1862 Congress creates the land-grant university system to make higher education more accessible to the average citizen through research in agriculture and the mechanical arts. Alabama’s first land-grant college is established at what later becomes Auburn University.

1881 Booker T. Washington moves to Tuskegee and sets the stage for off-campus education. Information he gathers will soon become the core of the “school on wheels” offered through what is now Tuskegee University.

1887 Congress creates Agricultural Experiment Stations at land-grant colleges to conduct research to improve farming methods.

1890 Congress grants land to institutions educating black citizens.

1906 The first four county demonstration agents begin working in Alabama, taking information to farmers to make their operations more efficient and profitable. Tom Monroe Campbell of Tuskegee Institute is appointed the nation’s first black Extension agent.

1909 The first corn and tomato clubs, forerunners of 4-H, are organized in Tuscaloosa and Calhoun Counties to teach farm boys and girls advanced farming methods.

1914 The Smith-Lever Act enables states to establish statewide Cooperative Extension programs through their land-grant colleges to coordinate the education being delivered to the people by the demonstration agents.

1923 Extension launches WMAV, one of the nation’s first educational broadcast stations.

1939 Extension showcases its contributions to scientific farming in Alabama through a series of murals. This Historical Panorama of Alabama Agriculture is commissioned for the 1939 Alabama State Fair.

1971 A new Extension program is established at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville to serve 12 north Alabama counties.

1986 Extension formally dedicates the Alabama 4-H Youth Development Center in Columbiana.

1995 The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is created and Alabama becomes the first state to combine the Extension programs from its “1862” and “1890” land-grant universities, Auburn and Alabama A&M, into a unified statewide system, with Tuskegee University as partner.

2004 The Coosa River Science School opens to expand environmental and outdoor education experiences connecting people to their natural world.

2006 ACES acquires a self-contained mobile Internet trailer for responding to emergencies and delivering Extension programs.

2012 Cooperative Extension marks the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act, which established land-grant universities to educate citizens in agriculture, home economics, mechanical arts, and other practical professions.

Today Alabama Extension touches the lives of millions of Alabamians through a network of 987 permanent or temporary employees in 67 county offices, three university campuses, urban centers, research facilities, and remote videoconferencing sites across the state.
June 30, 2012

Dear Friends,

Responding to the needs of the people is what Alabama Extension does best.

After comprehensive studies to determine the critical needs facing Alabamians today, we identified six areas where Extension would focus our efforts in the coming years. And then we went to work.

Each page tucked in this folder represents one of the focus areas. Look for the opportunities that Extension identified and then read about the impact of our efforts. Learn about both our immediate and continuing response to recent disasters in the state—the 2011 tornadoes and the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill—with everything from mobile Internet access to information on chain saw safety to job search tips.

Today Extension professionals with Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities—working together as the cover image illustrates—continue the 150-year land-grant tradition of providing the best in research-based educational programs to benefit individuals, communities, and families.

Our efforts reflect that we respect our past, accept and adapt to the current situation, and position ACES to prosper in the future. We thank you for your support and invite you to enjoy this report.

Sincerely,

Gary Lème  Virginia Caples

Director  1890 Administrator

www.aces.edu/impact
In calm times, Extension is busy preparing communities, businesses, and individuals for all phases of disaster—prevention and protection, response, and mitigation. Following disaster, Extension offers just-in-time practical information in response to needs of survivors. After the devastating tornadoes of 2011, Extension personnel helped families, friends, and neighbors cut down trees, remove debris, collect salvageable items, and much more. Extension also continued assistance to those affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

**Opportunity** Offer broad assistance and support to the survivors of the 177 tornadoes that struck Alabama in 2011.

**Impact** ACES helped **survivors connect** with agencies providing assistance, directed volunteers, coordinated distribution of donated items, and worked with Farm Service Agency representatives to assess agricultural damage; addressed needs of timber producers (204,590 acres were affected, with an assessed value of $228,360,576) and poultry producers (more than 3.2 million chickens were killed and 700 poultry houses were damaged or destroyed); provided just-in-time education to those in need; and conducted poststorm tree management workshops. Extension professionals remain involved in long-term recovery efforts.

**Impact** Agents used the **ACES website**, which was updated daily, to access **information and educational resources**. ACES cooperated with the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, Alabama Department of Emergency Management, Alabama Cattlemen’s Association, Alabama Farmers Federation, Alabama Poultry and Egg Association, USDA Farm Services Agency, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Southern Regional Extension Forestry.

