




# Stepping Up to the Plate

2 0 0 1      A N N U A L   R E P O R T



ALABAMA  
COOPERATIVE  
**Extension**  
SYSTEM



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## A Word from the Director

For more than 90 years, Extension in Alabama has been stepping up to the plate—educating citizens on topics as diverse as cotton variety selections and nutrition for infants. This past year, 2001, was a challenge for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. We had to confront a budget reduced by state proration while continuing to provide much-needed educational services to Alabamians.

I am proud of our Extension System's more than 900-member team. We met the budget challenge with creativity, hard work, and dedication. Not only did we manage the fiscal resources wisely, we never allowed money concerns to strike out needed programs.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System takes seriously its mission of making the latest in university-based research available to the people. Our professionals are committed to the people of this state and to the effective and efficient use of our resources.

I believe one crucial element is linked to the success of Extension's efforts: our focus on the individual. Even as we adapt new technologies to expand our program efforts, our organization has never lost sight of the importance of helping individuals make positive changes—on the farm, in the workplace, at home, and in the community.

As you take a moment to read the stories that follow, you will see examples of just how profound an impact Extension has on individuals. These stories are inspiring when considered alone. When considered in the context of the thousands of lives that Extension touches each year, you can see that our impact is immense.

Finally, I want to pledge the continued commitment of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System to improving the lives of all Alabamians. We will continue stepping up to the plate—and winning—for and with the people of Alabama. Extension confidently looks toward a future filled with many more victories like the ones in this 2001 annual report.

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Gaines Smith".

Gaines Smith, Interim Director

## How to Reach Us

For information about programs, to volunteer, or just to ask a question, call or go by your county Extension office (see back cover).

To reach state headquarters, call 334-844-4444 (Auburn University) or 256-851-5710 (Alabama A&M University).

For information about charitable contributions, call Beth Atkins, Assistant to the Director, Development, at 334-844-2247.

To place orders for publications, call 334-844-1592; or for videos or other media, call 334-844-5689.

## Extension On-Line: [www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)

Extension provides information and education to citizens electronically through a database-driven web site, which includes publications, news stories, timely information, and much more. In 2001 special pages on the web site were devoted to post-9/11 tragedy relief, anthrax, West Nile virus, invasive exotic species, and foot-and-mouth disease. These keep the public informed about issues of concern. Streaming and downloadable digital video clips are available on the web in RealVideo and QuickTime formats. Some 850 Extension publications are available on the web, most in two forms: one for printing and the other for on-line searching and viewing.

Several publications and a web page won international awards in 2001. A new home page was launched during the year, incorporating a new look and an easy-to-navigate format. The total web site includes more than 18,000 pages.



# Agriculture

*Commitment to Alabama's farmers is the hallmark of Extension's Agriculture program. We invite you to meet a few of the many Alabamians who have benefited from that commitment.*

## Green Thumbs, Caring Hearts

**S**usie Franklin could not have imagined how much her life and the lives of troubled youth would be touched by her involvement with Master Gardeners.

In 1996, Extension Agent David West was developing a horticultural therapy project for troubled youth at the Coosa Valley Attention Center in Anniston.

After securing five acres of land and building a greenhouse and nursery near the center, West turned the project over to Susie, her husband Curtis, and other local volunteers—a tall order for a handful of newly minted Master Gardeners. Fortunately for them, Hayes Jackson, an Extension urban environmental agent, spends 20 hours a week helping with the project.

“We initially expected to put in 40 hours of volunteer work the first year,” Franklin recalls. “By the time we finished, we had put in 258 hours.”

It’s been that way ever since, year after year, she adds.

Working in the greenhouse every Wednesday enables the youth to gain hands-on classroom experience in horticulture, earning credit toward their high school diplomas. But as Franklin discovered, the learning goes much deeper than that.

“We’ve found we serve something like a grandparent role,” she says. “We encourage them, hug them, pat them on the back.”

“Some of them are astonished, because they always thought you had to do something to earn this kind of

affection. They’re just taken aback when they discover we think so much of them we give freely of our time and money.”

Word of the project’s success is spreading. The Alabama Legislature recently appropriated \$30,000 to support the project. In addition, the Franklins were selected as National Master Gardeners of the Year in 2001, the only recipients to receive standing ovations for their efforts.



**The Green Team**—Calhoun County Master Gardener Susie Franklin never imagined her involvement with the Master Gardener program would touch so many lives so deeply. Franklin (second from right) is pictured with other Master Gardeners Mary Francis Paddock (left) and Don Specter (second from left). Also pictured are David West (center), Calhoun County Extension coordinator, and Hayes Jackson (right), Calhoun County Extension urban environmental agent.

## Master Gardeners: 20 Years of Excellence

**T**he next time you pass a beautified town square, nursing home, or tree-lined park, you may have a Master Gardener to thank.

Master Gardeners serve as the right hand of the Extension System’s horticultural outreach throughout the state.

Alabama Extension agents estimate that between 75 and 80 percent of inquiries from the general public concern horticulture and related topics.

Since the program began in Alabama in 1981, more than 6,000 volunteers in 42 counties have been certified to help Extension meet the horticultural education needs of the public. In fact, the primary aim of the Master Gardener program is to recruit a core group of volunteers to assist Extension agents in disseminating horticultural knowledge to a segment of the population that previously had little contact with Extension.



**Master Gardener—**Madison County Master Gardener Mary Lou McNabb played a key role in establishing Alabama Master Gardeners more than 20 years ago. She, like hundreds of other Master Gardeners across the state, gives freely of her time and expertise to make Alabama a better place to live.

Becoming a certified Master Gardener requires volunteers to invest at least 40 hours of service within their first year. They are also encouraged to commit at least 20 hours every year thereafter. However, many of the most committed Master Gardeners throughout the state far exceed this total, offering their time and talents freely to a vast array of projects—projects that have added immeasurably to the beauty of Alabama landscapes and to the well-being of Alabama communities.

## Quality Assurance, Maximum Profits

**A**s Autauga County producer Hank Gaines sees it, there are two ways to make a living in the cattle business.

“Either you do nothing for your cattle and sell them for what you can get, or you do it right by putting more costs into your operation and ending up with more to show for your efforts,” he says. Gaines is a strong believer in the second approach.

“Like every other industry, the more you know, the better chance you have of making a living,” says Perry Mobley, Gaines’ Extension agent.

The Extension-sponsored Master Cattle Producers Training Program functions with just this philosophy: to teach Alabama producers everything they need to know in order to keep up with one of the most competitive industries in agriculture. Butch Blaylock, an

Extension animal scientist, supervises the program.

Becoming a Certified Master Cattle Producer requires six days of intensive training, followed by a series of exams covering the program’s entire instructional manual.

“Everything was covered—nutrition, reproduction, genetics, animal vaccination, and forages,” recalls Mike Blake, an Autauga County producer and Master Cattle Producers alumnus. “The program does a very good job explaining everything in detail and helping growers assess their own operations and what they can do to put out the sort of product consumers demand.”

Through 41 county and multi-county sessions, more than 1,450 producers have been certified through the program.

Used in tandem with other approaches, such as Beef Quality Assurance Certification and innovative marketing methods, the Master Cattle Producers Program is moving Alabama producers to the forefront of the industry.



**A True Believer—**Hank Gaines (right) is a strong believer in “doing it right” when it comes to his cattle operation. This conviction led him to work with Extension Agent Perry Mobley (left) to become a Certified Master Cattle Producer.



## How Transgenic Cotton Saved the Farm

**N**othing prepared Pickens County cotton producer Hugh Summerville for the onslaught of insecticide-resistant budworms that “literally destroyed the entire crop” of cotton in 1995.

Desperate, he and other growers pinned their hopes on a new kind of cotton: genetically altered to resist tobacco budworms and other common predators.

Summerville had first heard about the new cotton from Ronald Smith, Extension’s cotton insect expert.

“I remember Ron commenting once about a day when we could farm cotton without insect control,” Summerville recalls with a slight chuckle. “I thought, ‘This can’t be true, because we’ll always have to spray for pests.’”

Still, after the budworm devastation, he was willing to try anything. But there was one big risk: the new-fangled cotton hadn’t yet been tested under Alabama growing conditions.

He turned to Smith for advice. While acknowledging the risks, Smith advised Summerville to follow his instincts and plant the cotton.

Much to his surprise, Summerville has not had to spray for any insects since planting the cotton more than five years ago.

“It’s almost like a miracle,” he says. “Everything Ron discussed has come to pass.”



