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Ford named recipient of Society of American Foresters' Gifford Pinchot medal

Vic Ford, head of agriculture and natural resources for the Cooperative Extension Service in Arkansas, has been recognized by the Society of American Foresters with its highest honor, the Gifford Pinchot medal.

"I am honored and humbled to receive this award because the list of award winners includes my mentors and heroes," Ford said. "It is extra special since I was nominated by friends and colleagues in Arkansas who thought my accomplishments qualified for the award when I did not. I am indeed grateful for their confidence and support."

The medal recognizes outstanding contributions by a forestry professional in the administration, practice, and professional development of forestry in North America, and is presented in odd-numbered years. The Society of American Foresters announced its awards on Aug. 31. Ford will receive the medal in October.

"We are very proud of Dr. Ford's accomplishments as a forester," said Bob Scott, director of the Cooperative Extension Service. "In his role as associate vice president for ag and natural resources, he often finds himself doing double duty in our forestry group due to some vacancies and reduction in the number of staff. I join everyone in congratulating him on this well-deserved recognition."

The medal is named for Gifford Pinchot, who is widely credited as being America's first forester and the father of the conservation movement in North America. In addition to establishing the Forest Service, Pinchot founded the Society of American Foresters in 1900. He served as its president from 1900–1908 and again from 1910–1911. He was elected an SAF Fellow in 1918. Gifford Pinchot brought

a professional approach to all his endeavors, the Forest Service, natural resource conservation, and the SAF. His actions have left an indelible mark on the profession of natural resource management.



Dr. Vic Ford, Associate Vice President - Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ford earned his Ph.D. in forest soils from Virginia Tech. He joined the UA System Division of Agriculture as a professor and head of the newly opened Southwest Research and Extension Center in 1983, the same year he joined SAF. He was named associate vice president for agriculture and natural resources-extension for the Division of Agriculture in 2020. Ford has become a familiar face and voice in Arkansas, thanks to his many appearances in media outlets, and talks about edible fungi.

In November 2022, Ford was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ouachita Society of American Foresters during its annual meeting in Oklahoma.

Read more [here](#). ■

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Arkansas 4-H receives first donation of \$50,000 pledge from Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas

The C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center has long been a gathering place for camps, conferences and more. Soon, the location will be even more welcoming.

On Aug. 10, Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas presented \$10,000 to Arkansas 4-H in support of the construction of the center's new Rose Garden Pavilion. The donation is the first installment of a \$50,000 pledge.

Farm Credit also donated \$10,000 for its annual sponsorship of the 4-H program and \$2,000 for its annual Farm Credit of Western Arkansas Scholarship. John Thomas, managing director of the Arkansas 4-H Foundation, said Farm Credit is an important partner of the 4-H program.

"Arkansas 4-H and Farm Credit have a very long history of partnership that has benefited hundreds of Arkansas youth over the years," Thomas said. "Their financial support has helped students with college tuition, participate in learning trips, and experience everything that Arkansas 4-H has to offer. We are very grateful for Farm Credit's friendship and partnership."

JJ Pitman, director of the 4-H Center, said the \$50,000 pledge for the Rose Garden Pavilion will support the many functions of this new space on the campus.

"It will increase seating for our dining hall, providing a shaded, well-lit and scenic area," Pitman said. "Outdoor activities that can be impacted by rain or too much sun will be able to take place under cover with shade and fans. Activities such as our Arkansas Outdoor School classes, the ExCEL leadership program, 4-H camp meetings, and groups using the 4-H center can use it to meet.

"The pavilion is important to the center because we have needed a large space to carry out program activities that need to be outdoors, but without being at the mercy of poor weather," he said. "In some cases, this will prevent cancellations due to weather conditions."

Eric Branscum, regional vice president of agricultural lending for Farm Credit Mid-America, said the organization's support of 4-H stems from a personal connection for many members.

"Our commitment to 4-H runs deep and personal," Branscum said. "From local engagement to participation at state



Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas presents 4-H sponsorship and Rose Garden Pavilion construction donations to the 4-H State Officers at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center.

programs, you'll find Farm Credit Mid-America team members there at just about every step of the journey. In fact, many were members of 4-H as youth, and many are still involved today as volunteers and through their children."

Thomas said Farm Credit's donations help make the Arkansas 4-H Foundation an important source of financial support for Arkansas 4-H'ers.

"The Foundation awards nearly \$200,000 annually in scholarships and learning trip sponsorships," Thomas said. "Over the years, this has empowered hundreds and hundreds of Arkansas youth to reach their next level of growth and education. And because of their 4-H DNA, they always look for ways to give back wherever their road takes them. It's a fantastic investment."

Pitman said he expects the Rose Garden Pavilion will be complete at the end of 2023. For Farm Credit, Branscum said the organization looks forward to how their support will help all future visitors and 4-H members at the 4-H Center.

"4-H opens the door for youth to learn leadership skills, gain the expertise needed to be a proactive force in their communities and develop ideas for a more innovative economy," Branscum said. "We are thrilled to be a part of this opportunity and look forward to seeing the impact this new pavilion will have for current and future 4-H members alike." ■

Message from the director



As you have probably heard, the search is on for my replacement as Director of the Cooperative Extension Service. I have enjoyed my 3.5 years so far in this position. I have learned so much more about Extension than I knew just four years ago. Becoming more familiar with FCS, 4-H and our

CPED groups has been some of the most rewarding work I have done in this position. I am leaving with mixed feelings. I do look forward to resuming my career working in the Crop, Soil and Environmental Science Department in Weed Science or wherever else work with the Division of Agriculture leads me.