**Impact** Cullman County professionals, including teachers, health care providers, public safety officers, and private citizens used Extension’s **mobile Internet unit** to charge cell phones, check e-mail, submit disaster assistance applications, conduct work, and take stress-relief breaks. After four days in Cullman, the unit was moved to Marion County, where high school students used it to conduct research and complete assignments until the school year ended.

**Opportunity** Direct youth in ways to help their communities recover from the 2011 storm damage while providing young people with opportunities for service and learning.

**Impact** Baldwin County **4-H’ers** collected and delivered personal items and school supplies to Hackleburg; 4-H’ers in North Alabama helped a fellow 4-H’er after his home was severely damaged. 4-H agents also volunteered in Tuscaloosa and other areas to provide educational programs to children while their parents worked on their damaged homes. Out-of-state 4-H’ers collected donations of feed, hay, and supplies for Marion County.

You cannot know how much our citizens appreciate Extension for providing this service.

Hanceville mayor Kenneth Nail, commenting on the portable Wi-Fi hotspot deployed in Cullman County just two days after the storms
Opportunity  Reestablish urban canopies.

Impact  ACES initiated Canopy by Design, a four-county (Cullman, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison) pilot project focused on enabling limited-resource communities to make research-based decisions about tree selections, site preparation and design, and tree planting. Using the expertise of the Alabama Master Gardener Program, the project offers non-Master Gardener participants training in tree selection and establishment.

Opportunity  Educate Alabamians in preparing for disasters.

Impact  Extension urban professionals participated with more than 40 exhibitors at the Disaster Preparedness Fair held in November at the Alabama A&M University Agribition Center. Topics included emergency contacts, disaster kits and family escape plans, food safety, and pet care. The Teens Making an Impact youth development program distributed clothing and household cleaning supplies to an estimated 200 families affected by the 2011 storms.

Opportunity  Help the economy of the Alabama Gulf region affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill improve and the area achieve economic diversification and sustainability. Help families begin to recover financially.

Impact  ACES developed four workshops attended by 807 individuals—Oil Spill Training for Homeowners, Financial Stress and Credit Repair, Returning to Work, and Home Budgeting. With a $93,006 grant—part of the $110 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Program for Shrimpers—ACES also developed a 12-hour small business workshop to train shrimpers in four business areas. If all 215 participants complete all phases of the program, the initial economic impact to Baldwin and Mobile Counties will be $1,932,216.

Impact  Extension partnered with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium to train 7,000 peer listeners; to develop with BP a training program for homeowners to teach them how to protect people, pets, and property when cleaning up oil; to organize a seafood working group to provide guidance and coordination of seafood safety, fisheries closures, and approaches to reopening closed fisheries; to provide legal explanations, translation services, damage claim assistance, and other services; and to form a team of four task forces to address oil spill issues.

Extension will bring its multidisciplinary approach to help the community deal with the societal, economic, and environmental impacts of the oil spill disaster. All of these affect the region’s overall sustainability. We are committed to helping people find solutions that will help return our Alabama coastal counties to economically thriving communities with restored natural habitats.

Paul Brown
Extension Associate Director
Sustainability involves living and working in ways that address present-day needs without eroding the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Extension agricultural and forestry programs emphasize sustainability in the following ways and many more.

**Opportunity** Encourage use of integrated pest management (IPM) to control insect pests on the state’s vegetable crops, worth more than $17 to $20 million with production exceeding 18,000 total acres.

**Impact** Extension’s Statewide Vegetable Entomology IPM Campaign 2009 to 2011 resulted in greater participation and diversity at Extension meetings where attendance increased more than 650 percent. Farmers using IPM recommendations averaged $3,550 cost savings, or $246 per acre. Alabama Extension’s vegetable IPM program was recently recognized by the Southern IPM Center as one of the most impactful Extension IPM campaigns in the southeast United States. Strong partnerships with agencies such as the Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Alabama Crop Advisors Association, and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives intensify the outreach.

**Opportunity** Meet the needs of forestland owners and forestry consultants for an easy, affordable way to use GPS and GIS technology.

**Impact** Extension developed GPS 101: Low-Cost Alternatives for Better Land Management, hands-on training in using low-cost alternative GPS and GIS technologies. In the last two years, 214 have attended the statewide trainings, with 13 percent and 6 percent purchasing GPS and GIS software, respectively, and 69 percent of purchasers using this technology in forestland management in Alabama. Over time, these participants will realize savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars and will benefit the environment by using less herbicide and fertilizer. The program has just won a national remote sensing and precision agriculture Search for Excellence Award.

