Direct Line

Welcome to the Future!

You can see the positive shape of things to come for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System with the hiring of our three new assistant directors.

I am pleased to welcome Evelyn Crayton to the position of assistant director of Family and Community Programs, Lamar Nichols to the position of assistant director for 4-H and Youth Development and Paul Mask to the position of assistant director for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources. Crayton, Nichols and Mask are ready to tackle the many challenges that await Extension during our period of restructuring and the coinciding tough financial times.

Crayton began her new role Oct. 15, bringing approximately 30 years of Extension experience to the post. Most recently an Extension specialist and professor in the College of Human Sciences at Auburn University, Crayton began her Extension career in 1973 as a foods and nutrition specialist at Tuskegee Institute. She moved to Auburn University in 1977 and was promoted in 1998 to full professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences.

In her new position over Family and Community Programs, Crayton is responsible for program areas that include food safety; nutrition and health; children, youth and families; community resources and economic development; and consumer science and resource management.

Nichols, who was once an Extension agent in Houston and Limestone counties, returns to Alabama Nov. 1 as assistant director for 4-H and Youth Development after serving as Extension program leader for the Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service. He also served four years as a teaching/research assistant and instructor at Mississippi State University and has been an assistant director for 4-H in Wyoming.

Mask will provide statewide leadership to all agriculture, forestry and natural resources programming, coordinating personnel at the Research and Extension Centers and working with colleges and schools at Auburn and Alabama A&M universities. Mask will also be responsible for seeking new and additional funding to support the programs within the agriculture, forestry and natural resources program areas.

Please join me in welcoming Evelyn Crayton, Lamar Nichols and Paul Mask to their new assignments and work with them to make Extension a more effective resource for the people of Alabama.

Still in Business

Alabama Extension fared reasonably well in the fiscal year 2004 budget. This, coupled with the savings achieved through the recent separation plan, allows us to forge ahead with our plans for restructuring and to offset the mandated increases in employee and retiree insurance and retirement costs.

However, we still face financial uncertainty that coincides with our restructuring plans. Predictions for fiscal 2005 indicate additional
and more significant cuts for all state agencies. This is a threat that may further endanger our staff and educational programming, but it certainly will not be the first time Extension has weathered a storm. I have faith that Extension and our resilient employees will survive this new test, thanks to a mindset that embraces challenge and change.

Since 1995, Extension has been meeting funding cuts that threaten our educational programming. We have lost 200 state-funded positions due to these cuts. Rather than sacrifice quality programming, this organization has come together to continue providing top-quality education to our clients. On-going assessment of program delivery and service coupled with extramural funding have allowed us to offset lost funds and continue to conduct business.

Our New Structure
Much work still needs to be done to reshape our organization. We have made several significant strides recently, including the following:

- Confirming that there will be four assistant directors to guide programming in areas of Family and Community Programs; 4-H and Youth Development; Agriculture and Natural Resources; and Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs.
- Defining the 13 program specialization areas as Agronomic Crops; Animal Science; Aquaculture and Recreational Ponds; Children, Youth and Families; Community and Economic Development; Consumer Science and Resource Management; Farm Risk Management; Food Safety; Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources; Horticulture: Commercial; Horticulture: Homeowner; Nutrition, Diet and Health; and 4-H and Youth Development.

The Future Is Uncertain
This is an interesting time of change, challenge, apprehension and excitement for Extension in Alabama. I urge you to hold your heads high and remain true to the Extension mission of providing quality educational programs to the people of Alabama. You have every reason to be proud of the achievements of Alabama Extension.

We are currently developing a legislative initiative to inform our state leaders and other decision-makers across the state about the strength of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and the changes we have already made. We want them to know that we have already met the challenges of a shrinking budget by making Extension a much more efficient state agency.

Extension in Alabama has faced obstacles many times before, and each experience seemed to be the ultimate challenge. Extension has responded to each crisis, and we've survived and thrived. We will do the same this time as we look ahead to a reshaped future.