**High Cotton**—Pickens County cotton producer Hugh Summerville inspects a stand of cotton genetically altered to resist tobacco budworms. “If I didn’t have this cotton, I probably wouldn’t be in cotton farming today,” he says. Extension Entomologist Ron Smith introduced him to the technology.

Genetically altered cotton has literally saved the farm—a fact to which Summerville and hundreds of other growers can attest.

The environment benefits, too. Research compiled by Smith and a colleague in Louisiana reveals that the use of genetically engineered cotton has resulted in about one million fewer pounds of insecticides being applied, thereby reducing long-term risks to soil, water, and air quality.

Genetically altered cotton has also led to savings of more than 2.4 million gallons of fuel and more than 93 million gallons of water that otherwise would have been used in the application of insecticides.

## Lean, But Effective

**L**ean, but effective would be an accurate way to describe the Mobile-based Marine Extension and Research Center.

Comprised of only two full-time Extension specialists, the center has nevertheless benefited hundreds of producers throughout the Gulf region and, through them, many thousands of consumers.

Case in point: Jim Stewart, who, along with his family, runs Captain Jim’s Seafood, a crab-processing facility in Mobile. Stewart developed a method for steaming crabs that he believed would better preserve both the flavor and shelf life of the crabmeat.

But there was one rub: Stewart had to prove the crabs were steamed at a high enough internal temperature to comply with state food-safety regulations.

He turned to Brian Perkins, the center’s seafood technologist, for help. After considerable research and numerous trials, Perkins helped Stewart perfect a method for reaching this temperature without compromising the quality of the meat.

“If we didn’t have Brian helping us, we wouldn’t have anything,” Stewart says. “Brian can help us with things we need that people can’t find anywhere else.”

Perkins has also trained Gulf-area seafood processors in a highly effective





**A Better Process**—Stan Wright, Bayou La Batre mayor and oyster processor, credits Extension Seafood Technologist Brian Perkins with helping him implement a state-of-the-art food inspection system.

food-safety inspection program known by its initials “HACCP” (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points).

“He worked with us to schedule training sessions during slow times of the year so we wouldn’t be shorthanded during peak periods,” says Stan Wright, a local oyster processor who also serves as mayor of Bayou La Batre.

“Brian has really been an asset to the seafood industry,” Wright adds. “He’s served the primary role in making all of this possible, and whenever we have a question, he’s right on it.”

Perkins has trained 10 percent of all seafood HACCP certificate holders in the United States, reaching roughly 700 individuals in six states.



**Brian Perkins**

*May 3, 1952 - March 16, 2002*

**An exemplary Extension specialist, Brian will be sorely missed by his family, friends, colleagues, and countless people in the seafood industry.**

**Cutting Them Down to Size**—Franklin County poultry producer Scott Hamilton (left) and Tim Reed, Franklin County Extension coordinator, discuss how they have successfully managed to cut propane costs down to manageable levels. “I don’t know if I would even be in business without the program,” says Hamilton.



## Taking the Bite Out of Propane Costs

**P**ropane costs are an unavoidable and often grim fact of life for poultry producers: unavoidable because propane is a staple of poultry production used to heat poultry houses; grim because the costs, if not properly managed, can devour a producer’s profits.

Several years ago, prompted by local poultry growers, Tim Reed, Franklin County Extension coordinator, undertook a study to determine what could be done to relieve producers of these high costs. The solution: Poultry producers needed some form of price protection.

Working with a large gas supplier, Reed helped establish a contracting system through which growers could lock in their prices over a 12-month period, saving them more than \$300,000 within the past few years.

“We were paying 80 cents a gallon for gas last year,” says Scott Hamilton, a Franklin County producer who serves on the local board of the Contract Growers Association. “Growers who weren’t participating paid between \$1.60 and \$1.70. Some of these growers barely squeaked by last year. I don’t know if I would even be in business without the program.”

Word of the program has spread. Working with a large propane supplier in their state, Georgia poultry growers have developed a similar program. From Georgia, the program spread to Tennessee and the Florida panhandle.

Recently, the National Association of County Agricultural Agents honored Reed for his pioneering efforts in helping Southern poultry growers make significant savings in operating costs, savings that have enabled many growers to stay in business.



# Fostering Environmental Stewardship

**T**here is gold in chicken litter. One truckload of chicken litter, in fact, contains the equivalent of about \$150 worth of commercial fertilizer—small wonder why hay and cattle producers pay commercial waste vendors to spread litter on their fields.

But there is one hitch: If too much waste is applied, it can wash into nearby lakes and streams, ultimately threatening the safety and quality of our drinking water supply.

With this in mind, Extension worked with other state and federal agencies to develop the nation's first Certified Animal Waste Vendor program to train waste vendors to become more adept at applying litter at environmentally safe levels.

Many vendors, of course, have already adopted safe practices, purely out of common sense.

"I was always conscious of ponds and streams and how important it was never to spread too close to them," says Billy Fred Lipham, a Randolph County poultry grower and former waste vendor, who is now spreading litter only at his own operation.

Even so, growers and program sponsors alike concede the training, especially dealing with calibration and record keeping, has benefited them in ways beyond environmental stewardship.

"I've begun thinking about it more from an economic standpoint," says Randolph County vendor Ritchie Traylor, who has been certified since 1999. "If I apply too much litter, I know I'll be wasting money."

It is a point emphasized by Stan Roark, a Randolph County Extension agent who assisted Extension Specialists Charles Mitchell and Ted Tyson in training some of the more than 600 vendors reached by the program in 2000 and 2001.

"I've personally enjoyed working with the program because it's helped farmers economically in addition to making them better environmental stewards," Roark says.



**On-the-Job Stewardship—**Randolph County waste vendor Ritchie Traylor says Extension-sponsored Certified Animal Waste Vendor training taught him about the economic and environmental benefits of applying less poultry waste on pasturelands.

## Agriculture

# LINE DRIVES

- With assistance from the Alabama Fire Ant Management Project, Extension agents succeeded in establishing phorid flies, a major predator of fire ants, in Talladega, Lowndes, and Houston counties.
- An Extension livestock economist is helping cattle producers market their animals through board, satellite, and internet sales, often increasing their sales by as much as \$40 per head.
- With funding provided by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Extension-sponsored Gypsy Moth Survey Program monitored for the presence of the pest in Alabama by establishing some 3,700 pheromone-baited traps in 45 Alabama counties.
- Extension helped the Coastal Clean Water Partnership identify 12 watersheds for water quality improvement projects.
- The Extension urban entomologist identified samples of structural pests and damaged wood for clientele throughout Alabama and in other states.
- Extension carried out a federal mandate to train private and commercial pesticide applicators in Alabama, reaching almost 2,700 private applicators and almost 1,600 commercial applicators.
- Working with federal and state partners in several states, the Extension seafood technologist helped train 59 private-sector seafood personnel, 11 federal and state seafood inspectors, and 12 university students and employees—training that helps private-sector personnel comply with federal food safety regulations.
- Extension participated in several international exchanges in 2001, including projects and tours in China, Russia, Moldova, Romania, Armenia, Brazil, and Argentina.
- During the last three years, Extension experts have obtained 18 winter-hardy citrus varieties from China, which they hope will form the basis for a new citrus industry in Alabama. Experts are also evaluating 100 plants from China that they hope will eventually be available to Alabama's rapidly expanding ornamental horticulture industry.



# Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources

*The Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources program area focuses on helping Alabama manage its natural riches. The next stories illustrate some of the ways our state and citizens benefit.*

## Ruffner Mountain Ozone Study

Until the 1950s, Ruffner Mountain provided raw materials for Birmingham's early mining and timber industries. When development threatened the area in the 70s, a group of individuals, corporations, foundations, and public and private agencies raised \$2 million to purchase the land.

Today, the mountain, located near downtown Birmingham, is the last undeveloped portion of Birmingham's Red Mountain Ridge. It is also the second largest urban nature preserve in the nation. The 1,000+ acres provide a critical habitat for many native species of plants and animals and include a Nature Center and a 10-mile network of woodland trails.

"Extension, the USDA Forest Service, Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and the Ruffner Mountain Nature Center are studying how pollution is affecting the forest on Ruffner Mountain," says Brenda Allen, Extension urban forester. "We're also developing a management plan and a monitoring system for the urban forest."

The effects of ozone pollution are evident on Ruffner Mountain trees and plants. Leaves that are usually bright green have chestnut brown mottling due to ozone harming the photosynthesis of the plants. Scientists say it's too early to know how much damage the pollution is causing, but they will examine tree growth, health, and

other factors and compare results each year. They also will compare the Ruffner results to those of studies in other Southeastern forests.

