14	Audrey Hairston - Dec. 24	Jeff Welch - Dec. 28
Barbara King - Dec. 8	Dick Kluender - Dec. 14	Avonne Petty - Dec. 24	Denise Roulhac - Dec. 28
Toy Siler - Dec. 8	Donna Graham - Dec. 14	Cheryl Maxwell - Dec. 24	Betty Brannan - Dec. 29
Albert Squires - Dec. 9	Wayne Miller - Dec. 15	Merle Gross - Dec. 24	Tom Leslie - Dec. 29
Richard DeSpain - Dec. 9	Brenda Yusko - Dec. 18	Bobby Coats Jr. - Dec. 24	Judy Robison - Dec. 29
Susan Watkins - Dec. 9	Beverly Sims - Dec. 18	Dennis Gardisser - Dec. 24	Saundria Ash - Dec. 29
Darlene Horne - Dec. 10	Mary Askew - Dec. 19	Blair Griffin - Dec. 24	Anna Landrum - Dec. 31
Joyce Bowlin - Dec. 10	Mark Peterson - Dec. 19	Margaret Goodson - Dec. 26	

Message from the director



Last week, I had the opportunity to attend the annual turkey pardon ceremony at the Governor's Mansion. I don't know how you feel about pardoning turkeys as opposed to meting out rough justice that puts them at the center of the Thanksgiving table. I

could go either way on the question, to be honest, but the pardon ceremony is a lighthearted way to draw attention to the state's ag/food industry. The agriculture community was well represented at the event, with a focus appropriate for the occasion, on the state's poultry industry.

Turkeys have played a rather important role in my career. For several years, I managed American Farm Bureau's annual survey on the cost of a Thanksgiving meal. I would spend the better part of two weeks leading up to the holiday doing my best to explain to the media why the price of turkeys had gone up or down or stayed the same (supply and demand). Despite my past proficiency with turkey data, I learned something new about turkeys this year at the governor's mansion. Marvin Childers, president of The Poultry Federation, noted in his remarks at the event that every single Butterball brand whole bird sold in the U.S. comes from Arkansas. That's pretty cool.

The star of the event, in my opinion, was Nevaeh Haile. She is the nine-year-old Faulkner County 4-H member

who raised Tom and Gladys – this year's pardoned turkeys. She was clearly proud of her birds, and as well-behaved as they were for the cameras, you might swear that she had trained them for the occasion. Much as I personally might have been tempted to put Tom and Gladys on the Thanksgiving menu, it would have taken a heart of stone to deny young Ms. Haile the satisfaction of seeing them pardoned.

Nevaeh and her turkeys were not alone in representing CES and 4-H in front of the governor this year. Faulkner County agents Kami Green and Mary Beth Groce also attended in support of the Hailes. The 4-H state officers also were on hand for the event, looking sharp as always in their green jackets. They got a chance to meet and shake hands with the governor as well as Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward. It was a great experience for our 4-Hers and a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase a little bit of our 4-H program.

As I write this a few days before Thanksgiving, I am mindful of the hard work that all of you have done for Extension. I am thankful not only for your dedication but also for the continued support you give Extension. I hope you all enjoyed a few relaxing days with your families and friends over Thanksgiving. ■