**Opportunity** Develop a demonstration and outreach forest to provide forestry education and recreation.

**Impact** The creation of a 20-acre demonstration forest on the Auburn University campus has resulted in several timber stand improvements on land that was overgrown and unsightly. Thousands of visitors learned about forestry and forest management from the ten interpretive signs on the site. More than 300 elementary students attended a forestry field day. The project received a Silver Level Award for Youth and Teacher Education Programming from Southern Region Extension Forestry.

**Opportunity** Reduce devastating damage by fall armyworms on forage crops and increase knowledge of key forage production practices.

**Impact** Extension and the Alabama Cattlemen’s Association worked together to help farmers save more than $800,000 with early detection and elimination of fall armyworms in hayfields and pastures.

Vegetable production in Alabama is worth more than $20 million. On-farm interviews indicate that commercial farmers make about a $246 per acre gain by using IPM practices recommended by ACES.
Opportunity  Develop agroforestry programming to meet changing needs of forest landowners.

Impact  Extension and Auburn University collaborated with the National Agroforestry Center to develop a video on silvopasture management that has had widespread use. Southern Region Extension Forestry honored this project with a Gold Level Award. Extension educators developed and participated in a webinar, "Reaching Out to Forest Landowners." ACES partnered with experts from the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Tennessee to highlight the land management needs of nonindustrial private forest landowners.

Opportunity  Encourage the use of renewable fuels and lubricants to decrease reliance on imported oil.

Impact  After participating in an ACES-conducted renewable energy workshop, Alabama Fleet Managers reported a 2 percent biodiesel use increase.

Opportunity  Help ranchers increase the value of heifer calves to equal that of their steer mates.

Impact  The Herd Builder project produced gross sales of more than $3.7 million by retaining superior genetics of calves.

Opportunity  Help farmers and landowners manage wild pigs.

Impact  When Babe Turns to Beast workshops educate Alabamians on the management of feral pigs, which are now found in all 67 counties and which threaten crops and forestland.

Opportunity  Help small-scale and limited-resource farmers increase the availability of a number of multicultural and organic food products in an efficient and profitable way.

Impact  The urban program’s Alabama Ethnic Food Security Network conducted 17 outreach activities focusing on topics including the sustainable production and marketing of goat, lamb, grass-fed beef and chicken, and specialty vegetables. More than 570 small-scale and limited-resource farmers from Alabama and parts of adjoining states attended the educational activities. As a result of the activities, 77 farmers gained knowledge of pasture-raised chickens, grass-fed beef cattle, and specialty vegetable production, and 393 goat and sheep producers reported increased profitability rates ranging from 5 to 18 percent.

Opportunity  Expand knowledge of and practices to improve production of agronomic crops.

Impact  Extension efforts helped expand public and private interest in using geospatial technologies; developed a herbicide resistance management program to detect and limit the spread of herbicide resistant weeds to help combat the potential loss of $8 million per year to cotton farmers; and established a statewide season-long Asian soybean rust monitoring program that provides an early warning system for soybean growers. ACES efforts also led to more than $4.5 million savings through education and information on the threat of herbicide resistance; increased interest in and adoption of integrated pest management; and on-farm, soybean, small grain, field corn, and cotton trials that helped producers select appropriate varieties that increased income several million dollars for the state.
Many of Extension’s efforts to improve health and wellness are focusing on obesity, the state’s number one health problem, directly related to a number of chronic conditions. Special emphasis is on reversing the trend of childhood obesity. Extension is working to help Alabamians eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and engage in more physical activity, such as walking. We are also advancing policies to promote statewide health and wellness.

**Opportunity** Promote healthy living among young people, adults, and families with a focus on youth and limited-resource audiences. More than 68 percent of Alabama’s population is overweight, a condition that can lead to costly illnesses (averaging more than $50 million annually for every 100,000 citizens in high-rate cities).

**Impact** Through Alabama 4-H Health Rocks! Extension urban educators focus on addressing the negative impact of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use among teens in urban communities through educational training in basic life skills. Early intervention has proven to have a greater impact by steering a child’s life path away from problems and toward positive behaviors. In 2011, more than 3,300 youth were active participants in the program.

**Impact** Limited-resource youth, adults, and senior citizens in Alabama’s urban areas are high-risk audiences for developing chronic diseases related to nutrition and exercise. The **Community Health Aerobics Motivational Program Initiating Optimal Nutrition (CHAMPION)**, an Extension urban program, helps to combat those risks by educating individuals about good nutrition habits and the importance of incorporating physical activity into their daily lives. More than 6,000 youth and adults participated in the program. Of that group, 227 adults joined a six-week weight management effort and lost a total of 360 pounds.