"The study will have a long-term impact," says Cory Thomas, executive

director of the Ruffner Mountain Coalition. "We welcome the chance to be a part of this unique educational and scientific pursuit and to collaborate with the premier forestry program in the South."



**Looking for Clues—**  
Dave Wergowske,  
U. S. Forest Service,  
and Lisa Harris, director  
of public relations for  
Ruffner Mountain,  
check for ozone injury  
on Ruffner Mountain.

## Dog River Clearwater Revival

Several years ago, the City of Mobile decided to use the last vestiges of the Wragg Swamp wetland as the site for a baseball park. A group of local citizens were outraged, arguing that the wetland helped filter the Dog River. Without it, the river would be at best unclear and at worst, downright dangerous.

A group known as the Dog River Clearwater Revival (DRCR) was born in the controversy. Though it lost that battle, it is still working to keep the river clean. DRCR President Mimi Fearn says the group depends on help from Extension to keep going.

Fearn and Jody Scanlan, an Extension watershed project coordinator with the



**Cleaning up Coastal Waters—Jody Scanlan (front), coastal cleanup captain, and Mimi Fearn, Dog River Clearwater Revival president (back), load up bags of trash from Dog River.**

Auburn Marine Extension and Research Center in Mobile, recently created the Clear Water Guardian Program, a reward system for contractors who “do the job right.”

“In the beginning, the membership was emphatic that we go after the bad guys,” says Fearn. “But that just doesn’t work. We decided to use a reward system—we recognize contractors who do the job right.” The group has given two awards so far. They have also posted a sign on the award-winner’s construction site.

“It wouldn’t have happened without Extension,” Fearn says. “We’re all volunteers. I have a full-time job, and although I devote a lot of time to this, I can’t do it all day. Having Jody Scanlan paid by a grant to work on this at least part-time has really made it possible. Extension has never turned us down for anything we needed.”

## All’s Well with the Well

**D**uane Godwin and his family discovered a problem with the water soon after building their new home in Houston County. Besides having a metallic taste, the water was causing blue-green stains in sinks and tubs. Godwin, a Dothan firefighter and a part-time farmer, contacted the Houston County Extension office for help.

Godwin began working with Extension Agents Ricky Hudson and Phillip Carter. After having the water tested, Godwin discovered the water problems were caused by highly acidic well water running through copper pipes. “While the copper is not that dangerous, lead from the pipe solder can be,” says Carter.

The Extension agents told Godwin he had several options: abandon the well and connect to the county’s water supply; buy expensive equipment to

connect to the well pump to fix the problem; or build his own filtering system to neutralize the well water.

Being a man who “likes a challenge,” Godwin believed he could build and maintain the system himself.

Extension Water Quality Scientist Jim Hairston provided building plans, calling for pipes, limestone chips, stainless steel grids, and replaceable paper filters. So far, it’s working great. Godwin hopes soon to add a third pipe to his two-pipe system.

“This water quality project has been a real education for me,” Godwin says. “I really appreciate the help and guidance Extension has given and continues to give me. They could have told me to connect to county water and been done with me, but they stuck with me even though I picked the option requiring more work.”



**Well Done—Duane Godwin (left) and Extension Agent Phillip Carter check out water test samples from Godwin’s home well.**



## Model Behavior

**W**hen Extension began working to increase public awareness of radon in 15 high-risk counties in North Alabama, no one knew the program would be such a huge success. Last November, Alabama's radon program was recognized nationally by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its creativity and productivity in reaching communities and promoting environmental stewardship.

One success of the program is the newly dedicated Morgan County Agricultural Service Center, the first public service building in Alabama constructed with radon-resistant features.

"Extension is the educational branch of the Agricultural Service Center," says Extension Coordinator Julie Dutton, "and modeling behavior is one of the best teaching tools we have. By constructing the building

with radon-resistant features, our commissioners helped us model some of the things we teach."

"It took planning, cooperation, and guts to do some of the innovative things incorporated into the building," County Commission Chairman Larry Bennich said at the building's dedication in September.

"Julie talked with me about what it would take to add radon-resistant features into the construction of the building," says Commissioner Don Stisher, who was assigned to oversee the construction. The features, though innovative, cost less than \$500.

"We are proud of our new Agriculture Service Center and appreciate Extension's and the other agencies' input into making it a beautiful and useful facility," Stisher says. "We're grateful for the outstanding jobs they do as they serve the people of Morgan County."



**A Model Job—Morgan County Commissioner Don Stisher speaks to guests at the grand opening of the new Morgan County Agricultural Service Center, built with radon-resistant features.**

## Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources

### LINE DRIVES

- Extension conducted a two-day strategic planning summit for the Southeast Alabama Trails Association to develop a stable funding base and assisted the Alabama Scenic Byways Advisory Council. Scenic byways and trails help Alabamians preserve, showcase, and profit from the natural beauty of the state.
- Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences (SFWS) Extension program has educated nearly 3,000 loggers in safety, silviculture, environmental impacts, finances, and personnel management. Such training helps ensure that the state's forests remain safe and profitable.
- SFWS Extension manages a regional cooperative in the area of forest tree seedling production. Co-op members produce approximately 70 percent of all the tree seedlings in the United States.
- Working with organizations such as the Alabama Urban Forestry Association and local and state officials, Extension helped establish Tree Cities USA throughout Alabama.
- SFWS Extension is one of the regional leaders in the Sustainable Forestry Partnership, a national coalition of public universities promoting the concepts of sustainable forestry management.
- Hunting is a multi-billion dollar industry in Alabama. SFWS Extension provides landowner and hunter education on the sustainable management of game populations.
- Extension and the Auburn University School of Pharmacy formed a collaborative partnership to provide a community-based asthma education and intervention program.
- The Alabama Radon Program has initiated radon testing in 2,768 homes since October 1997. Of those homes, 22 percent had elevated radon levels, showing the need to mitigate for radon.
- The Newborn Infant Program, which began in 2001 in Colbert County, offers free radon test kits to families with newborns. The program is planned to expand to all 15 Alabama Radon Zone 1 (high radon risk) counties.



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# Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

*With two-thirds of Alabamians living in urban areas, Extension's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs are dedicated to this growing segment of our population. The people you will meet next, like so many others, have learned life-changing lessons from Extension programs that target urban audiences.*

## Tithing Time

**A** mother of five with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Adelle Jones was enjoying her retirement. But 31 years as an LPN left Jones with a continuing desire to help people. Although she already was a volunteer with several Extension programs, she still felt something was missing. Then she attended an Extension leadership workshop and found her calling: she became an activist in her community.

Judy Edmond, Extension agent at the Urban Family Center in Huntsville, says, "Ms. Jones really inspires the people in her community. She's always telling them about the benefits one can gain by volunteering with Extension."

"Oh yes," adds Jones, "I visit all my neighbors and encourage them to become more involved in the community. 'Tithe of your time, not just your money!' is what I tell them."

Jones tells of the 77-year-old woman she helped register to vote. "This lady voted for the first time ever in the last election!" Jones also sees a new neighborhood pride in the way the residents look out for each other and improve their surroundings.

Jones has added yet another activity to her life. She is a college student in a general education degree program that will help her as she volunteers in schools.

"What Extension needs is more volunteers like Adelle," says Judy. "We've seen a growth of interest in this neighborhood like never before since she's been on the Resident Council. People who once sat in their homes are now coming forward to participate. I've never known anyone who can inspire others to do their best like Adelle Jones can!"



Inspiration at Work—Adelle Jones studies before she goes out to work in her neighborhood.



San Diego Bound—The Hayden Shoppers and their sponsors are (from left, standing) Carol Reid, Ronda Sullins, Aaron Bowen, Blake Cummings, Jillian Bishop, and (seated) Colene Burns and Beth Gibbs.

## Smart and Prepared

**T**welve students from Hayden High School participated in the on-line competition of LifeSmarts, a national consumer education program that teaches teens to be responsible citizens and consumers. All three teams scored high enough to be invited to the state competition at Extension's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit on the campus of Alabama A&M University.

State competitions were tough, but The Hayden Shoppers (Colene Burns, Blake Cummings, Beth Gibbs, and Aaron Bowen, captain) became the state winners for Alabama. Their



correct response to the question "To what temperature do you need to cook chicken?" (180 degrees) cinched first place.

