Direct Line

In early August, Sam Wiggins, Pickens County Extension Coordinator, and volunteer leaders conducted a training session on Farm-City activities for local leaders throughout the state. As I sat in on the session, I reflected on the whole phenomenon of the rural-urban interface. This interdependence sometimes gets glossed over as we become a more urbanized state. Two-thirds of our population now live in urban areas. This trend is projected to continue.

It’s important to remember that many of our current issues directly link the urban and rural areas of our state.

Food safety begins with the production of crops and food animals in rural areas. It continues through the harvesting, transporting, processing, distributing and selling process right on to the family dinner at home or in a restaurant. Each of these steps is linked and must be done in a way to maintain the quality of the food our families eat.

The water each of us drinks and depends on in our daily lives, whether from surface reservoirs, streams or deep wells, is directly linked to how we manage our lawns, gardens, fields and forests. Water movement is not bound by the urban or rural geographic boundaries.

Obviously, many of our activities in town and in the country have the potential to affect our daily lives.

As we expand residential areas, we often build homes in or adjacent to fields, farms and forests, creating a whole set of dynamics. Wildlife that everyone has always admired suddenly becomes a major nuisance. Wildfire becomes a top-level concern. We ask how streets, lots and houses should be laid out to protect wetlands, trees and other important features of the land. What say does a neighbor have regarding what happens on the land, farm or forest next door?

We could discuss many more issues. Most likely everyone in Extension has worked with one of these issues either as a part of his or her job or as an individual. This offers a tremendous potential for our Extension educational programs to serve a need at the local level. It's a year-round process that involves community forums, tours, civic club talks, 4-H meetings and on and on.

Consider some of the events that we lead or participate in that highlight our efforts:

- The Urban-Rural Interface Conference held each year in mid-April at Alabama A&M University provides an excellent forum for examination and presentation of issues associated with the urban-rural interface. Keep this in mind and watch for the announcement early next year of the date and topics. I strongly encourage you to attend and facilitate the participation of your rural and urban leaders.

- Farm-City activities that many of you are quite active with offer the same type of opportunity in the fall of each year. To those of you already involved, thanks for the good work and keep it up. For those not participating, I strongly encourage you to get involved. Identify who your local Farm-City chairperson is and work with him or her.

- As we move our 4-H youth program to community-based, volunteer-delivered activities, we will find that rural-urban interface offers tremendous opportunity for participants to learn about the interconnectedness. These experiences will literally last a lifetime.

Each staff unit is challenged to think through and discuss this important issue at your next staff meeting. Set a plan of action in motion. Involve more volunteers and partners. This will educate our clients and increase awareness of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

A recent front-page article in The Sand Mountain Reporter welcoming Juana Macias, Marshall County Extension agent, to the Sand Mountain area and to Extension brings to mind...continued on page 2
our commitment to work with the Hispanic communities in our state. Juana joins the many others in ACES designing and delivering nutrition, youth and family programs targeted to our new residents.

Just reviewing the recent success stories, I see that a number of counties are developing programs to better serve their growing Hispanic populations. For example, Franklin County Extension is spearheading a Hispanic coalition. The coalition’s goal is to offer a single starting point for Hispanic residents to access a variety of services. In the spring, more than 500 Hispanic Morgan County residents attended the Education Fiesta held by Morgan County Extension. People could get more information on topics ranging from IRS tax forms to Extension publications — all in Spanish.

Many thanks to everyone in Extension for their commitment to provide informal educational opportunities to the Hispanic communities as well as other minority and underserved audiences.

A reminder to keep October 1 open on your calendar. We will unveil the ACES Vision and Strategic Plan at the Scrushy Conference Center in Birmingham. Expect more details in the near future.

Congratulations to Wendi Williams and the editorial board of Metro News! The Web-based newsletter is celebrating its first anniversary. The newsletter has done an excellent job of promoting Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs as well as providing timely information to clients.