**Impact** Alabama has hosted an annual **Diabetes and Obesity Conference** since 2001, addressing issues related to managing childhood obesity in both home and school settings. Continuing education hours are offered for nurses, dietitians, family and consumer science professionals, and social workers. These well-attended conferences have addressed pre-diabetes, healthy cooking, foot care, eye care, gum care, supplements, herbal nutrition, counting carbohydrates, and much more.

**Impact** Alabama Extension’s **Junior Master Gardener Programs** and **JMG Day Camps** help youth learn about plants and gardening as well as the value of growing their own fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Students learn to try new foods and cook with herbs, such as the ones they grow in their own gardens.

**Impact** With an interesting variety of games, activities, and lessons, Extension’s **Just Move Alabama** physical fitness program encourages young people to play outside more, get regular sleep, have fun with their families, and eat more fruits and vegetables.

"Negative effects of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco usage can cause life-altering problems for our youth. The Health Rocks! program provides curriculum-based training that empowers youth to make positive life choices."

Edna Coleman, urban youth development specialist
Impact Body Quest: Food of the Warrior, an innovative Nutrition Education Program initiative empowering third graders, is reaching more than 2,000 Alabama youth with anime-style characters and cutting-edge technology. The effort is funded by Extension and the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

“We quickly realized that the best way to engage kids was with the coolest technology we could find. That led to Extension’s developing one of the first and best nutrition and health apps that students use on the Apple iPad. Alabama is truly leading the way on this project.”

Sondra Parmer, NEP project manager

Impact PROSPER (PRomoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience), an outreach effort of the urban educators, develops long-term partnerships to help youth, enhance parenting skills, and reduce substance abuse, youth behavior problems, and lifetime STD rates. PROSPER has worked with 995 students and 97 families. The program has an 86 percent graduation rate and up to a $9.60 return in reduced public expenses per dollar spent.

Impact FACES (Family Advocacy Through Caring Engagement Strategies) of Extension’s urban program promotes family mealtime to increase interaction and togetherness for long-term positive benefits, including better grades, reduced drug and alcohol use, and healthier lifestyles. FACES reached more than 500 individuals in 15 counties. Its Family Day programs increased family interactions by more than 2,500 hours.

Impact 4-H TGIF (Teens Getting Involved for the Future) provides sexual abstinence education and mentoring, counseling, and adult supervision programs for 6th through 9th graders in fourteen Alabama counties and outreach activities in community-based settings; more than 65,000 youth have participated since 1995.

Opportunity Help individuals and families identify and address housing-based health and safety concerns related to indoor air quality, asthma and allergies, mold and moisture, carbon monoxide, lead, drinking water, hazardous household products, pesticides, and home safety.

Impact Since 2006, Alabama Extension has provided national coordination for the Healthy Homes Partnership, an interagency initiative between Housing and Urban Development and USDA-NIFA. Part of the effort is the distribution of the handbook “Help Yourself to a Healthy Home” available in Arabic, Bosnian, English, Hmong, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Also available is a version designed for tribal audiences. Exhibits, coloring books, bookmarks, and a website also support the program.

Impact Radon causes an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States every year. Extension has led the radon education effort for Alabama since 1986. To date, almost 2,000 homes have had radon-resistant systems installed, and 4,600 new homes have been built radon resistant. More than 90,000 Alabama youth have learned about radon and its health risks through the Alabama Radon Education Program.
The decline of the overall median income, high unemployment, community disasters, the mortgage foreclosure crisis, retirement planning with our aging population, and other financial challenges have caused Alabamians to take a closer look at their financial resources and their need to better understand financial matters. Last year Extension worked with thousands of individuals educating them on ways to overcome financial crises, manage resources and reduce debt, improve ability to handle opportunities and meet challenges at all stages of life, protect assets and personal identity, expand business enterprises, decrease stress, and improve financial well-being. Following are just a few examples of how ACES is helping Alabamians, with a special focus on limited-resource families and individuals.

Opportunity Help individuals avoid financial risks, indebtedness, and bankruptcy. Help accelerate economic growth and address economic concerns as Alabamians try to rebound from the recent economic crisis.