Originally, the Attorney General's office was going to sponsor the winners' trip to the national competition in San Diego, but proration of the state education budget intervened, and they had to raise their own money for the trip. Their families and the community pitched in to help. One local business donated the T-shirts to be worn in San Diego. The slogan on the shirts read: "Some people have Book Smarts, Some people have Street Smarts, But we have... LifeSmarts!"

They loved their experience in San Diego, and the city will never be the same! Although they didn't win the national competition, just getting there was a major accomplishment. And they are going to try again in 2002. The Shoppers will stay together as a team, and will pass on what they have learned to the rest of the Hayden teams. "Be prepared" is their recommendation to other contestants. And "Look out—we're coming back" is their dream.

Bernice B. Wilson, LifeSmarts coordinator and Extension urban specialist in resource management, is pleased with the response throughout the state. "Last year was our first year with LifeSmarts, and interest continues to grow. I'm looking forward to the turnout in 2002."

## On Her Way

**G**wanda Wiggins, a young single mother of two, participated in Extension's Welfare to Work program in 1997. In her program evaluation, she expressed a desire to take charge of her life and get a job. Unfortunately, Wiggins got sidetracked for the next several years.

Then last year Cynarra Moore, a program assistant with Extension's Family Life Center in Huntsville who works with more than 1,600 households, saw a picture of Wiggins taken during the Welfare to Work program. Moore contacted Wiggins and gave her an inspirational poem. The encouragement was just the boost Wiggins needed, and she decided to keep that promise she had made to herself. Soon afterward,

Wiggins called Moore and said, "Guess what—I have a job!"

This is the first job Wiggins has had since high school. She loves her job and looks forward to going to work each day. And now, with something to do with herself, the days don't seem as long. Her children are proud of their mom too.

Wanting to continue her goal to take charge of her life, Wiggins has now been approved for a home loan and is looking forward to moving out of public housing. Wiggins recently told Extension Agent Judy Edmond, who is in charge of the Family Life Center, "I have come a long way and I'm going to win. I'm on my way!"



**Enjoying Work—Gwanda Wiggins is enjoying her new job, her first since high school.**





**In Control**—Dianne Madyun (left) credits Agent Mary Andrews and Extension with helping her control her blood pressure without medication.

## Fit and Fine

**Y**our blood pressure is at 188/102. Stroke level! Have this prescription filled and take your medicine. These were the last words Dianne Webster Madyun, a tall black woman in her very young-looking early 50s, expected to hear. Sure, she had some symptoms. But a stroke? No way.

Madyun decided to take control of her own health. “I grew up in a home where Extension was a household word. I knew from my parents that whenever I have a need for information, I should call my county Extension agent,” says Madyun. And call she did.

Mary Andrews, Extension agent in the Shoals Urban Center, has been working closely with Madyun for the past several months, using information developed through the Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Program unit’s Health Initiative for Underserved Populations on the campus of Alabama

A&M University. Andrews has plenty of experience working with people with a variety of health problems, including arthritis, diabetes, and Alzheimer’s disease, as well as hypertension.

“Mary has given me the personal attention that no doctor ever could. She’s been there for me and offered encouragement when I didn’t feel I could go on,” says Madyun.

With Andrews’ guidance, Madyun has lost 10 pounds and increased her energy level beyond what it’s ever been. She walks about three miles a day and works out at the gym for 45 minutes to an hour, six days a week. Dianne has started limiting some foods and has added more fruits, vegetables, and water to her diet. With a lot of hard work and these lifestyle changes, she has lowered her blood pressure to 110/70—a success story for Madyun and Andrews both.

## Helping Herself

**W**hen she came to Alabama seven years ago from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Cerene Prince planned on furthering her education. She never planned on being a single mother of two young children, living in public housing, going nowhere.

In an effort to improve herself and get work experience, Prince began volunteering at the Oscar Mason Community Center Library and at the



**On the Job**—With a little help from Extension, Cerene Prince helped herself get a job she loves.

Boys and Girls Club. But volunteering doesn't pay the bills. When she heard about the Workforce Preparation classes being taught by Extension's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs, she decided to sign up.

Prince enrolled in a program that guarantees employment for Workforce Preparation participants. She worked the 20 hours a week required by the program at the Community Center Library. She also attended the Workforce Preparation classes, where she learned how to prepare a resume and apply for a job. This all came in handy when her supervisor told her about a full-time position at the main public library. Prince applied for the position, using the resume she prepared in class, and got the job.

She now promotes the classes to others who "really want to help themselves." She is grateful that "Extension was there with the help I needed."

Prince is one of more than 10,000 people who received information and assistance in job preparation from the Workforce Preparation program in 2001. In addition, the program reached approximately 580,000 people during the year through media outreach. Extension Specialist Rosalie Lane, the program's coordinator, says she is "proud of our efforts to help people help themselves."

## TLC Works Wonders

**G**etting Down & Dirty in the Community allowed the Mobile County Teen Leadership Connection (TLC) members to clean up at the 2001 Alabama Youth Leadership Expo. As winners of the community service project display competition, these teens not only served their community through hours spent cleaning up the AIDS Memorial Garden behind the Mobile AIDS Support Services Office, they also spent weekends handing out informational brochures at local malls and served at the AIDS Memorial Tea.

Amanda Outlaw, Extension agent at the Mobile Urban Center, was pleased with the job done by the youth. "The Memorial Garden looked like a jungle when we started. I was afraid we'd never get through," she says. But the group persevered. John Gordon,

director of Mobile AIDS Support Services, notes, "Even though we all got hot and messy, I truly enjoyed working with such determined young people."

The Leadership Expo involved more than 200 Alabama youth and volunteer leaders from across the state and was a collaborative effort of several agencies including the Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce and the Madison County District 6 Commission.

"This event was very successful in providing youth participants with a broad range of educational opportunities designed to build and enhance leadership skills," says Expo Coordinator Edna Coleman. "In order to meet the challenge of leading in the 21st century, youth leaders must be engaged in development training and be involved in community service activities."



**A Lot of TLC—Mobile TLC workers John Gordon, Christopher Stone, William Walker, Ashley Franklin, Joseph Lucas (in front), Brittany Smith, Ersula Boykin, Treneashea Stone, Antonio Cook, and Amanda Outlaw (kneeling) enjoy the results of their work at the AIDS Memorial Garden.**



## Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

# LINE DRIVES

- The Yes I Can! curriculum is being used in various court and detention programs and other youth development programs throughout the state. More than 4,500 young people and 600 adult female inmates learned ways to live happier, more productive lives.
- The Workforce Education and Career Assistance Network for You ([www.wecan4u.net](http://www.wecan4u.net)) web site designed through a multi-state agreement between Alabama and West Virginia provides 24-hour access to employment-related information in both states.
- Urban Extension agents spearheaded grassroots efforts to provide educational training on domestic violence issues to 1,000 citizens. Fayette County Extension helped provide support to 150 adult victims and 25 children in violent homes since May 2001.
- Interactive seminars, health fairs, lunch-and-learn sessions, and other events reached more than 13,000 urban citizens with health-related education in 2001. Coalitions created closer alliances with health agencies.
- In the Students Promoting Action: Community Education (SPACE) program a total of 97 student volunteers were recruited and trained. The volunteers collaborated with 20 community agencies generating more than 1,200 volunteer hours and reaching some 3,400 customers.
- A program on dogs as companions provided dog obedience training and a seminar on animal cruelty and dog care. The program expanded to reach hearing and physically impaired citizens, children and adults in hospitals, and seniors in nursing homes who could benefit from animal companionship.
- The LegalEase program was initiated to provide practical legal education to Alabama citizens, with special attention to the elderly and youth. A legal consultant provides in-service training to county agents and partnering agencies.



# Family and Individual Well-Being

*Extension's Family and Individual Well-Being programs help people learn better ways to be healthy and financially secure. The people you will meet next are a few of the beneficiaries of these programs.*

## BEEing Better Dads

**W**atching the grin spread across Jerry Carter's face as his daughter, Jurnee, wraps her tiny hand around daddy's finger, you would think this is an ordinary moment for the pair.

These days, it is. Earlier in Jurnee's life, it was not the case. Carter is a non-custodial father and did not always recognize the impact he could have on his daughter's life.

Now, thanks to the BEEing Dads program in Choctaw County, he's learned how to take an active role.

"It just makes me happy being a part of her life," says Carter. "I'm being the kind of dad she deserves."

The BEEing Dads program, funded by a grant from the Children's Trust Fund, is at work in Choctaw and Wilcox counties. It's an offshoot of the Begin Education Early program.

