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RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

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Governor proclaims May EHC month

One of the state's largest volunteer organizations will celebrate more than a century of achievements with a gubernatorial proclamation of May as Extension Homemakers Month. A proclamation ceremony was held on May 6 at the state Capitol.

"We're pleased that Gov. Hutchinson is helping us recognize May as EHC month," said Karen Bell Fox, state president of the organization. "We appreciate his support, not only this month, but also the rest of the year. Our members, men and women, work year-round for the betterment of all Arkansans. Being recognized by our state leadership is a great honor."

Arkansas Extension Homemakers began in 1912 as Home Demonstration Clubs. The clubs, organized by the Cooperative Extension Service, were essential for disseminating critical information for managing family resources and food safety at a time when many rural households were isolated by distance, and without modern tools such as electricity, phone service or access to libraries or other sources of life-saving knowledge. Through the years, the program has helped victims of the great Mississippi River Flood of 1927, promoted vaccination programs and provided tools to help young children communicate what ails them to health professionals.

Today, EHC puts a spotlight on community leadership development. It creates opportunities for members to develop leadership skills that increase self-confidence, improve communication, and enable individuals to become more active in community engagement.

Nationally, AEHC is affiliated with the National Volunteer Outreach Network, and AEHC will be hosting the national network meeting this year. AEHC also is part of the national Country Women's Council, USA, and internationally, AEHC is part of the Associated Country Women of the World.

"Arkansas Extension Homemakers has been around for 107 years, and for the organization's whole history, has quietly worked to improve the lives of all Arkansans today as it has for more than a century," said Laura Hendrix, associate professor for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. "The thousands of members of this organization put in hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteer work every year. We are proud of the contributions they make to their communities and the state as a whole." During fiscal 2018-2019, Arkansas Extension Homemakers reported giving 707,960 hours of volunteer service. Those at the Capitol represented the more than 3,775 members of the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council from 324 clubs.

AEHC will hold its annual meeting June 4-6, 2019, at the Hot Springs Convention Center. 



PROCLAMATION: Karen Bell Fox, Arkansas Extension Homemakers president, with Gov. Asa Hutchinson. Dr. Debie Head, FCS associate department head, and Rachael Price, program technician, are in the background.

THE INSIDE STORIES

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RockCityHacks: Up all night solving the world's challenges

Faces lit by the glowing screens of laptops, more than two dozen Arkansas high-schoolers tested their coding skills in a competition to solve their choice of five challenges at the first RockCityHacks hackathon.

With most hackathons being out-of-state and out of reach for many students, RockCityHacks was designed by the Cooperative Extension Service to give students in grades 9-12 an accessible in-state hackathon experience. It was hosted at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center in Ferndale.

The 28 participants formed eight teams. When they weren't trying to code a solution, the teens took part in workshops to help sharpen their skills and learn about different applications of coding technology, including virtual reality.

Fueled by in part by doughnuts and adrenaline the teens tackled real-world use cases that included food traceability, feral hog trapping and creating a paperless absentee ballot voting system.


Daniel Burnett, a student from eStem in Little Rock, said he was invited by his fellow Quiz Bowl teammates to join them for the hackathon. "It honestly sounded like a bunch of fun," he said. Looking at his lanyard, covered with University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture logos, he added, "I wasn't expecting agricultural problems."

"We set out to provide a fun and educational opportunity to also introduce young people to some of the few ways agriculture and the Division of Agriculture utilize technology to help serve the people of Arkansas," said Julie Robinson, assistant professor for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

Karen Watts, extension digital and information technology innovation manager for the Division of Agriculture, said that "Seeing all of the students collaborate and having fun while learning was an amazing experience to see firsthand. Giving students the opportunity to work as a team to solve real world problems, while meeting other students and bonding is worth every bit of the time to put it together."

Once the competitors found their solution, they had to give a presentation about their work to the judges and the rest of the audience.