Impact Consumers Score with Credit in Check through Responsible Spending, an outreach of Extension urban educators, helped more than 478 limited-resource clients learn about checking accounts, family spending plans, credit management, credit ratings, and savings accounts. At the completion of the financial literacy training, 54 percent of participants knew how to obtain their credit scores, 44 percent understood the advantages and disadvantages of credit cards, and 42 percent planned to create a family spending plan.

Opportunity Assist potential first-time homeowners or homeowners at risk of foreclosure enact long- and short-term financial plans and make smart housing choices.

Impact The Smart Home Buying Foreclosure Prevention program and Realizing the American Dream workshops, conducted by Extension urban professionals in metropolitan areas of the state, helped 94 families learn more about credit, savings, budgeting, loss mitigation, home buying, and saving. Families and individuals were trained in prevention and buying strategies based on best practices for credit, lending, and planned spending.

Opportunity Offer job search solutions to individuals and families in Alabama’s struggling economy where unemployment rates are still greater than 9 percent.

Impact Promoting Readiness for Employment Possibilities (PREP), an Extension urban program, helps individuals improve job search skills. In the 2011 launch year, 387 participated in PREP programs and services where they developed or revised resumes, completed job applications, and learned to search for jobs online and participate in technology-driven interviews. To date, 11 individuals have reported finding employment as a result of the PREP program.
Opportunity Upgrade and uplift the state’s urban and nontraditional audiences’ economic capacity by engaging youth in activities and training.

Impact In 2011, Welcome to the Real World offered more than 2,600 youth training opportunities to simulate economic deterioration and direction as well as training in career and education planning. As part of Extension’s urban educational outreach, the program stresses partnerships with local organizations and promotes family and community engagement in career and educational planning for future leaders.

Opportunity Help senior citizens, especially underserved older adults, families, and caregivers, with legal, health, and financial issues.

Impact Through the Successful Aging Initiative, Extension urban professionals made more than 9,000 face-to-face contacts and saved participating consumers more than $200,000 in combined legal and preventive health care savings.

Opportunity Educate youth and adults about the realities of budgeting, investing, entrepreneurship, personal finances, debt, savings, wealth building, and job hunting.

Impact ACES Reality Check is a financial education simulation that allows youth to experience the realities of budgeting in an interactive and enjoyable way. Extension conducted 118 simulations reaching 8,475 youth and 1,563 adults. In written evaluations, the majority of youth indicate that they understand the importance of making wise choices, budgeting, saving, and staying in school as a result of participating in the program. Youth Learning About Money Management combines the Reality Check simulation with seminars on budgeting, investing, entrepreneurship, and other financial management topics. Extension reached 180 youth through this program, which was supported by a $10,000 grant from the Alabama Securities Commission.

Impact Through the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE), Extension educators train teachers to incorporate the NEFE High School Financial Education Curriculum. Focused on basic personal finance skills relevant to preteens, teens, and young adults, the curriculum is designed to lay a solid foundation for financial independence and future financial decisions. Five training sessions were conducted and 279 high school educators and volunteers were trained.

Impact Extension participated in America Saves during Alabama Saves Week, a yearly effort to increase awareness of the need to save money, reduce debt, and build wealth with a primary focus on taking financial action. Activities are conducted through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, companies, government agencies, educational institutions, religious institutions, community groups, and others.

Opportunity Help consumers become smarter shoppers.

Impact The Smart Food Shopper program helps consumers be better shoppers by making and sticking to shopping lists, using coupons, and looking for unit prices. More than 500 individuals participated in this program.
Technological advances and global competition require a knowledgeable, skilled, and adaptable workforce. At the same time, many communities face natural and manmade disasters, industry closings, and other economic woes. Extension works in a variety of ways to help citizens and communities recover from losses and prepare for new opportunities.

**Opportunity** Help improve the economy of the Alabama Gulf region, which was severely affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

**Impact** Through the Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI), Extension is working with the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama to develop a strategic economic development plan for the eight Alabama counties most directly affected by the oil spill—Baldwin, Mobile, Washington, Etowah, Clarke, Monroe, Conecuh, and Choctaw. The primary purpose of the project, funded by the Economic Development Administration, is to create a regional long-term plan to achieve economic diversification and sustainability. It has also demonstrated the value of working together beyond geographic, political, and organizational boundaries.

**Impact** Extension partnered with Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant college programs and other groups to address regional concerns facing coastal communities and the environment. Four task forces address oil spill issues for damage assessment, family stress and financial management, food safety and consumer confidence, and oil spill communications.

**Impact** Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and Extension have supported research leading to an increase of 500 pounds per acre for inland shrimp farms with a total economic impact of $175,000 per year.