Non-custodial fathers improve their parenting skills by working with Extension program assistants using research-based parenting curricula.

Fathers receive books and games they can use to build a relationship with their children. They also go on field trips, attend family workshops, and enjoy birthday parties for the children whose dads are enrolled in the program.

Sarah Spear, the Choctaw County program assistant, says she has seen Carter and the other 26 dads involved make great strides in the program.

"They recognize how their children need them and they have the skills now to develop a close and loving relationship with their children," says Spear.

Research shows that having an involved father helps children avoid a variety of destructive behaviors, including early sexual activity.

But you don't need research to see the benefits of the program as you watch Jerry Carter scoop up his daughter in a bear hug and hear her giggle as he plants a kiss on the top of her head.



**He Enjoys BEEing a Dad—Jerry Carter and his daughter, Jurnee, enjoy a book and a cuddle. Carter is one of the first participants in the BEEing Dads program in Choctaw County.**

## Identity Regained

**T**racy Gissendanner, a single mom with twins, wanted to buy a home. But she was turned down because of bad credit—just as she was turned down for a car loan.

Gissendanner couldn't understand how she had bad credit. She always paid her bills on time. In her mid-20s and without reading skills, Tracy didn't know where to turn. Then someone suggested she talk with Dale County Extension Coordinator Teresa Williams.

Williams helped Gissendanner obtain a copy of her credit report. That report showed that someone had stolen her identity to get credit cards when she was only 12. The person had run up sizable bills and never paid them, ruining her credit.

"We talked to all three credit bureaus," says Williams. "We worked afternoons after Tracy got off work. She had to be present to authorize the credit bureaus and creditors to talk with me. We had to dispute each charge."

It was a daunting challenge for Gissendanner, who could not read.

"Mrs. Williams would read every letter to me and explain what we needed to do. Then we would talk about what we needed to say in our letter. Mrs. Williams would write the letter and read it to me to be sure I understood. Then I would sign it."



**Setting the Record Straight**—Tracy Gissendanner (right) discusses setting up a budget with Dale County Extension Coordinator Teresa Williams.

For more than two years, the pair worked together, often several times a week.

Finally, the last charges attributed to Gissendanner were cleared from her credit report.

Thanks to a clean credit report, she was able to buy a home for herself and her children. She's working for the City of Ozark and improving her reading skills.

Her advice to others—safeguard your Social Security number and other important papers.

"Now I keep everything like that in a safe deposit box at the bank."

## Eating Better

**A**cross Alabama, the moms and dads of more than 34,000 children and teens are hearing much less of "I don't like that" and "I don't want to taste it," thanks to the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) and its fun and friendly nutrition lessons.

NEP educators use a variety of techniques to reach young people with nutrition information. The key—make it fun.

In DeKalb County, a puppet, Chef Combo, took children on tasting adventures via his magic carpet, while in Dallas County, students and Janey Junkfood learned more about healthy food choices. The Germ Inspector helped St. Clair County children spot glowing germs on their hands and fingers.

While having fun, children learn nutrition lessons that carry over into their lives. A number of creative and interactive assessment tools are used to evaluate children's knowledge before and after lessons. For younger

children, there are sticker activities, and for teens a game show format quiz.

The best indication of the program's effectiveness comes from the words of participants:

"I have been eating a good breakfast at home," says a fourth grader in St. Clair County.

"My daughter only ate five or six things before the program and wouldn't try new foods before Chef Combo. Now she's still trying new foods," a parent in Lawrence County says.

"An excellent program that teaches concepts about nutrition that students will use for a lifetime, since so many of my students don't get them at home. My students enjoyed all of the hands-on learning activities," says a teacher in Conecuh County.

"I drank my milk yesterday," boasts a student in Tuscaloosa County.

"Thank you for teaching us to have healthy bodies," says a third grader in Tallapoosa County.



**Eating Right**—Tia Morton, 9 (left), and her older sister, Miquela, 10, prepare a healthy after-school snack.



# Today's Mom

**L**eslie Copeland was about four months pregnant when she learned about Today's Mom, which is part of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

"I enrolled in the classes after the Marshall County Health Department told me about it," says Copeland. "I never really thought about how what I ate could affect my baby."

The program's goal is to help mothers have healthy babies who weigh more than 5½ pounds at birth. Low birth weight babies are at a higher risk for disease and other health concerns.



**Baby and Mom**—Cameron takes a midmorning nap while his mother, Leslie Copeland, a graduate of the Today's Mom program, looks on.

Sue Moman, Marshall County EFNEP program assistant, says Copeland and other expectant mothers learn how to modify their diets to include more healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables.

Copeland had completed four of the six Today's Mom classes when she gave birth to Cameron, who weighed just over 7 pounds at birth. Copeland was dedicated enough to come in and take her final class after Cameron's birth—earning her certificate. Attendance at five of the six classes is necessary to receive a certificate.

"Leslie is a good example of how being committed to the program can help mothers ensure their own and their babies' good health," says Moman. "I've been involved in EFNEP for more than 28 years, and it just makes me happy to see how this program helps women bring healthy babies into this world."

Today's Mom in Marshall County is also reaching out to the growing Hispanic population. Moman and an interpreter provide classes for Hispanic women, and a number of materials have been translated into Spanish.

This year, Marshall County women who participated in Today's Mom had infants whose average weight was 7 pounds 3 ounces, well above the 5½-pound goal.

## Family and Individual Well-Being

# LINE DRIVES

- **More than 5,000 people in 27 counties participated in Walk! Alabama, an eight-week walking program. Participants lost more than 1,400 pounds and walked more than 250,000 miles. They also reported increased energy levels and self-confidence along with decreased stress levels and fewer hours watching television.**
- **Alabama Extension reaches far beyond the state lines. For example, the joint project between Extension and four South Dakota Tribal Colleges continued this year with hands-on-training conducted in two locations.**
- **Nutrition workshops have been conducted across the state for Headstart workers as part of their annual in-service training. The workshops emphasized the importance of healthy meals and snacks to young children.**
- **Extension specialists in nutrition, food safety, and child development appear weekly on a Georgia-Alabama television station, keeping thousands updated on the latest information.**
- **More than 80 percent of the homemakers involved with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices, including such things as planning meals, making healthy food choices, and preparing foods without added salt.**
- **Test scores of 2,200 children from limited-resource homes showed a significant increase in nutrition knowledge after completing a Nutrition Education Program (NEP) course. Scores rose from 76 to 93 percent. Such increases in knowledge are a first step to healthier food choices, which lead to healthier children.**





# Community and Economic Development

*Teamwork is the key to success  
in Extension's Community and  
Economic Development programs.  
The winning team is filled with  
people and programs like those  
you'll learn about next.*

## Improving the Bottom Line

**A**labama communities, like thousands of towns and cities across America, are trying to win in the game of economic globalization.

Extension's Intensive Economic Development Course, established in 1984, was developed at the request of several community development professionals. They were concerned that Alabama lacked a program for helping local communities develop a strategy for sustaining long-term economic growth.

The program quickly developed into one of the Southeast's premier economic development short courses, reaching hundreds of community development professionals throughout the state. Now co-sponsored with Auburn University's Economic Development Institute, it was initially developed with grants from the Alabama Development Office and the Economic Development Administration.

Generous support from four companies—Alabama Gas Company, Alabama Power Company, Alabama Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and BellSouth—enables course planners to provide each class with a topflight faculty comprised of university professors and state and federal economic development experts at a reasonable cost. Alumni from previous classes also share what they have learned.



**An Intense Experience—The 2001 Intensive Economic Development Course class picture, including instructors. The course is one of the premier economic development programs in the Southeast.**

The course has consistently earned rave reviews from alumni who have used what they have learned to breathe hope and life back into their communities.

"It is a great program that everyone in government should participate in because economic development is the bottom line," says Autauga County Probate Judge Alfred Booth.

"I wish everyone involved in local government could go—legislators,

probate judges, county commissioners, mayors, and city council members.

Everyone working for the community should take that program."



**Judge Alfred Booth**

## Rolling Out the Red Carpet

**R**etirees, in ever-increasing numbers, are relocating in rural areas to benefit from lower housing costs and property taxes and outdoor recreation.

Extension agents and community leaders are eagerly rolling out the red carpet to these groups. This warm welcome has involved working across city and county boundaries to develop coalitions and long-term strategies to capitalize on this trend.

One of the most noteworthy examples is SEATS (Southeast Alabama Trails),

developed by Extension agents and community leaders in an eleven-county region in southeast Alabama.