The winners were:

- Most Useful – Soggy Hamsters, Stuttgart, comprised of: Logan Heinzelman, Logan Williams, Gray Allen
- Best Presentation – Quiz Bowl, eStem, Little Rock; Daniel Burnett, Sergio Markin, Spencer Knight, Jeremy Choh
- Most Social Good – Foodies, combined team from Little Rock and Benton; Julia McPeake, Emma Hodges, Traton Gorman
- Best Overall Hack – Mad Cow Disease, Jonesboro; Cade George, Samuel Creekmore, Larson Carter, Eric Fluke 



Obesity reduction efforts help put Lake Village in the running for national prize

A national health foundation has named an obesity reduction and health program supported by the Chicot County Cooperative Extension as one of 12 finalists for national recognition.

Lake Village, Arkansas, home to about 2,300 Arkansans, was recently named as one of 12 finalists throughout the country for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize. The \$25,000 prize is awarded annually to communities working to transform their neighborhoods, schools and other civic institutions into healthier environments.

According to its website, the foundation chooses both finalists and national prize winners based on six criteria:

- Defining health in the broadest possible terms.
- Committing to sustainable systems changes and policy-oriented, long-term solutions.
- Creating conditions that give everyone a fair and just opportunity to reach their best possible health.
- Harnessing the collective power of leaders, partners and community members.
- Securing and making the most of available resources.
- Measuring and sharing progress and results.

(See Lake Village, page 4)

Charles Hodges, retired Benton Co. ag agent, dies


Charles Lloyd Hodges, 78, of Bentonville died March 12, 2019.

Hodges obtained an undergraduate degree from Texas Tech and a Masters from Texas A&M University.

He became a county Extension agriculture agent in Benton County and retired there after 20 years of service in 1997. After retiring, he worked as a deputy for the Benton County Sheriff's office.

He was a long-time member at the Bentonville Church of Christ where he served as an elder for a number of years.

Hodges is survived by his wife, Countess of Bentonville; a daughter, Kathy Hodges Matherly; a brother, Mack Hodges, of Lubbock, Texas; and two grandchildren.

A celebration of life service was held March 16, 2019, at Bentonville Church of Christ. Memorials may be made to Bentonville Christian Academy. 

Scholarship donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

■ Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship

In Memory of Irene Lee


Portia Short

In Memory of Dennis Holzhauser

Darlene Millard

In Memory of Brenda Henderson-Pratt


James Aikman

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure that proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification. 

New retirees

The following Extension employee has joined the ranks of the retirees:

Debbie Archer – UAPB 1890 Program

Debbie served as an Extension Specialist IV for UAPB at the time of her retirement. She began working for Cooperative Extension in September of 1982 as an Extension Communication assistant specialist. She moved to the UAPB 1890 Program in May of 1994 and served there until her retirement. Debbie had 36 years of service. 

To our Extension retirees

May is here, and complicated. The dry weather this week has been a blessing.

I note in this issue the stories regarding family and consumer sciences, including our affiliation with AEHC. I remain convinced that nothing we do for Arkansas is as complex or as important to the health and vigor of the state as family and consumer sciences programs. I commend our staff for their dedication and visibility, as well as the AEHC – one of the largest and most impactful volunteer organizations in the state.

I also note the story on the Hackathon. I confess I did not know what a hackathon was until our IT group started down the road of staffing for the computer technology advances ongoing in the world and picking up speed. Things that were science-fiction when I was growing up are now being used every day. What a time to be working in research and education! Anyway, I observed the students competing in the first ever high school hackathon in the state, and it was inspiring. These are some of the best and brightest in computer technology, and they are high school age. Makes one think a bit. They created websites and wrote code for applications to help solve practical problems posed to them in the programmatic areas we work in – like food safety or voter education. They did these in 24 hours. It all was rather astounding to me. The teachers and other adults in attendance were very enthused to do this again and more often, and were surprised that the Division of Ag and Cooperative Extension Service did stuff like that. It was all a good feeling about our work, but also about the future. Stay tuned.

I sadly note the passing of Mr. Hodges, former county agent, a few months back. His legacy is a reminder of the dedication and excellence of our professional staff and faculty.