**Impact** Along with the Business Support Center (BSC) in Gulf Shores and in Bayou La Batre, Extension helped shrimpers who wanted to leave the industry after the oil spill to be retrained so they could move into other occupations.

**Impact** Extension partnered with several organizations to develop an online database that allows people to upload or query oil spill research and monitoring activities. The database, which has been accessed by more than 5,700 unique visitors, includes 200 activities.

I am so proud of your accomplishments, but I am not surprised that you reached your goal! Your 95 percent placement into employment is outstanding.

Brinda W. Barrett, Alabama Career Center, speaking of the BSC/Extension partnership
Opportunity Work to provide funds to help community leaders finance ideas for projects that will enhance local community, economic, and workforce development.

Impact ECDI administers the Extension-funded Rural Alabama Initiative (RAI) minigrant program to support local community and economic development projects throughout Alabama. Since its inception in 2006, RAI has funded 136 projects ($1.25 million). More than 60 percent of these projects focused on workforce development or youth leadership and entrepreneurship.

Opportunity Equip individuals with tools and training needed to enter the workforce.

Impact Career Countdown is an urban Extension readiness program designed to help participants determine where their interests best fit into the workplace. During 2011, approximately 594 young adults were served. Programs were conducted in Madison, Morgan, Limestone, Jefferson, Montgomery, Macon, Houston, and Mobile Counties. Of the program participants who responded to the post survey, 28 percent created an education plan, 31 percent created a career plan, 22 percent reported improvement in school, and 21 percent reported improvement in academic performance.

Impact Urban Extension’s Career Exploration and Education Planning workshop attendees created educational and career plans and improved their schoolwork and academic performance. The Virtual Business Development program sought to increase minority business participation and signed up 112 businesses and provided information on business development to 400 individuals through MinorityMALL.com.

Opportunity Provide a strong community leadership development program to enhance the leadership, connections, and engagement needed for a successful local workforce.

Impact ECDI manages the Alabama Community Leadership Network (ACLN), which serves as a link among all community leadership programs throughout Alabama (55 adult programs and 25 youth programs). More than 1,500 local leaders are trained through this leadership network each year.

Opportunity Educate and train residents and community leaders in every Alabama county about the social and economic benefits and applications of broadband technology.

Impact Through ECDI, Extension is conducting a $1.2 million project, Connecting Alabama: Boosting Broadband to Bridge the Digital Divide, to address these challenges. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Connecting Alabama
- Computer skills and broadband training to as many as 11,500 residents over the life of the project
- Approximately 115,000 training hours focusing on online connectivity, career building, entrepreneurship and business development, community resources, and education
- Partners: BEACON Consortium of six state community colleges, including historically black colleges

Opportunity Facilitate continuous training and lifelong learning to help workers survive as technological advances and global competition increase the pace of change for today’s businesses.

Impact ECDI, the state’s leading organization for economic development education and training, conducts the Intensive Economic Development Training Course, which has trained more than 1,000 state and local economic developers during its 27-year Extension history. Most of the state’s leaders in workforce development are graduates.

Opportunity Promote the growth and expansion of Alabama’s tourism and travel industry, which creates thousands of jobs in the state. This sector represents about 5.5 percent of the state’s gross domestic product and 8.6 percent of nonagricultural employment.

Impact ECDI conducts more than 100 consultation sessions each year in support of tourism-related entrepreneurs, primarily for rural and agritourism initiatives. ECDI also promotes education and training in rural tourism through the Intensive Economic Development Training Course and sponsorship of an annual Alabama-Mississippi tourism conference.

Opportunity Educate and train residents and community leaders in every Alabama county about the social and economic benefits and applications of broadband technology.

Impact Through ECDI, Extension is conducting a $1.2 million project, Connecting Alabama: Boosting Broadband to Bridge the Digital Divide, to address these challenges. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce.
Some of the most diverse landscapes in the United States are in the state of Alabama—and they provide habitat for the nation’s highest number of aquatic species and among the highest number of land species. Extension focuses on increasing citizen empowerment to lead local sustainability efforts, advances solutions for complex problems, and encourages personal responsibility for the environment.

**Opportunity** Inform landowners where to get the best science-based technical information and assistance to manage their land resources.

**Impact** More than 1,000 landowners have been reached through a web video developed by the Alabama Technical Assistance Team (ALTAT) to showcase the roles of Extension, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Alabama Forestry Commission, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in assisting landowners in managing their forests, wildlife, and agricultural lands. See [Alabama Landowner Technical Assistance Team](http://www.aces.edu/impact) on YouTube.