I must admit that I also had no idea of the level of volunteerism that Extension enjoys - Extension Homemakers, Master Gardeners, 4-H clubs, and other volunteers. These groups put in hours and hours of work at no cost. I also want to thank you, our Extension retirees, for your time and efforts. Not many organizations have former employees who contribute so

much back to their former coworkers. The scholarships you provide mean so much to the agents and other employees who receive them and are good for the overall health of our organization. I am looking forward to the upcoming regional retiree meetings and want to thank Khaliah Coleman and Amy Hedges for all their work putting these together in the absence of our Development Office position.

Speaking of that position, we have an excellent field of candidates for the job previously held by Brian Helms, and interviews will start soon. This position has been rewritten and is now a Division position. We hope this will more closely tie the efforts of this office to things like the Arkansas 4-H Foundation, legislative affairs, Bumpers college and the Division's needs overall. The end game is casting a wider net for support for the entire Division, including the Extension Service.

Speaking of giving, this was a big month for 4-H with the Dinner at the Vines event on Sept. 26. I hope some of you were able to participate as it is quickly becoming a tradition. ■

Register for the 2023 CES Regional Retiree Meetings

**Register now for one of the regional meetings.
Join us for food, fun and fellowship!**

Tuesday, Oct. 17

Little Rock State Office | 10AM

Friday, Oct. 27

Fayetteville, Don Tyson Center for Agricultural
Sciences | 10AM

Friday, Nov. 10

Jonesboro, Hilton Garden Inn | 10AM

[Click here to register now](#)



2023 Arkansas Master Gardener 35th Birthday Event

**October 13, 2023 | 10AM-12PM OR 12PM-2PM
St. James United Methodist Church, Little Rock, AR**

Featured speaker is Joe Lamp'l. Registration (\$35)
includes includes BBQ lunch and birthday cake.

[Register HERE by Oct. 6](#)

October Birthdays

Portia Short - Oct. 1
Larry Pryor - Oct. 2
Bobby Hall - Oct. 2
Frank T. Jones - Oct. 3
Gerald Klingaman - Oct. 3
Stanley D. Carter - Oct. 3
Paul Beck - Oct. 3
Craig Randall Andersen - Oct. 4
Jimmie Lee Bowling - Oct. 5
Judy M. Riley - Oct. 5
Lazaro English - Oct. 5
Sheila Whiteley - Oct. 5
James R. Lipsey - Oct. 7
Suzanne Wiley - Oct. 8
Al Rosendale - Oct. 9

Glen Ford - Oct. 10
Billie Coleman - Oct. 10
Lorene McGuire - Oct. 10
Charlotte Gorman Trent - Oct. 10
Debbie DeRossitte - Oct. 10
Judith R. Urich - Oct. 11
Armenthia J. Willis - Oct. 12
Elinor Sue Coates - Oct. 13
Jack Carr Boles Jr. - Oct. 13
Bruce Knox - Oct. 14
Richard Lynn Poling - Oct. 14
Carroll R. Prewett - Oct. 15
Tom Troxel - Oct. 16
Carolyn A. Meeks - Oct. 17
Gail Torok - Oct. 17

Ron Baker - Oct. 17
Mary K. Parker - Oct. 18
Cecilia Harberson - Oct. 18
Hugh W. Plumlee - Oct. 19
Mable Tate - Oct. 19
Pam Cannada - Oct. 20
Renee E. Myers - Oct. 20
James A. Clower - Oct. 21
Tom Riley Jr. - Oct. 22
Mark B. Bryles - Oct. 23
Wanda Snyder - Oct. 23
Janice B. Gooch - Oct. 27
Janella B. Pugh - Oct. 31

A-mazing autumn agritourism

One of the oldest agritourism attractions in Arkansas has used some of the newest technology to make a bit of fall family fun: a corn maze.

[Pumpkin Hollow Farm](#) in Piggott is owned and operated by the Dalton Family.

“One of the first corn mazes we ever did, we actually did on graph paper,” said co-owner Ellen Dalton. “And we used rolling wheels, measuring wheels and we measured and flagged and ribboned every inch of the corn maze.”

It took two people a week to cut the maze, she said.

However, this year, the family used a “smart planter,” and what a difference it made.

[A new video](#) shows how the Daltons worked with their county extension office and local equipment distributors to create a very special maze for 2023.

Whether a corn maze, pumpkin patch or a wine tasting, there are plenty of autumn agritourism opportunities in Arkansas.

Agritourism has become increasingly popular among farmers as a means to diversify income.

The Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says farm agritourism revenue more than tripled between 2002 and 2017, according to data from the Census of Agriculture.

John L. Turner, Jr. passes

John L. Turner, Jr., age 75, of Texarkana, AR passed away on Sept. 19. Pecan John" as he was referred to retired from Extension on January 5th, 2015 after 26 years of service. He served as an extension agent in Miller County. "Pecan John" as he was referred to retired from Extension on January 5th, 2015 after 26 years of service. He served as an extension agent in Miller County. The funeral will be held on Saturday, September 30 at Lonoke Baptist Church.

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View the [Clay County Corn Maze 2023 video here](#).

Adjusted for inflation, agritourism revenue grew from \$704 million in 2012 to almost \$950 million in 2017. The 2017 data excluded wineries, although they were included in the 2002, 2007, and 2012 data, which suggests agritourism revenue growth may have been even greater during that period. However, agritourism revenue is still small relative to total farm revenue, accounting for 5.6 percent of farm-related income in 2017.

Landowners and farmers can learn more about whether agritourism might be a fit. ■