I also note the retirement of Debbie Archer, long-time colleague with UAPB and certainly one of the best of the best in my experience. We simply wish for Debbie all good things come her way in retirement and that all her wishes come true.

We deeply appreciate the scholarship and other donations made by retirees that benefit CES and the Division, as well as our staff and students. This is critically important and THANKS!

We hosted our county agent conference as well as our support staff conference recently, both well attended and with enthusiastic, positive and useful agendas and speakers. It was a privilege to recognize the excellence and longevity of service of many attendees, and I extend again my congratulations on their work and dedication. Sincere thanks to all of our employees for their service.

I hope all of you have a great May and a bearable June coming up. June will be an interesting month.


– Rick Cartwright 



Extension Length of Service awards presented

Extension employees were recognized recently with awards for length of service ranging from five to 40 years.

Awards were presented to faculty and county agents at the Tri-District Conference April 2, 2019, at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center, and to classified employees at the 2019 Support Staff Conference, also at the 4-H Center, on April 25, 2019.

The employee with the longest service, 40 years, is Laura Rooney, administrative specialist, Lonoke County. Those serving 35 years include Ples Spradley, pesticide assessment specialist; Kelly Thomason, administrative specialist, Calhoun County; and Steve Hall, computer specialist. 



Laura Rooney



Ples Spradley



Steve Hall



Kelly Thomason

Lake Village

(Cont. from page 2)


Jennifer Conner, regional obesity reduction program associate, said the Lake Village community had taken numerous steps to meet each of the award's criteria, including the expansion of a community garden and the addition of a second farmers' market, establishing a free fitness center, the zoning of a "creative corridor" for artwork and much more.

"As a native of Lake Village, I am both excited and proud that the community has come together to address the issues we face as a rural area," Connor said. "We want the next generation to have a quality place to live and play. We have not only improved our natural assets, but created new assets that will have a long-term impact for Lake Village."

Conner said Cooperative Extension Service work with the city began in 2015. The work is grant funded through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and expressed through two programs: SPAN, the State Physical Activity and Nutrition program administered by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; and ArDROP, the Arkansas Delta Region Obesity Project. The Lake Village program has also received guidance or assistance from the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care and WinRock International. The program operates as the Delta Consortium for Arts and Innovation.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation said the 2019 winners will be announced in the fall.

Extension and healthy habits

The Cooperative Extension Service's participation in Lake Village's obesity reduction work is just one of many of the service's efforts throughout Arkansas to reduce obesity and enable everyone to live a healthier life. Through its Family and Consumer Science section, the extension service delivers health and nutrition education, exercise and stress management programs, as well as personal finance information. 

Renovation begins on education wing



Work has begun on the auditorium and meeting rooms of the education wing of the Little Rock Extension headquarters building. Improvements will include new carpet and paint, a lighting upgrade, and an update of Zoom and Internet

communication capabilities in the auditorium and meeting rooms.

Work is scheduled to be completed in late July or early August. 

June Birthdays

Ford L. Baldwin, June 1
Mae E. Rosby, June 1
Linda C. Hon, June 3
Jesse D. Clark, June 4
Mike McCarter, June 5
Jelyne H. Coldwell, June 6
Brenda S. Vick, June 7
Lanny Ashlock, June 8
Vetress L. Strong, June 8
Rex R. Roberg, June 9
Jo N. Howard, June 10
Joe Bradley, June 11
Martha May, June 11
Tamara Walkingstick, June 13

Michael D. Hamilton, June 14
Janet M. Kuykendall, June 16
Sharon Dawson, June 17
Lila Grist, June 20
Rin Robertson, June 20
Bonnie Taylor, June 20
Dennis Ray Bailey, June 21
Sherry Ann Black, June 23
Clifford M. Coker Jr., June 24
Carroll R. Garner, June 25
Linda M. Outlaw, June 25
Pamela Ferrell, June 27
Sharon High, June 27
Dorothy A. Hall, June 29

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Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$_____. My gift is in honor / in memory of _____.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts:

Please make check payable to the **UA Foundation** and mail to Brian Helms, Development Office, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204-4940.