Our effort to let people know all that Extension does and how our programs benefit them continues to show results. Recently, the St. Clair Times ran an editorial commending St. Clair 4-H’ers, volunteer agents and Donna Dickinson for their success at 4-H District Round-Up. The summer 2002 issue of Landscapes, a publication of the Federal Land Bank of South Alabama, devoted five pages to ACES and Cooperative Extension. My thanks to all whose efforts put ACES in the media spotlight in a positive way.

Program Highlight: 4-H Environmental Stewardship

Alabama has one of the best environmental stewardship programs in the nation. If you don’t believe it, just ask people from other states.

Alabama 4-H’ers have won the national title five times in wildlife judging and 11 times in forestry judging.

This year the Tuscaloosa County 4-H Forestry Judging Team won its seventh national championship at the 2002 National 4-H Forestry Judging Competition, keeping the title in Alabama for another year. Talladega County won the national title in 2001.

The Coosa County 4-H Wildlife Team won third place at the National Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Invitational. The point spread at this year’s competition was very close, with only an eight-point difference between Coosa County, representing Alabama, and the national champions, Virginia.

But this success at national competitions is just one aspect of the total success of Alabama’s 4-H Environmental Stewardship program.

Currently, the program reaches more than 19,000 youth with diverse learning experiences in areas such as land management, water management, outdoor recreation and the urban environment.

Emily Kling, Extension 4-H natural resources specialist, says there is a key element that makes the overall program work.

“Partnerships. We could not work with the number of young people that we do or provide support to the program without our partners,” says Kling.

She characterizes the partnerships in several categories. Trained volunteer leaders are the first set of partners.

“They provide leadership for special interest clubs and serve as team coaches, to name just a few of their roles,” says Kling. “Without these additional adults, our program would not reach nearly as many young people.”

Warren McCord, state 4-H program leader, agrees.

“County agents only have so much time,” says McCord. “Volunteers help agents reach more young people with these programs.”
Other partnerships that Kling says are critical to the success of the environmental stewardship program are donors. The Joe Brady Trust established a substantial endowment in the 1980s to support 4-H forestry activities while Thompson Tractor Co. created an endowment in 1996 with an investment of $100,000 to support Alabama 4-H's environmental stewardship programs. In addition to endowments, annual contributions from corporations and environmental resource-affiliated groups provide valuable support. For example, the Alabama chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation makes a generous annual contribution of $5,000.

Kling stresses that private individuals make important contributions to fostering environmental resource programs. These people make monetary contributions as well as in-kind contributions such as products and services.

“Our donors have been very generous over the years,” says Kling. “Their support has really allowed us to expand training of our volunteer leaders and to broaden our program efforts from focusing on competition to including more issue-oriented content. While we do enjoy considerable support, we do have additional areas that would benefit from financial support. With additional support, we could expand scholarships and recognition programs as well as expand curriculum development.”

Other vital partnerships are those between Alabama 4-H and governmental agencies and private organizations that also have strong ties to natural resources.

Alabama’s 4-H environmental stewardship effort includes a shooting sports program, environmental issue-oriented projects and an environmental stewardship leadership conference in addition to the forestry and wildlife components.

Success Stories Highlight Variety of Program Efforts

Extension specialists and agents have submitted more than 340 brief accounts of program efforts, ranging from farmers markets to character education. These success stories will be used to inform policy makers and the general public of the positive impacts ACES is having on Alabama communities. Thirty success stories have already been sent to selected legislators and congressmen, and more will be sent in the months ahead.

Sam Fowler, Extension specialist, program planning, evaluation, reporting and accountability, says that these success stories are vital components of our effort to let people know all that Extension does and how our programs benefit them.

With this goal in mind, each success story was read by three individuals and scored on how well they explained the basic concepts of what was done, how it was done, when it was done, where it was done, who benefited and, perhaps more importantly, why the program was conducted.

The stories were also evaluated on how well they answered the "so what" question, the most important and difficult part of these stories. This part explains not only why the people of Alabama benefited from the work that ACES has done, but it also tells how they have benefited and, ideally, how much they have benefited.