**Opportunity** Provide environmental and conservation resources for Alabama’s K-12 educators (public and private) and others working with youth.

**Impact** The [Alabama Outdoor Classroom](http://www.aces.edu/impact) and [Discovering Our Heritage](http://www.aces.edu/impact) programs have had a substantial impact across Alabama. In 2011 alone, 20,000 students enjoyed environmental education experiences through their schools’ outdoor classroom programs.

**Opportunity** Train landowners, forestry consultants, and state agency personnel on how to identify and control cogongrass, an extremely invasive weed that threatens Alabama’s forest industry.

**Impact** Extension provided training, workshops, and eradication and control demonstrations across the state and collaborated with the [Alabama Cogongrass Control Center](http://www.aces.edu/impact), serving as technical advisors to the $6.2 million three-year effort. More than 2,722 people in Alabama and the Southeast were trained to identify and control cogongrass. By the end of 2011, more than 24,000 patches of cogongrass had been reported in Alabama, and more than 11,800 had been treated.

**Opportunity** Encourage sustainable habits of environmental stewardship.

**Impact** Each year, Extension’s urban educators host a [Green Living Expo](http://www.aces.edu/impact) where they provide educational resources to challenge youth and adults to think critically about global environmental concerns and solutions. In 2011, more than 600 participants learned about recycling, e-cycling, and much more.

**Impact** [Home*A*Syst](http://www.aces.edu/impact), an urban Extension program, helps homeowners understand that their actions are crucial to the protection of their health and the environment. In 2011, 75 percent of the program’s 300 participants showed increased knowledge concerning low, medium, and high risks in and around the home.

[www.aces.edu/impact](http://www.aces.edu/impact)
Opportunity Educate Alabamians about landscape maintenance. Homeowners use ten times more chemical fertilizers and pesticides than farmers use. If applied improperly, these chemicals can pollute lakes, streams, and even drinking water.

Impact The **Alabama Smart Yards** program encourages wise use of all natural resources to make every bit of every resource count. ASY programs and workshops have reached 24,800 participants. A survey of 487 individuals indicated that 92 percent learned to identify common pests and/or beneficial garden insects and 88 percent learned new pest management strategies.

Opportunity Offer Alabama youth outdoor experiences to supplement classroom science and environmental education.

Impact The **Coosa River Science School** at the Alabama 4-H Center in Columbiana allows youth to learn about the environment through experience. In 2011, 2,089 students participated in the school where they learned to make better decisions about the environment, understand the importance of plants and animals, learn about the connection between growing food and the environment, enhance their problem-solving skills, and appreciate the importance of clean water.

Impact Through the **Youth Exploring Environmental Science (YEeS)** program, Extension urban professionals encouraged 5,132 young people to become better environmental stewards. Most participants indicated a desire to increase their knowledge of environmental concepts and to practice better stewardship including picking up litter, starting compost piles, and recycling.

“It was so much fun watching the process with the worms, the newspaper, and the apples. It was also really fun when I got to teach my family.”

“Thank you for teaching us new things about the environment and its soils. You have made science twice as much fun.”

Opportunity Educate, train, raise public awareness, and influence public policies about safe environmental practices for the management of e-waste in Alabama and around the world.

Impact Urban Extension staff partnered with Alabama A&M University researchers and educators to establish the **E-Waste Institute**. In 2011, the institute collaborated with local agencies to educate the public and to recycle or dispose of 135 tons of electronic waste, including 800 pounds of cartridges and 300 pounds of cardboard boxes. In addition, more than 2,500 program participants increased their understanding of e-waste environmental issues, and nearly 1,100 began to recycle and properly dispose of e-waste.

Opportunity Increase public awareness of the importance of the Gulf of Mexico as a national treasure in terms of its value to tourism and recreation, oil and gas production, seafood production, shipping and transportation, and other ecosystem services.

Impact Extension works with the **Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant** program to train volunteers, support student and teacher education, and support volunteer stewardship programs at the Environmental Studies Center, Dauphin Island Sea Lab’s Discovery Hall, and the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Lab’s Marine Education Center. More than 108,439 K-12 students, teachers, and others have participated in MASG-supported programs. Oyster gardening volunteers produced more than 17,500 oysters used to restore reefs, and Master Naturalists volunteered more than 700 hours of training involving more than 2,749 coastal residents.
Safe and Secure Food Supply

A safe and secure food supply is essential for the well-being of humans and animals. Extension offers programs for food service workers, food processors, and consumers in an effort to ensure that communities have adequate food supplies that are safe from foodborne illness. We provide consumer education in all aspects of food safety and efficient food dollar management while promoting consumption of more locally produced food and increased access to affordable food in all communities.

