Direct Line

Hurricane Ivan left its mark as it moved across our state Sept. 16. From office closings for a couple of days to changes that will be evident for a long, long time, very few locations were unaffected. Most severely affected were the people and property in southwest Alabama. We’re thankful that none of our Extension family was personally injured in spite of considerable property damage in some areas.

As always, our focus was on helping individuals, families, businesses and communities overcome the crisis and look beyond the immediate situation. Agents and specialists were actively on the job well before Ivan completely moved out of the state. We are currently a critical part of the assessments under way that will provide the basis for relief efforts. My special thanks to each of you who has been and will continue to be involved in this massive undertaking.

The transition of our organization is continuing. Priority program teams are meeting to get organized and focused on key objectives in their areas of work. Regional agents are settling into their new territories by getting to know their constituents and coworkers. We’re welcoming new and reassigned coworkers to the teams.

The new fiscal year also brings excitement as we begin working on special initiatives that were funded in our budget for the first time. Agricultural Systems and the Environment: Products and Jobs from Poultry Wastes is a joint effort of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and is targeted in northwest Alabama to capitalize on the commercial value of the waste while protecting the environment. Fishing for Jobs: Developing New Aquaculture and Business Opportunities in West Alabama is another joint effort. Initiative teams of research and Extension personnel are already working to design the programs to carry out these objectives.

We are working on expanding the funding for these initiatives and adding new ones in the 2005 legislative session. Special thanks to Auburn University Interim President Ed Richardson for his very effective leadership and efforts in getting this new direction of funding for Cooperative Extension.

New facilities at the Wiregrass Research and Extension Center in Headland were dedicated in early October. The center provides excellent labs, conference space, meeting rooms and offices for our research and Extension programs in southeast Alabama. These new facilities will enhance the transition of agriculture and the economy that is occurring in that region.

The 2004 round of visits with our professional associations concluded with a presentation to the joint meeting of the Alabama Association of Extension 4-H Agents and Epsilon Sigma Phi. It’s a pleasure to learn of the work that members of our associations are doing for our citizens and communities. Two additional associations are becoming more active: the Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals and the National Association of Community Development Professionals. I encourage all the associations to identify opportunities for jointly sponsored activities that will benefit their members.

Letters notifying eligible employees of salary increases were recently mailed. We’re pleased that these raises can be provided during a time when there are many demands on public resources. My thanks to each of you for the excellent work that you do.
Program Development Team Named

Rebecca Dollman is the state leader for program development. She will lead a team in transforming Extension’s program development process to focus on the team approach while being more targeted, more responsive to needs and opportunities, and more accountable to constituents and funding agencies. Team members include Jeff Bastuscheck, Danny Cain, Dennis Evans, Buck Farrior, Richard Feuerriegel, Grace Kirkman, Katanga Mants, Carolyn Reedus, Carol Reid and Ron Williams.

Communication Plan Update

It has been two years since the Alabama Cooperative Extension System began our move in a bold new direction with the kickoff of our Communication Plan. Extension Communications helped us promote Extension’s many excellent programs and staff among the public, leaders and news media.

The Communication Plan began with the Strategic Plan that ultimately served as the foundation for our new structure. The plan has encompassed a variety of cost-effective promotional projects ranging from staff development to public service announcements to intensive and targeted media relations. Careful planning went into each project to help us navigate tough times that included funding threats, employee and program losses, and the restructuring of our system.

News media across the state are praising the recently published Experts Guide and are learning quickly that our Extension specialists are valuable news sources. Hurricane Ivan proved the success of our media relations efforts as News and Public Affairs staff and Extension professionals provided information for stories appearing in newspapers across the state and nation as well as in Great Britain and India.

Among the many accomplishments of the Communication Plan are the following:

1. A public opinion poll evaluating awareness of Extension across Alabama.
2. The long-range Strategic Plan.
3. A new theme and tagline, Your Experts For Life.
4. The Identity Guide and the Driving Our Message quarterly newsletter designed to support Extension employees in their communication efforts.
5. Targeted media relations and promotion of news stories to Alabama news outlets.
6. Media relations training for employees via satellite and in-service sessions.
7. The Experts Guide.
8. Public service announcements sent to more than 120 Alabama radio stations.
9. A leaders list of 5,000 civic, business and government leaders across Alabama.
10. Extension Update, a quarterly newsletter for the leaders list and news media.
11. A civic club speech program designed to take the story of Extension to civic leaders in cities across Alabama.

Extension is committed to maintaining the momentum of its communication efforts to continue to raise awareness of the programs and expertise offered to the people of Alabama.

PERSONNEL

Kudos:

• Helen Drinkard, Clarke County Administrative Assistant, won the Auburn University Spirit of Excellence award in the clerical/support category for August.
• J. Walter Prevatt, Extension Economist, was recognized by the American Agricultural Economics Association for his superior forecasting of livestock production and prices for the period of 2003 to 2004.
• Evelyn Crayton, Extension Assistant Director for Family and Community Programs, had an article titled “Possible Benefits of a Calcium-Rich Diet for Girls” published in the September issue of the Journal of the American Dietetic Association.
• Glenn Glover, Extension Forester, and the team of specialists and county Extension agents who coordinate the Alabama Master Tree Farmer Program are part of the Southwide Master Tree Farmer Program. This program was a recipient of the USDA Secretary’s Honor Award. Alabama is one of several states that participates in this outstanding program.