SEATS is the outgrowth of the Lower Alabama Tourism and Retiree Association (LATARA), a project begun in 1989 by Kathy Sauer, Coffee County Extension Coordinator Sandra Coffey, and Dan Presley, who was county coordinator at the time.

With support from Extension and the Southeast Alabama Regional Development Commission, SEATS is led by a full-time executive director, Lin Graham, who is headquartered at the Coffee County Extension office.

Graham is developing an outreach effort involving all sectors of the local economy—hotels, local tourist attractions, restaurants, and retirement-related industries.

“Why is it important to attract retirees to our area?” asks Graham.

“They own 77 percent of the country’s personal financial assets, and they typically pay more in taxes than they cost in government services.”

The Alabama Sunrise Region, the brainchild of Clay County Extension Agent Tom Farrow, is another regional coalition based on a similar approach. Organized by Extension agents and Chamber of Commerce executives in four east central Alabama counties in 1993, it now includes 15 counties. As one of its first projects, the coalition developed a video and brochure used as part of Alabama’s promotional effort at the Atlanta Olympics.

The coalition is currently developing a comprehensive strategic plan to guide its outreach efforts during the next decade.



**United They Stand—** Extension has played a vital part in organizing regional coalitions to attract retirees and tourists to Alabama. One of the most successful coalitions is Southeast Alabama Trails, an outreach effort comprising 11 counties in Southeast Alabama.





## Community and Economic Development

# LINE DRIVES

- Through its Community and Economic Development program, Extension works with communities, designs programs that build a high quality workforce, and helps local leaders, organizations, and schools to recruit and retain businesses and industries.
- Extension helps individuals learn how to find jobs, stay employed, or start their own cottage industries or small businesses. Extension also supports the efforts of schools and businesses as they work together to provide career exploration opportunities for young people preparing to enter the work force.
- A collaborative effort in agromedicine helps prepare physicians for practice in rural areas. The program pairs medical students with Extension agents to visit farms, get firsthand experience of the health and safety risks of farming, and learn about Extension's role in helping rural communities.
- Tourism benefits from Extension expertise. Extension was involved in the first annual Alabama-Mississippi Rural Tourism Conference, the Tuskegee and Macon County Tourism Plan, and numerous other tourism promotion efforts.

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# 4-H and Youth Development

*Preparing young people to be leaders and good citizens today and tomorrow is the focus of the 4-H and Youth Development program. The next people you'll meet are among the many thousands of success stories in the almost 100-year history of 4-H.*

## Donation of Life

**A**labama 4-H'ers are young men and women of action. They see and respond to needs in their communities. After learning at the fall retreat about the critical importance of organ and tissue donation, the State 4-H Council adopted the organ donation card program for its 2001 community service project.

"As 4-H'ers we realize the importance of getting the word out that we, as a state and a nation, need more people to agree to donate their organs so if something unfortunate happens to them and there is no chance of survival, someone else may have another chance at life," says Virginia Mathews, a member of the State 4-H Council.

"It's important for people to realize that after they choose to sign a donation card, they need to talk to their families so they will know, understand, and agree with their decision," Mathews adds.

Kickoff for the project was during the 2001 Auburn homecoming weekend. Four-H State Council members are now taking their message into Alabama's classrooms.

This project has attracted the attention of the state's highest leadership.

"We received a letter of support from Governor Siegelman. He is committed to presenting every 4-H'er who registers 250 or more new organ donors with a Governor's Service Award and will join each winner for a photo opportunity sometime next summer," says Molly Gregg, Extension specialist, 4-H and Youth Development.

The numbers tell the story of the importance of the project the State 4-H Council has undertaken: more than 78,000 men, women, and children nationwide currently await lifesaving transplants. Every 13 minutes another name is added to the list. In Alabama, 1,850 people await organ transplants.



**4-H Council at Work—**  
Leonora Rutland of Auburn  
and Leonard Hall of Opelika  
receive organ donation  
information from Jessica  
Simmons, Fayette County,  
and Alan Balch, Lawrence  
County, both members of  
the 4-H State Council.

## Best Innovative Program for Youth

**A** new Extension program is coming to the aid of at-risk students in Geneva County. STEP-UP (Students, Tutors, Educators, and Parents—United Partners), which began in January 2001, is an after-school tutoring and 4-H enrichment program for students at risk of academic failure.

The Alabama Juvenile Probation Officers Association named the program Best Innovative Program for Youth.

"STEP-UP proved to be very successful during the last school year when 62 of 67 students in the program passed. This year we are dealing with students who have already been retained. We are hoping to help them find some academic success. This program offers them one-on-one assistance and encouragement in an out-of-school setting so they may succeed in the classroom," says Alayna W. Beckham, Extension agent assistant.

Another component of the STEP-UP program is 4-H enrichment.

"This year our focus is on art enrichment. Art is another way for these students to experience success. In addition to academics and sports,



**Stepping Up**—Omini Williams and Jason Stanley, STEP-UP students, paint a mural in the Human Resources Development Corporation building in Geneva as Alayna Beckham, Extension agent assistant, watches. The mural depicts the various aspects of the innovative program: the 4-H clover, the state of Alabama, and students stepping up the mountain to better grades, better relationships, fun, and success.

many people find a measure of success in the arts, yet many have no exposure to it. Art enrichment can be another form of expression for these students,” Beckham says.

STEP-UP is an alliance of community agencies. This partnership includes the Extension System’s Geneva County Office, Geneva City Schools, Geneva County Schools, and the Juvenile Court of Geneva County.

## From Club to Career

Seven years ago, Jessica Kelley met the challenge of participating in not one but two national 4-H judging competitions. Today, she takes the skills she learned from that experience to her job as a forester for the Florida Division of Forestry.

Like so many 4-H’ers, Kelley’s choice of a college major and eventual career is rooted in 4-H.

“Four-H had a big impact on my career choice. I enjoyed the forestry and wildlife judging so much that I wanted to continue it through college

and in my career,” says Kelley, who earned a degree in forestry from Auburn University.

“We have kids in 4-H who start competing in the fourth grade. As they get more involved, they build confidence and often discover a career interest,” says Roger Vines, Coosa County Extension agent.

“One valuable lesson the kids have learned is that things don’t always come easy—most often you have to work for them,” Vines adds.

“Participating in the judging competitions taught me leadership skills. This was especially true as I got older and the high schoolers began to help the younger kids,” Kelley says.

“Four-H took me to a lot of places. I got to travel and learn how big the world is. I also made lasting friendships.”

Four-H and forestry run in the Kelley family. Jessica’s younger sister Meagan also participated in national forestry and wildlife judging competitions. Their father is a forester with the Alabama Forestry Commission.



**On the Job**—Jessica Kelley, now a professional forester, gained experience in 4-H that helped her choose her career.



## Making the Best Better—Times Two

**W**hen Wanda Pharris started looking into 4-H for her daughter, Extension agents in Madison County quickly convinced her to participate herself.

“When my daughter Tiphannie was 11 years old, she wanted to get involved in 4-H, and I knew nothing about it,” Pharris says. She talked to Extension Agent Sylvia Oakes, who encouraged her to become a volunteer leader.

After several Saturday mornings in 4-H leadership training, I started a community-based 4-H club called STARS (Striving Toward Achieving Responsible Standards) for youngsters in the Huntsville schools,” says Pharris, a victim service officer with the Madison County district attorney’s office.

“Our club has done voter registration drives and distributed breast cancer awareness information. We visited the Alabama State Legislature and traveled to Washington, D.C., for the National Stand for Children rally and for Citizenship Washington Focus,” she explains.

Pharris also developed a career-based retreat held each year during spring break and the Urban Youth Farm Day.

Pharris offers this advice to anyone interested in 4-H volunteering: “Speak with your county Extension agents. Form a group and include the parents and children in the decision making. Get the parents involved and the professionals will pitch in and work with you.

“The Extension agents taught me what I needed to know and gave me support. Four-H volunteering is very much a collaborative effort,” Pharris says.

Tiphannie and her mother have come a long way through 4-H. Wanda is 2001 Alabama Volunteer Leader Association president, and Tiphannie, a freshman at Morris Brown College in Atlanta, has been named a Gates Millennium Scholar, an honor that carries a full, four-year scholarship.

“Making the best better” is a 4-H slogan. This mother and daughter are both living examples.