Opportunity Train food service workers in the proper handling of food, and help food establishments protect reputations and keep consumers safe.

Impact Extension educators trained 1,113 food service workers, and 83 percent of those taking the ServSafe training course passed the rigid exam for certification. With this certification, food service workers can gain employment as supervisors. ServSafe is accredited by the National Restaurant Association and is the industry standard in food safety. The course teaches food handlers how to safely handle food during storage, cooking, and serving, and it facilitates compliance with new Alabama Department of Public Health FDA Food Code regulations. Inspection scores and food safety standards have risen in those facilities that have completed the ServSafe course.

Opportunity Help producers and food processors add value to their fruits and vegetables.

Impact Extension’s Food Testing and Assistance Program’s Better Process Control School helped producers test their food products to ensure that they qualified for processing under the minimum processing standards for acidified food products. Extension also helped beginning food processors develop nutrition labels for their products. More than 80 food products were tested and more than 60 nutrition facts labels were generated.

Impact Extension helped processors set up businesses and answered food processing questions. Extension collaborated with the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and local processors to create the Chilton Food Innovation Center, a fully equipped industrial kitchen providing local farmers and other aspiring entrepreneurs with opportunities and technical assistance to turn produce that otherwise would have been wasted into value-added products.

I want to see it develop as a small-business incubator that spawns multiple successful businesses that draw from the produce of central Alabama.

Chilton Food Innovation Center board member J. Sam Johnson, who expresses high hope that the center will secure long-term economic benefits for the produce industry

www.aces.edu/impact
Opportunity Help farmers and food processors in Alabama supply the growing demand for safe multicultural and organic meat and vegetable products.

Impact Through the Alabama Ethnic Food Security Network, urban Extension professionals offered a wide range of outreach activities on the safe production of meat goats and sheep, all-natural chickens and beef, and specialty vegetables. As a result of these activities, Alabama farmers and processors became more knowledgeable about methods and technologies that directly affect the safety of a number of ethnic and organic food products.

Opportunity Help organize marketing opportunities for producers to sell cattle with improved genetics.

Impact The Alabama Beef Cattle Improvement Association and ACES personnel helped producers organize four feeder calf sales grossing $10 million. Bull breeders sold 159 bulls to 95 different producers—an effort which is expected to generate an additional $198,200 more farm income via increased weaning weights of calves during the next three years. Producers also sold 44 open and 269 bred replacement heifers netting an additional $50 to $300 a head over market price.

Opportunity Teach youth the importance of community, the rewards of hard work, and the financial and health benefits of growing your own food.

Impact Under the direction of urban Extension educators, youth in the West Gate Community in Decatur, one of Alabama’s metro centers where garden space and fresh produce are limited, planted a community garden as a Teens Making Impact program project. Senior citizens partnered with the youth to make a difference in Morgan County. In addition to the thousands of pounds of produce for community consumption, the garden fostered an Extension partnership including the Decatur General Hospital, Community Action Agency, Boys and Girls Club, the Senior Companion Program, Volunteer Center of Morgan County, and the Foster Grandparents program.

Impact Extension offered a free three-week Junior Master Gardener camp with the theme “Health and Nutrition in the Garden” for 63 eight- to ten-year-olds in Pratt City, one of the areas hardest hit by the 2011 storms. Participants learned about the needs of plants and made a “plant person” to take home and care for. A fresh fruit taste test was also held to encourage youth to try blueberries, strawberries, mangoes, pineapple, and kiwi.

Opportunity Help Alabamians learn to safely preserve fruits and vegetables they grow themselves or purchase in season from local growers or farmers markets.

Impact More than 1,300 individuals, including some from outside the state, participated in 50 Extension programs in food preservation. Extension educators produced numerous articles and publications with basic information and practical tips on food preservation. Extension’s popular Home Food Preservation book has sold countless thousands of copies over many decades and was recently reprinted.
The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

New June 2012, EX-0134

For information about programs, to volunteer, or ask a question, call or go by your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county’s name to find the number.

To reach state headquarters, call Auburn University at (334) 844-4444 or Alabama A&M University at (256) 372-5710. To send a question to your local Extension agent, visit www.aces.edu/questions/. To order publications, videos, or products, visit the Extension store at https://store.aches.edu, call (334) 844-1592, or go to publications@aces.edu.