While there were a number of good stories submitted in this first group, congratulations go to the following 16 people whose success stories scored 90 or above.

Teresa Alexander
Angela Cardwell
Willie Datcher
Henry Dorough
Jeannie Hollinger
Sonya Mahler
Marsha Moorehead
Bennie Carol Reid
Stan Roark
Linda Sartain
Elaine Shields
Kent Stanford
Susan Thompson
Wendy Ulrich
Shirley Whitten
Rusty Wright

Jackson County
Elmore County
Greene County
Talladega County
Wilcox County
Baldwin County
Clay County
Blount County
Randolph County
Geneva County
Choctaw County
St. Clair County
Choctaw County
Blount County
Walker County
Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture

PERSONNEL

Kudos:
• Congratulations to Bill Goff, Extension Horticulturist, for receiving the Most Distinguished Scientist in the Pecan Industry award at the Louisiana Pecan Growers Association’s annual conference in June.
A job well done to Harriet Bates, Dallas County Extension Coordinator, for receiving the 2002 Golden Eagle Educator Award from the Alabama Senior Citizens’ Hall of Fame Commission. She received the award in recognition of her successful "Making the Olden Years Golden" program, which she has directed for more than 10 years.

Appointments:
• Cheryl Vasse, NEP Agent, Madison County, July 1
• Arthuro Menefee, Extension Health Associate, State Headquarters, July 20
• Eli Haddock-Belmont, Agent Assistant, Fort Rucker, July 29
• Sheila Mock, Agent Assistant, Fort Rucker, Aug. 5
• Wendy Padgett, Multicounty Agent, Clarke/Wilcox Counties, Aug. 19
• Juana Macias, Multicounty Agent—Urban, Marshall County, Aug. 15

Transfers/Promotions:
• Shirley Schofield, Office Assistant to Administrative Secretary, Crenshaw County, July 1
• Shane Harris, Agent-In-Training to County Extension Agent, Tallapoosa County, July 8
• Amanda Wagoner, NEP Agent, Lauderdale County to Walker County, Aug. 7

Retirement:
• Patricia Robinson, Lauderdale County Administrative Assistant, July 31

Resignations:
• Lisa Lightsey, NEP Agent, Bibb County, June 24
• Paulette Didier, Info Tech Specialist II, State Headquarters, July 3
• Linda Schotz, County Extension Agent, 4-H Center, July 10
• Shelby Hanback, EFNEP/NEP Agent Assistant, Lawrence County, July 26
• Jane Montanaro, Agent Assistant I, Fort Rucker, July 31
• Robert White, Extension Agent on Special Assignment, State Headquarters, July 31

ACES FAMILY HAPPENINGS
• Our condolences to Tony Cook, 4-H Program Specialist, whose father, Cecil Cook, died July 17.
• Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Charles Vickery, retired Mobile County Extension Coordinator, who underwent heart bypass surgery July 21 and several subsequent surgeries. He is not feeling well enough for phone calls yet, but has appreciated the notes and cards he has received. Address: Charles Vickery—Patient, Mercy Medical, P.O. Box 1090, Daphne, AL 36526.
• Congratulations to Mark Mayeske, Jefferson County Extension Agent, and his wife, Lisa, on the birth of their daughter, Sara Maria, July 22. She weighed 9 pounds 12 ounces.
• Our sympathy to Nayretha Haynes, Jefferson County Administrative Secretary, whose mother-in-law, Lillie Mae Haynes, died July 24.
• Our condolences to Ruth McLaughlin, Jefferson County Agent Assistant (Horticulture), whose grandfather, Cecil Rue Dobson, died in August.
• Our sympathy to Kimberly Burgess, Multicounty Extension Agent in Tuscaloosa County, whose grandmother, Ollie M. Qualls, died Aug. 14.
• Our sympathy to Wilma Ruffin, Extension Family and Human Development Specialist, whose father, Louie Ruffin, passed away Aug. 18.
• Our condolences to Vera Norton, Butler County Agent Assistant, whose father, Archie Kelly, died Aug. 21 following a lengthy illness.