Appointments:

• Rebecca Turner (Chandler), Extension Agent, Ft. Rucker, Aug. 23
• Danny Cain, County Extension Coordinator, Walker County, Sept. 1
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sherry Chandler</td>
<td>Tuscaloosa County Agent Assistant</td>
<td>(TGIF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tonya Shamery</td>
<td>Pickens County Agent Assistant</td>
<td>(TGIF)</td>
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<td>Janice Hall</td>
<td>Family and Community Programs</td>
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<td>Mazie Wilson</td>
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<td>Kristen Woods</td>
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<td>Kimberly Good</td>
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<td>Bridgette Griffin</td>
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<td>Shannon Andress</td>
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<td>Anita Howard</td>
<td>Cook II</td>
<td>4-H Center</td>
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<td>Lee Ann Clark</td>
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<td>Cheryl Vasse</td>
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<td>Janet A. Johnson</td>
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<td>Margaret Odom</td>
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<td>Debra Ward</td>
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<td>Stanford King</td>
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<td>Nancy Alexander</td>
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<td>James Shropshire</td>
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<td>Evelyn Rachell</td>
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<td>Kirsten Holt</td>
<td>4-H Regional Extension Agent</td>
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**ACES FAMILY HAPPENINGS**

- Our sympathies to the family of **Fariss Prickett**, retired Extension Specialist, who died Aug. 4.
- Our sympathies to **Mary Baltikauski**, Geneva County Extension Coordinator, whose mother-in-law, Louise Baltikauski, died Aug. 6.
- Our condolences to the family of **Samuel Perry McClendon**, retired Lawrence County Farm Agent, who died Aug. 7.
- Our condolences to **Wilma J. Ruffin**, Extension Family and Human Development Specialist, on the death of her mother, Willie M. Ruffin.
- Our sympathies to **Camellia L. Taylor**, Cullman County Administrative Assistant, whose mother, Lurel Leeth, died Aug. 13.
- Our condolences to **Elaine Alberson**, Choctaw County Extension Coordinator, whose mother, Irene C. Brooks, died Aug. 19.
- Our sympathies to **Hoyt Webb**, retired Tallapoosa County Extension Coordinator, whose wife, Margaret Webb, died Aug. 27.
- Our condolences to the family of **Calvin M. Jones**, former USDA Entomologist, who died Sept. 8.
- Our condolences to **Denise Shirley**, Family and Child Development Regional Extension Agent, whose father, James Lewis Roberts, died Sept. 18.
- Our sympathies to **Janice Neloms**, Lauderdale/Colbert County Urban NEP Agent, and **Kara Neloms**, Lauderdale County Agent Assistant, whose father and grandfather, Alfred Roy, died Sept. 23.
- Our condolences to **Kajuandra Harris-Huntley**, Family and Community Programs Regional Agent, whose grandfather, Hamp Davis, died Sept. 25.
Proposals Funded in August and September:

• **David Cline**, SARE for Recirculating Production Pond Inflows to Increase Production, $14,145

• **Patty Presley-Fuller**, Children’s Trust Fund for BEE, $20,000

• **Denise Shirley**, Children’s Trust Fund for BEE, $20,000

• **Rick Beauchamp**, Children’s Trust Fund for First Years Count, $25,000

• **Elaine Cole**, Children’s Trust Fund for First Years Count, $25,000

• **Helen Jones**, Children’s Trust Fund for Bibb County DADS, $15,000

• **Ray Rice**, Children’s Trust Fund for B.E.E.ing DADS, $27,000

• **Ray Rice**, Children’s Trust Fund for Begin Education Early, $32,000

• **Emily Brogden**, Children’s Trust Fund for Rainbow Family Resource Center Parenting Program, $20,000

• **Vickie Fussell**, Children’s Trust Fund for Hope Place Career Center, $45,000

• **Vickie Fussell**, Children’s Trust Fund for the Learning Center, $20,000

• **Francesca Adler-Baeder**, Children’s Trust Fund for Healthy Couples, Healthy Children, $40,000

• **Jim Hairston**, ADEM for Restoration and Management of Rivers and Watersheds, $40,000

• **Paul Mask**, USDA Forest Service for U&CF FY04 Carryover, $20,000

• **Rick Beauchamp and Katrina Mitchell**, Children’s Trust Fund for Elmore County Family Resource Center, $23,000

• **Derek Bryan**, Children’s Trust Fund for Building Healthy Families, $20,000

• **Evelyn Crayton and Laura Booth**, USDA for Healthy Indoor Air for America’s Homes, $3,000

• **Brenda Allen**, AU Urban and Community Forestry Program for Urban Forestry Internships, $26,000

• **Brenda Allen**, AU Urban and Community Forestry Program for Urban Forestry Resource Library, $10,000

• **Rick Wallace**, City of Gulf Shores for Little Lagoon Watershed Project, $20,000

• **Chuck Simon**, Opp City Schools for Covington County School Enrichment, $13,144

• **Chuck Simon**, Opp City Schools for Environmental Day Camp, $975

• **Evelyn Crayton**, Lee-Russell COG for Preventive Health Services, $3,077

Gaines Smith, Interim Director