



LeadAR

Member **SPOTLIGHT**
Class 19

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System



Hazelle Whited

*Regional Program Coordinator
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Hazelle Whited has been a champion for small business since 2006, serving on Boards supporting economic development efforts in Western Maricopa County, and continued this passion after moving to Ash Flat, Arkansas, in 2009. Whited currently works as the Regional Program Coordinator at the University of Arkansas Community, Professional and Economic Development Unit on a grant funded program by Walmart that assists the four sectors that contribute to the economy of rural communities and specifically focuses in Sharp, Fulton and Izard Counties. She is currently part of

Leadership Arkansas Class 19, a two-year hands-on program that allows participants to broaden their understanding of issues and opportunities throughout Arkansas including developing a leadership project to make a positive impact in their specific region. Whited serves on the Northeast Arkansas Intermodal Board of Directors on behalf of Sharp County and continues to work with other small business organizations and non-profits.

Whited has a drive to support entrepreneurship and workforce training as these are large economic components especially in rural communities. She was invited to be a part of the Peer-2-Peer program through the Conductor, joining other community leaders to offer free consulting to entrepreneurs in central Arkansas counties wanting to start or grow their business, and has already consulted with two participants. Whited is a believer in continual learning for personal and professional development, attending the Mid-South Economic Development Basic course in 2020, and she is one year away from completing her bachelor's degree in Business Administration which is on track to be completed on her 49th birthday. She is married to Joey Whited who owns his own small business in Ash Flat and she is getting ready to send her graduating high school senior to Williams Baptist University in the fall.

Why did you apply to the LeadAR program? What motivated you?

I am a business and community developer, a true economic developer at heart. I recognize that our rural AR community is evolving, and I want to be a part of that process. I know that change requires the participation of our businesses, non-profits, education system, healthcare, government, and residents, and leaders are needed to steer the ship in a collaborative and cohesive manner that makes the best sense for our local community. In addition, these leaders need to have relationships throughout the state, in big communities and small, to be able to advocate on behalf of the region. The LeadAR program will open up those opportunities to network with others and develop the leadership skills I will need to be a part of the process to help our area maneuver the challenges and opportunities that will come with the exciting growth in our communities.

What leadership quality do you admire most in others? Why?

I am most intrigued by leaders that can "lead without leading" through empowering others to believe in the process so excellence shines through. I am always drawn to leaders that understand that leadership means developing future leaders to take over what they have started.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you? Why is this surprising?

I am an introvert. No just kidding. I am very much an extravert and a dare devil. I think people would be surprised to learn that I speak French (not fluently, but enough to make French people smile that I tried), in addition to Tagalog (Filipino). This is surprising because I lived in California when I took French and it would have made more sense to take Spanish. But, as I explained to my Mom, Spanish has several words similar to Tagalog. I felt it would be easier for me learn Spanish on my own when I wanted, but French required a classroom setting so I can practice. Oh, also, I have flown in an F-16.

What are your top three ingredients necessary for success?

Flexibility, innovation, and tenacity. I think not being afraid to fail is right up there also.

What are your top three ingredients necessary for happiness?

1) Being at peace with one's decision and ultimately the action (and consequences) that may result from it. 2) Knowing what I do makes a difference or adds value 3) Celebrating joy for and with others

Describe your personal leadership style.

I am a motivator and try to lead through excitement in the project. When I provide tasks, I ask for outcomes with a timeframe, but allow for someone to find their own way to reach those objectives, unless they need help on how to get there. I encourage ownership in the task or project, while instilling guidance as needed, by asking for feedback on how things could be done better or more efficiently.

What is something you hope to gain from your LeadAR experience?

Understanding of the different issues that affect Arkansas in other regions as well as statewide. Grow as a leader. Develop professional and personal relationship that will last throughout my career and beyond. Hope to mentor others to be a part of LeadAR.

How can effective leadership help move the state of Arkansas forward?

Effective leadership can help bring the different needs, concerns, and philosophies of different parts of the state together to find collaborative solutions and lead specific entities to take ownership of executing the solution in their own areas to help move all of Arkansas forward.

You are stranded on a desert island. What are your three MUST HAVE items?

Flint, spade, machete

What is something that was difficult for you six months ago but easy for you now?

Develop more creative Marketing tag lines or one-liners.

What else do you want others to know about you?

I enjoy "intentional" learning. I want to learn as much as I can so that I can apply it to what I am doing today. I enjoy learning about people and how to better work with different personalities. It is humbling to know how much I have yet to learn, and may never know, but I am grateful to have the chance to learn all I can.