PERSONNEL
Kudos:
• The following Alabama Extension employees were recognized during the recent National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Galaxy II Conference in Salt Lake City: Joann Smith Wissinger—Distinguished Service Award; Denise Shirley—Continued Excellence Award; Barbara Mobley and Laura Booth—First Place Regional and National Environmental Education Award; Lisa C. Murphy—First Place Regional and Third Place National Radio Award; Sondra M. Parmer and Barbara Struempler—Second Place National and First Place Regional Educational Publications Awards; Linda Glass—25 years of service in the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents; and Rebecca Dollman—Epsilon Sigma Phi Distinguished Service Award.
• James Novak, Extension Economist, won the 2003 Outstanding Public Issues Education Award as a member of a national team of Extension economists who created the National Extension Farm Bill Train-the-Trainer Program. The award was presented by the 2003 National Public Policy Education Committee and the Farm Foundation.
• Kathryn Flynn, Extension Forester, has been named to a three-year term as Mosley Environmental Professor, beginning Oct. 1, and will serve as Executive Secretary to the Mosley Environmental Awards Steering and Selection Committee.

Resignations:
• Teresa Troyer, Agent Assistant I, Fort Rucker, Sept. 3
• Jonathan Borden, Environmental Educator, 4-H Youth Development Center, Sept. 24
• Julian Cope, County Extension Agent I, Bullock County, Sept. 30
• Jerry Jackson, Agent Assistant II, 4-H Youth Development Center, Oct. 1
• Linda Johnson, County Office Administrative Secretary, Lauderdale County, Oct. 15
• Sharon Layton, Cook II, 4-H Youth Development Center, Oct. 20
Retirements:
• Warren McCord, Assistant Director, Oct. 31
• Patsy White, County Extension Coordinator, Henry County, Oct. 31
• Marjorie Day, County Extension Agent III, Mobile County, Oct. 31
• Elaine Shields, County Extension Coordinator, Choctaw County, Oct. 31
• Linda Sartain, County Extension Agent III, Geneva County, Oct. 31
• Bobby Spears, County Extension Agent III, Lee County, Oct. 31
• Linda Sanford, Administrative Assistant, Jefferson County, Oct. 31
• Annette Wardrup, County Extension Agent III, DeKalb County, Oct. 31

Appointments:
• Debra Scruggs, Regional Extension Office Administrative Secretary, North Alabama Regional Office, Sept. 29
• Clara Marable, Coordinator, ACES BEE Programs, Macon County, Oct. 1
• Evelyn Crayton, Assistant Director, Family and Community Programs, Oct. 15
• Cynthia Makesmon, County Extension Office Administrative Secretary, Tuscaloosa County, Oct. 20
• Lamar Nichols, Assistant Director, 4-H and Youth Development, Nov. 1
• Paul Mask, Assistant Director, Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources, Nov. 1

ACES FAMILY HAPPENINGS
• Our sympathy to Tommy Futral, Tallapoosa County Coordinator, whose father, Thomas L. Futral, died Sept. 16.
• Our sympathy to Rusty Parrish, County Agent in Butler County, whose father, Russell C. Parrish Sr., died Oct. 2.
• Our sympathy to the family of James Paul Moore, Retired County Agent in Butler County, who died Oct. 4.
• Our sympathy to Danny L. Cain, County Agent in Walker County, whose father, Curtis L. Cain, died Oct. 8.
• Our sympathy to Maggie Lawrence, Extension Communications Specialist, whose mother, Jackie Crowder, died Oct. 18.

Proposals Approved:
• Eve Brantley and Jim Hairston to USDA for Developing Community Based Stream Restoration Programs, $152,000
• Brenda Allen to Auburn University Urban and Community Forestry Program for Urban Forestry Internships, $26,000
• Kathleen Tajeu to USDA for Sustainability for Healthy People, $50,000
• Sam Fowler to USDA for USDA/Army Youth Development Project, $3,509,320
• Evelyn Crayton to USDA for a National Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Conference, $15,000
• Barbara Mobley and Laura Booth to Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs for Energy Star outreach, $8,000
• Mark Hall to Cotton Incorporated for Utilizing Precision Agriculture, $4,500

Proposals Submitted:
• Ed Sikora to Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs for demonstration of the Top Dry System, $50,000
• Shannon Norwood, Mark Hall and Paul Mask to Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs for Light Bars: Reducing Time in the Field, $40,000
• Leonard Kuykendall to Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs for Energy Utilization and Soil Quality Preservation, $6,385
• Mark Hall and Shannon Norwood to Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs for Biodiesel Use Research, $49,888
• Helen Jones to Bibb County Board of Education for Brent Elementary Community Learning Program, $10,200

Gaines Smith, Interim Director