### Direct Line

#### Looking Ahead!

“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal.” - Margaret Mead

As we work daily for the citizens of Alabama toward our goal of being *Your Experts for Life*, it is vital that we keep our vision front and center:

To be a world-class educational organization providing real-life solutions to improve the lives of all Alabamians.

To help us implement this goal, we have developed a mission statement that expresses how we will continue to work toward fulfilling this ongoing task:

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the primary outreach organization for the land-grant mission of Alabama A&M University and Auburn University, delivers research-based educational programs that enable people to improve their quality of life and economic well-being.

I urge you to keep our vision and our mission in mind as we consider some of the potential obstacles that are being encountered while we continue to deliver effective, viable Extension education programs.

### Changes and Uncertainty in Our Revenue Stream

We will continue to respond to and prepare for decreased funds from public sources and generate more of our support from nontraditional sources. We must change our mindset. We cannot focus on past successes, but rather we must adapt to the new era we’re entering. We cannot let the problems we face be excuses to let our programs stagnate.

You may be able to think of other potential challenges. But let’s look ahead to achieving our goal while transforming these challenges into opportunities.

Our public awareness initiative will inform our decision makers of the relevance and need for Extension in Alabama. Stakeholders will become fully aware of what changes are taking place in Extension, why they are happening and how we are moving ahead. Our goal is to firmly convince them that funding to Extension is a good investment.

The process of reshaping Alabama Extension is moving ahead with tremendous involvement of Extension workers. We are reviewing and considering the many ideas and suggestions received through the online review process and the discussions we are having. A draft plan is being developed over the next few weeks that will be expeditiously reviewed and then implemented soon thereafter.

The three assistant director positions will be filled. These leaders will have important roles as we move forward with our reorganization. Strong program leaders are a vital part of ensuring that our reshaping enhances our program offerings.

An early step in the reshaping will be the filling of the 30 county coordinator assignments that are now or soon will be interim assignments. Preparation for this step is currently underway with the managerial assessment profi-
The creation of expert teams will follow soon afterward. Size (and perhaps number) of teams will be driven by the financial resources available — both initially and when the teams are fully implemented.

The timeline for full implementation of the reshaping will be determined by the fiscal resources available for FY 04 and thereafter. We hope to know next year’s appropriation by Oct. 1, and we’ll finalize our budgets soon thereafter.

Training will be a priority for the 2003–2004 program year with focused attention on the leadership/management functions necessary to ensure that our reshaped system work efficiently and smoothly. Recommendations from the work group on training will be the basis for training expert agents.

An early key focus will be the design and implementation of the certification and credentialing procedures. Again, available resources will influence how quickly we can move ahead with the enhanced training.

Charging fees for programs is another issue in our future. Recommendations from the new revenue work group will be the starting point for designing and implementing our fee structure. As with all the other changes, issues associated with program fees will be carefully considered as we move ahead.

### PERSONNEL

**Kudos:**

- **Tom Chesnutt**, Extension Tourism Specialist, was appointed by Gov. Riley to the Scenic Byways Program Advisory Board.

- **Shane Harris**, Tallapoosa County Extension Agent, was recently named a national finalist for the Personal Column Communication Award by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.

- **Neil Letson**, Urban and Community Financial Assistance Program Coordinator, and **Brian Waldrep**, Extension Specialist, Community Forestry Volunteer, served on the review team of Pennsylvania’s Urban and Community Forestry Review.

- **Walt Prevatt**, Extension Economist, co-authored a recent article in the *Journal of Extension*.

**Resignations:**

- **Mary Remenschneider**, ACENEP Subcontract Specialist, Aug. 15

**ACES FAMILY HAPPENINGS**

- Our sympathy to Emmett Farrington, retired Cleburne County Extension agent, whose wife, Melba, died June 25.

- Congratulations to Francesca Adler-Baeder, Extension Specialist, and her husband, Patrick, on the birth of their daughter, Juliana Grace, Aug. 21.

- Condolences to Ralph Teague, retired Extension Coordinator–Management Information, on the death of his mother, Mayburn Teague, Aug. 23.

- Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Lynn Wilson, Administrative Assistant at the 4-H Youth Development Center, who had elective surgery Aug. 28.

- Obviously, our future is full of challenges and opportunities — not obstacles. As we address these opportunities, let’s remind ourselves and our constituents that we’re still open for business and that we remain Your Experts for Life.

- Extension in Alabama and the nation has been challenged many times before. Each time seemed to be the ultimate challenge. Each time Extension responded, survived and thrived. We will do the same as we look ahead to a reshaped future.

- Thanks to the professional associations for their work in the professional development of Extension educators. Your activities and awards programs are an important part of the total development of Extension professionals. I’m looking forward to attending the Galaxy II Conference where the associations work together to extend their efforts.

- Be sure to mark Dec. 5 on your calendars. That’s the Extension Excellence Awards Luncheon at the 4-H Center. That afternoon, we will also have a dessert reception and recognition program for our co-workers leaving Extension during the October–December period. I know you will want to be present to say thanks and wish them well as they look ahead.

**Proposals Approved:**

- Wheeler Foshee, Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries for Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, $26,000

- Rick Wallace, Baldwin County Commission for Coastal Impact Assistance Program, $6,000

- Lisa Kriese-Anderson, Tommy Brown and Joshua Elmore, USDA for Alabama Beef Connection, $119,220

- Warren McCord, USDA Forest Service for Urban and Community Forestry FY 05, $586,000

- Kathleen Tajeu, USDA for Partnership to Reduce Cervical and Breast Cancer Mortality, $16,000

- Kathleen Tajeu, Alabama Department of Public Health for Unwed Pregnancy Program, $60,000

- Sallie Lide-Hooker, Alabama Department of Public Health for Unwed Pregnancy Program, $16,056

- Harry Straw, Alabama Department of Public Health for State Indoor Radon Grant, $230,000

**Proposals Submitted:**

- Warren McCord to USDA Forest Service for Fire Borrowing for Economic Action, $105,000

- Sallie Lide-Hooker to the Women Helping Others foundation for Healthy Lifestyles, $8,000

- Eve Brantley to ADEM for Watershed Restoration, $118,944

- Chuck Hill and Molly Gregg to USDA/National 4-H for Military 4-H Program Development, $26,090

Gaines Smith, Interim Director