**Mother-Daughter 4-H Pride—Wanda Pharris (right) and daughter Tiphannie hold a trophy, just one of the many rewards of their 4-H involvement.**

## Leading Lady

**V**irginia Mathews is a young woman on the move, and she gives 4-H a lot of the credit. “Four-H showed me I have leadership skills. Before I became active in 4-H, I thought I was shy, but 4-H helped me open up and express feelings and be assertive,” she says.

The daughter of Jake and Debby Mathews, Virginia is president of the Cleburne County 4-H Club and a representative on the State 4-H Council. Her mother is the Cleburne County Extension Coordinator.



"I became active in 4-H in the seventh grade. Before that, I had been in a private school that didn't have a 4-H program, but since my mother was a 4-H agent I knew about it and took part in some of the events," Mathews says.

"Four-H helped me learn what it means to be a good leader and a good citizen. Basically, being a leader means making the best of what you have and applying it to your everyday life," she explains.

Mathews has been involved in 4-H public speaking programs, participating on both the district and state levels. She has also been involved in the clothing judging competitions.

"The skills I have acquired in 4-H have also led to my interest in journalism," says Mathews, who was a delegate to Girls' State last summer. "In college, I am interested in studying journalism as well as political science. I may even want a career in political science and, after college, I think I might run for political office."



**On the Move**—Virginia Mathews credits 4-H with bringing out her leadership skills.



**Pillar Talk**—Extension specialists Chuck Hill and Molly Gregg conduct a training session for a character education program that focuses on six "pillars of character."

## Character Is What It's All About

**A**labama 4-H leaders have put lesson plans for character education into the hands of our state's teachers. Alabama legislators have mandated that character education be taught in each school for 10 minutes a day.

"Alabama 4-H is committed to helping the state's schools, businesses, civic organizations, and individuals encourage character development and safeguard our future," says Molly Gregg, Extension specialist, 4-H and Youth Development.

Extension has 100 people statewide involved in a character education program that focuses on six "pillars of character": trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. In 2001, the program reached its goal of

having a trainer in every county.

Cynthia Knowlton, Monroe County Extension agent-in-training, uses the program in her 4-H school enrichment. A recent experience brought home to Knowlton the impact of her work.

"Before I deliver the program, I apologize to the students and teacher because I tell them that I'll be stepping over the line and sharing examples—real ones. I tell them that I don't mean to hurt feelings or accuse, but what I'm about to say is reality and it's happening in our schools.

"At the end of a recent session, the teacher told me it was about time that someone spoke up," says Knowlton, "because she had just realized that she was guilty of many of the things I had shared, and no one had ever held her accountable."



## It's the Kids, Not the Goats

**M**ore Alabama youngsters had an opportunity to compete in youth livestock competitions in 2001, thanks to the efforts of 4-H and the Alabama National Fair in Montgomery. A new category, meat goats, was added to the four existing Supreme Competitor awards.

At the 2001 fair, 4-H'ers took home \$4,100 in savings bonds, with \$600 of that total being awarded in the new Meat Goat Supreme Competitor category. The Supreme Competitor category was started in 1998 with beef cattle, dairy cattle, and sheep. Hogs were added the next year.

"It's less expensive to get involved in the showing of meat goats because it requires less cash outlay. This makes the competition available to more youngsters," says Extension Animal Scientist Bob Ebert.

"Several years ago, we recognized that a shift had taken place in the 4-H livestock shows," Ebert says. "Too much emphasis was being placed on the winning animals and not enough on the skills of the youngsters showing the animals. After all, the purpose of youth livestock shows is to develop youngsters, not prize-winning animals.

"The show ring helps kids develop life skills including decision making, responsibility, dedication, animal care and well-being, and, in some cases, oral communication," Ebert says. "That's where we need to keep the emphasis."

In the Supreme Competitor competition, 70 percent of the points come from a youngster's knowledge or ability to work with animals (showmanship) as opposed to coming from the animal itself.

"Without a doubt, this new competition has been successful," says Ebert. "We are rewarding and recognizing what youngsters know and can do rather than the conformation and quality of the animal."

Winning is one mark of success, but youth development—making the best better—is what 4-H is really all about.



**New Opportunity**—Brandon Boyd, Torsay Norris, Justin Echols, and Arthur Boyd Jr. learn about life as well as livestock through 4-H.

### 4-H and Youth Development

## LINE DRIVES

- Two university studies released in 2001 revealed that long-term involvement in 4-H and similar activities helps young people develop assets considered essential for lifetime success. In 2001, more than 140,000 Alabama young people ages 5-19 were involved in 4-H and other Extension youth programs.
- Alabama 4-H'ers joined the National Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century. This program, which will present the best ideas and programs for youth development in the 21st century to the President of the United States, his Cabinet, and Congress, is a part of the 4-H centennial celebration planned for the year 2002. The Power of Youth Campaign is one of the ways 4-H plans to engage the nation in developing positive youth development programs, addressing youth problems, building youth skills, generating civic involvement, and creating better communities.
- Alabama 4-H'ers won national competitions in meats judging, livestock agri-knowledge, livestock judging, wildlife judging, automotive safety, and compact tractor operation, and regional awards in horse competition.
- The Coosa County 4-H team became the fifth Alabama team to take top honors at the national wildlife judging competition.
- The Alabama 4-H forestry team has won the national forestry competition more than any other team. In 2001 the Talladega County forestry judging team gave Alabama its tenth national championship. Alabama 4-H'ers took three of the top ten individual scores, including a tie for first place in the nation.
- A Shelby County 4-H'er placed first in the nation in automotive safety.
- The third annual Teen Challenge Summit was held on the Auburn University campus in February. The largest youth entrepreneurship gathering in the country, it is a part of the African American Entrepreneurial Summit, which is now in its eighth year.
- Alabama 4-H'ers at the 2001 Midwinter Teen Leadership Retreat initiated a statewide service project to purchase and distribute 4-H bears to critically ill children at Children's Hospital in Birmingham.
- The 4-H Teens Getting Involved for the Future (TGIF) program continues to show impressive results in addressing the problem of high teen pregnancy rates in nine Alabama counties. In 2001, a follow-up questionnaire to ninth through twelfth graders in Choctaw and Sumter counties showed a dramatic difference for TGIF ninth grade participants and a significant difference for tenth grade participants.

# Development Helps Extension Score

**T**he events of September 11, 2001, remain painfully fresh in our hearts and minds and have left us all shocked, stunned, and questioning how we can help. However, a tremendous outpouring of goodwill has been inspired. It is a basic human desire to want to help and comfort those who are suffering, and those of us working in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System are no exception. Extension has been a source of such information as how to help children and youth deal with trauma and loss, and information on anthrax and bioterrorism.

But Extension always looks to the future with hope. For example, Alabama 4-H'ers have been engaged in local conversations in conjunction with the upcoming 4-H centennial celebration, focusing on one question: "Within the next three to five years, what are the most important actions we can take to create a future we want for youth in our community?"

As important as Extension was to our forebears a century ago, we who experienced the sorrow and uncertainty that swept the country during the last months of 2001 may find that Extension is more relevant than at any other time in our history. In a world where change comes faster and faster, Extension has embraced consistent values: hard work, responsibility, leadership, and community involvement—giving people the educational tools to help themselves.



In the preceding pages you have read about just some of the many ways Extension is "stepping up to the plate" to help Alabama and her citizens. In order for Extension to continue during this uncertain time, support is needed. While Extension receives public funds, those funds have dwindled. Extension has been greatly affected by state education budget reductions and proration, as well as level funding from our federal partner—when our costs continue to rise. In order for Extension to continue to meet our many challenges, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System needs private support.

So many needs cannot be filled with current resources. Some counties need youth, family, agriculture, or natural resources agents. Specialists retire or resign for higher-paying jobs in other states and cannot be replaced. Youth programming needs more support, and our 4-H youth need to be recognized for the wonderful work they do. The 4-H Center needs help in expanding its natural resources and environmental education programs.

Our families, our communities, and our state depend on the well-being of citizens. Join us as we work to give Alabama a bright and prosperous future. ***Help Extension help Alabama.***

Support comes in many ways. Support can be designated to a specific program or county or can be designated to the Extension general fund to support efforts to initiate new programs. Options include gifts of cash, gifts of securities, gifts of real estate, memorial or tribute gifts, gifts in kind, and corporate matching gifts. In addition, planned or deferred gifts including bequests by will or living trust, life income gifts, charitable lead trusts, gifts of life insurance, retirement plan gifts, and retained life estate gifts are also options.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is supported by a qualified charitable organization that meets the standards and requirements of the Internal Revenue Code Section 501 C 3. Under this provision, all contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes (subject to statutory limitations) and for federal estate and gift tax purposes.

