



LeadAR

Member **SPOTLIGHT**
Class 19

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System



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I grew up on a Hay and Cattle farm just north of Dover, Arkansas on Big Piney Creek. We operated a Holstein Dairy for several decades and transitioned to all beef cattle and custom forage production when I started school. I worked alongside my parents and twin sister there learning the value of hard work and perseverance. I also participated heavily in the 4-H program at the local, county, state, and national levels which greatly influenced my career path later in life. I also met my future wife at a state 4-H event.

After graduating from Dover High School in 2002 I attended Arkansas Tech University (ATU) obtaining a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture Business in 2006. The people I met, and the classes I took at ATU have helped me beyond measure in my career in Agriculture and youth development. After college I continued to work on my family farm and at a local Goodyear store as a mechanic before applying for and accepting the County Agent position with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service in Sebastian County.

I served the people of Sebastian County for 8 years as the 4-H and Agriculture agent trying to provide an even greater experience to my clients than my family had over the years before transferring to Perry County to serve as the Ag Agent. During that time, I was able to work with youth and adults from all backgrounds including guiding 12 4-H teams to nine different national contests. I led and conducted on farm demonstrations with producers and served in many different roles within the community. I also married my high school and 4-H sweetheart Creenna in 2008 and finished my master's degree from the University of Arkansas in 2016. I absolutely loved working in both counties helping to re-establish the expectations and influence of the county extension programs in those communities. I was humbled and surprised when I received the 4-H Alumni award from Sebastian County in 2017 along with my wife for our work in the county and the 2017 Perry County Citizen of the Year.

In 2017, I accepted a position as the state 4-H Outdoor Skills Instructor in the state 4-H office. I have served the last four years leading outdoor programs such as the Arkansas 4-H Shooting Sports program, and Arkansas 4-H ATV Safety program along with multiple other duties. I have served on the state board of directors for the Arkansas County Agriculture Agents Association and the Arkansas Association of Extension 4-H Agents. I have also served on the National Board for the 4-H Agents Association as the Southern Regional Director.

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

LeadAR is the program that I have admired since I started with Extension. Watching how it has empowered people to start businesses, organizations, and get into public service and better their communities was an eye opener for me. As a county agent and now as a state specialist I think that getting involved in your own community and being actively involved is the key to a successful future in a rural state like Arkansas. So, having worked with LeadAR alumni and seeing what kind of impact they made in their communities really motivated me to step up take on this challenge.

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

I would have to say the ability to match people's talents to areas that will make them successful. It takes a wide array of talents and personalities to make an organization work. So, identifying those folks who can fill in the gaps and complement each other's talents is a tremendous talent.....And then being able to manage those in the same office or area speaks volumes for leadership style.

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

That I was offered a book publishing deal. Most folks do not think of me as a writer because I am so outgoing or have that orange personality type, but I usually write with a point in mind but also like I talk.

What are your top three ingredients necessary for success?

Adaptability Failure, and don't be afraid to WORK

What are your top three ingredients necessary for happiness?

Find the funny in every situation. Don't take professional criticism personally. Have an outlet - animals, trucks, guns, friends

Describe your personal leadership style.

I lead by example and do not micromanage. I will help in any way possible but if someone says they have a concept, or something handled I will step back and let them take care of the task. I don't force folks to do things the exact same way that I do them to achieve a goal.

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

I really want to gain more knowledge of leadership styles and how they are used in multiple settings, industries, organizations, etc.

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

By allowing us to stay relevant. We can plan for future growth economically, educationally, and socially. By setting goals and using effective leadership Arkansas will be seen as a desirable place to live, work, and do business.

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

Knife, water filter, fire starter

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

Constant zoom meetings

What else do you want others to know about you?

I don't like chocolate but love to socialize and get to know people.