Proposals Funded:
• Wanda Jurriaans, Appalachian Regional Commission for Master Entrepreneur Program for Talladega and Clay counties, $10,000
• Perry Mobley, Southern Region SARE On Farm Research Grant Program for Benefits of Incorporating Triticale/Clover Management Systems, $967
• Leonard Kuykendall, Southern Region SARE On Farm Research Grant Program for Soil Quality Improvement, $2,116
• Elaine Shields, Children’s Trust Fund for B.E.E.ing Dads, $25,000
• **Elaine Shields**, Children’s Trust Fund for Baby B.E.E., $25,000
• **Jeannie Hollinger**, Children’s Trust Fund for B.E.E:ing Dads, $25,000
• **Jeannie Hollinger**, Children’s Trust Fund for Baby B.E.E., $25,000
• **Marilee Tankersley**, Children’s Trust Fund for First Years Count, $18,000
• **Elaine Shields** and **Ellen Abell**, Children’s Trust Fund for B.E.E, $30,000
• **Jeannie Hollinger** and **Ellen Abell**, Children’s Trust Fund for B.E.E, $30,000
• **Elaine Cole**, Children’s Trust Fund for First Years Count, $36,000
• **Patty Presley** and **Ellen Abell**, Children’s Trust Fund for Begin Education Early, $20,000
• **Warren McCord** and **Laura Booth**, University of Georgia for Alabama Lead Compliance Assistance Project, $26,208
• **Denise Shirley** and **Ellen Abell**, Children’s Trust Fund for Begin Education Early, $37,000
• **Helen Herndon-Jones** and **Ellen Abell**, Children’s Trust Fund for Begin Education Early, $35,915
• **Helen Herndon-Jones**, Children’s Trust Fund for Bibb County DADS, $36,000
• **Helen Herndon-Jones**, Alabama Department of Public Health for Bibb County Capacity Building Program, $30,000
• **Elaine Alberson** and **Denise Shirley**, Alabama Department of Public Health for 4-H TGIF, $126,753
• **Elaine Alberson** and **Denise Shirley**, Alabama Department of Public Health for Alabama Community Abstinence Education, $36,000
• **Rodie Ruffin**, Monroe County Schools for Monroe County At-Risk, $12,000
• **Warren McCord**, Alabama Wildlife Federation for Discovering Our Heritage, $30,000
• **William Birdsong**, Cotton Inc. for Comparing Tillage for Cotton Profitability, $3,500

**Proposals Submitted:**
• **Ellen Abell** to Environmental Protection Agency for Beginning Education Early and Healthy, $150,000
• **Suzette Jelinek** to USDA for Food Stamp Program Research, $282,787
• **Suzette Jelinek** to Alabama Department of Public Health for Take Charge of Your Health, $44,000
• **Martha Johnson** and **Kathleen Tajeu** to USDA for Sustainability for Healthy People Healthy Communities, $100,000
• **Martha Johnson** to USDA for Alliance for Healthy Americans, $60,000
• **Barbara Mobley** and **Laura Booth** to USDA for Healthy Homes Initiative, $2,000
• **Sam Fowler** to USDA for USDA/Army School-Age and Teen Project-ACES, $473,541
• **Warren McCord** and **Laura Booth** to University of Georgia for Alabama Lead Poisoning Prevention Education, $16,460
• **Evelyn Crayton** and **Noel Thompson** to SRDC for Assessment of Nutrition Education Initiatives, $23,210
• **Warren Griffith** to Alabama Department of Public Health for Life Skills Training, $20,000
• **Rick Wallace** to Ocean Trust for Bon Secour Bay Oyster Restoration, $5,000
• **Jim Hairston** to Texas A&M for Southern Region Watershed Resources Management Year 3, $10,000
• **Kathleen Tajeu** to Alabama Department of Public Health for Unwed Pregnancy Prevention Program, Phase II, $60,000

Gaines Smith, Interim Director