## For more information

about charitable opportunities, please contact Beth Atkins, Assistant to the Director, Development, at 334-844-2247.



# Alabama Cooperative Extension System County Offices

## **Autauga**

2226 Hwy. 14 W. Suite E  
Autaugaville 36003-2540  
334-361-7273

## **Baldwin**

302A Byrne Street  
Bay Minette 36507  
251-937-7176

## **Barbour**

Courthouse, Room 105  
P.O. Box 99  
Clayton 36016  
334-775-3284

## **Bibb**

175 Davidson Dr., SW  
Centreville 35042  
205-926-3117

## **Blount**

Frank J. Green Bldg.  
415 Fifth Ave. E, Suite A  
Oneonta 35121  
205-274-2129

## **Bullock**

132 N. Prairie Street  
Union Springs 36089  
334-738-2580

## **Butler**

101 S. Conecuh Street  
P.O. Box 338  
Greenville 36037  
334-382-5111

## **Calhoun**

County Admin. Bldg.  
1702 Noble Street  
Suite 108  
Anniston 36201  
256-237-1621

## **Chambers**

Co. Office Bldg., Rm. 201  
18 Alabama Ave. E  
LaFayette 36862-2092  
334-864-9373

## **Cherokee**

102 Main Street  
Room 303  
Centre 35960-1532  
256-927-3250

## **Chilton**

Courthouse, Rm. 122  
500 2nd Ave. N  
P.O. Box 30  
Clanton 35045  
205-755-3240

## **Choctaw**

218 S. Hamburg Ave.  
Butler 36904  
205-459-2133

## **Clarke**

Courthouse Basement  
P.O. Box 40  
Grove Hill 36451  
251-275-3121

## **Clay**

93 County Road 31  
P.O. Box 10  
Ashland 36251  
256-354-5976

## **Cleburne**

72 Brockford Road  
Suite A  
Heflin 36264  
256-463-2620

## **Coffee**

Farm Center Complex  
U.S. 84  
5 County Complex  
New Brockton 36351  
334-894-5596

## **Colbert**

Courthouse Basement  
201 N. Main Street  
Tuscumbia 35674  
256-386-8570

## **Conecuh**

David L. Burt Ag. Center  
102 Liberty Street  
Room 103  
Evergreen 36401  
251-578-2762

## **Coosa**

County Activities Bldg.  
P.O. Box 247  
Rockford 35136  
256-377-4713

## **Covington**

374 Southern Bypass  
P.O. Box 519  
Andalusia 36420  
334-222-1125

## **Crenshaw**

Courthouse, 2nd Floor  
Room 201  
P.O. Box 71  
Luverne 36049  
334-335-6568, ext. 270

## **Cullman**

402 Arnold Street, NE  
County Office Bldg.  
Suite G-1  
Cullman 35055  
256-737-9386

## **Dale**

1702 Hwy. 123 S  
Suite D  
Ozark 36361  
334-774-2329

## **Dallas**

429 Lauderdale Street  
P.O. Box 40  
Selma 36702-0040  
334-875-3200

## **DeKalb**

111 Grand Ave. SW  
Suite 105  
Ft. Payne 35967-1991  
256-845-8595

## **Elmore**

Co. Ag. Center  
340 Queen Ann Rd.  
Wetumpka 36092  
334-567-6301

## **Escambia**

175 4-H Ag-Sci. Dr.  
Suite D  
Brewton 36426-8149  
251-867-7760

## **Etowah**

Co. Annex Bldg.  
3200A W. Meighan Blvd.  
Gadsden 35904  
256-547-7936

## **Fayette**

650 McConnell Loop  
Fayette 35555  
205-932-8941

## **Franklin**

Courthouse, Room 1  
P.O. Box 820  
Russellville 35653  
256-332-8880

## **Geneva**

Courthouse  
200 N. Commerce  
P.O. Box 159  
Geneva 36340  
334-684-2484

## **Greene**

#1 Professional Court  
Springfield Ave.  
P.O. Box 228  
Eutaw 35462  
205-372-3401

## **Hale**

Agricultural Extension Ctr.  
701 Hall Street  
Greensboro 36744  
334-624-8710

## **Henry**

101 N. Doswell Street  
Suite F  
Abbeville 36310-2105  
334-585-6416

## **Houston**

Farm Center Bldg.  
1699 Ross Clark Cir.  
Suite 4  
Dothan 36301  
334-794-4108

## **Jackson**

County Office Bldg.  
16003 Al. Hwy. 35  
P.O. Box 906  
Scottsboro 35768  
256-574-2143

## **Jefferson**

County Extension Office  
2121 Building  
8th Ave. N, Suite 1700  
Birmingham 35203-2387  
205-325-5342

## **Lamar**

281 Columbus Ave.  
P.O. Box 567  
Vernon 35592-0567  
205-695-7139

## **Lauderdale**

Courthouse Basement  
Room 1  
200 South Court Street  
P.O. Box 773  
Florence 35631  
256-760-5860



[www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)

## **Lawrence**

County Ag. Center  
13075 ALA-157, Suite 6  
Moulton 35650  
256-974-2464

## **Lee**

County Ag. Center  
Suite 4  
600 S. 7th Street  
Opelika 36801  
334-749-3353

## **Limestone**

Market Street Bldg.  
1109 W. Market Street  
Suite A  
Athens 35611  
256-232-5510

## **Lowndes**

Courthouse Annex Bldg.  
125 Tuskeena Street  
Room 125  
P.O. Box 456  
Hayneville 36040  
334-548-2315

## **Macon**

207 N. Main Street  
P.O. Box 830629  
Tuskegee 36083-0629  
334-727-0340

## **Madison**

Stone Ag. Center  
819 Cook Ave.  
Huntsville 35801  
256-532-1578

## **Marengo**

Co. Office Bldg.  
101 N. Shiloh, Suite 100  
Linden 36748  
334-295-5959

## **Marion**

Courthouse, Room 174  
Military St. & Bexar Ave.  
P.O. Box 400  
Hamilton 35570-0400  
205-921-3551

## **Marshall**

424 Blount Ave.  
Suite G21  
Guntersville 35976-1132  
256-582-2009

## **Mobile**

Archer Ag. Center  
1070 Schillinger Rd. N  
Mobile 36608-5298  
251-574-8445

## **Monroe**

USDA Service Center  
334 Ag. Drive, Suite 104  
P.O. Box 686  
Monroeville 36461  
251-575-3477

## **Montgomery**

Courthouse Annex II  
125 Washington Ave.  
Montgomery 36104-4247  
334-265-0233

## **Morgan**

3120 Hwy. 36 W  
Suite B  
Hartselle 35640-2406  
256-773-2549

## **Perry**

208 W. Green Street  
P.O. Drawer 540  
Marion 36756  
334-683-6888

## **Pickens**

Service Center Bldg.  
155 Reform Street  
Room 300  
P.O. Box 271  
Carrollton 35447  
205-367-8148

## **Pike**

306 S. Three Notch Street  
Troy 36081  
334-566-0985

## **Randolph**

1 Main Street South  
Courthouse, 2nd Floor  
P.O. Box 227  
Wedowee 36278  
256-357-2841

## **Russell**

Courthouse Annex  
508 14th Street  
P.O. Drawer 1128  
Phenix City 36868-1128  
334-298-6845

## **St. Clair**

1815 Cogswell Ave.  
#103  
Pell City 35125  
205-338-9416

## **Shelby**

Co. Ag. Building  
54 Kelley Lane  
P.O. Box 1606  
Columbiana 35051  
205-669-6763

## **Sumter**

24 Washington Street  
2nd Floor  
P.O. Drawer H  
Livingston 35470  
205-652-9501

## **Talladega**

132 N. Court Street  
Talladega 35160  
256-362-6187

## **Tallapoosa**

Courthouse Basement  
125 N. Broadnax Street  
Room 23  
Dadeville 36853  
256-825-1050

## **Tuscaloosa**

2513 7th Street  
Co. Courthouse Annex  
Tuscaloosa 35401  
205-349-4630

## **Walker**

1501 N. Airport Road  
Jasper 35504  
205-221-3392

## **Washington**

Turner Hall, Court Sq.  
P.O. Box 280  
Chatom 36518  
251-847-2295

## **Wilcox**

Courthouse Annex  
Suite 117  
12 Water Street  
Camden 36726  
334-682-4289

## **Winston**

Courthouse Annex  
Courthouse Square  
P.O. Box 69  
Double Springs 35553  
205-489-5376