



2023

The Urban Difference

*Impacts from Alabama Extension
at Alabama A&M University*



extension
ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

UNP-2198

One Resource.
Many Solutions.



Alabama Extension, From the Hill to the Community



From the President

Dr. Daniel K. Wims, *President*, Alabama A&M University (AAMU)

Whenever I think of Alabama A&M's role in engaging with communities, Cooperative Extension comes to mind since it has fulfilled this mission for over 110 years. Over time, Alabama Extension has adapted to meet the needs of both rural and urban communities. Now, with new leadership in place, we face even greater challenges and have higher expectations. These changes are essential if we are to reach new heights of excellence, expand our partnerships, and enhance our ability to serve both the people of Alabama and influence a global community. I am proud to affirm that Alabama Extension is headed in the right direction.



From the 1890 Administrator

Dr. Majed Dweik, *Vice President for Research & Economic Development, Interim 1890s Extension Administrator*, AAMU

There is a saying, "The train has left the station!" That's how we feel at Alabama Extension--excited about where we are headed. This publication showcases the hard work and impacts we've made among Alabama populations in the past year. Just think how much more we could achieve with partners like you and additional resources. But that's a conversation for another day.

For now we invite you to delve into these pages and experience the lives and communities we transformed by extending knowledge and believing in the possibilities of change.



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Visit www.aces.edu/directory
for a listing of additional Alabama Extension offices and staff.

Find us Online

Alabama Extension Calendar
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across Alabama,
within a network of
to impact all

acts: **770,591**

a: 6,354,559
: 175,391
(potential reach)

on

A close-up photograph of two white camellia flowers with yellow centers, surrounded by several green, serrated leaves. The flowers are in full bloom, and the leaves are vibrant green with visible veins. The background is plain white.

Signed MOUs: **21**

Direct (Face-to-Face) Program Contacts: **770,591**

Indirect Contacts: **12,978,836**

- Program: 310,682
- AL Extension Week Digital Media: 6,354,559
- Urban Extension Website Views: 175,391
- WJAB Interviews: 6,010,000 (potential reach)
- Facebook User Reach: 128,204

Aces.edu website views: **3,823,872**

- FY 2021/22: \$10 million
- FY 2022/23: \$9.8 million
- FY 2023/24: \$10.9 million



Urban Extension is Here for You



Map Legend



Alabama Extension Urban Centers

Calhoun County - Anniston
Houston County - Dothan
Jefferson County - Birmingham
Lauderdale County - Florence
Madison County - Huntsville

Mobile County - Mobile
Morgan County - Decatur
Montgomery County - Montgomery
Tuscaloosa County - Tuscaloosa



Urban Extension In Person Service Areas

Autauga, Baldwin, Blount, Calhoun, Chilton, Coffee, Colbert, Cullman, Dale, Elmore, Etowah, Franklin, Houston, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Lee, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, Mobile, Morgan, Montgomery, Russell, Shelby, St. Claire, Tuscaloosa, and Walker counties.



Myron Thomas, Chief Operating Officer, ELI Thrive



NAREB-Huntsville joins in on the Walking Like a CHAMPION fun. (Photo by Tamarra Warren)



Commission Chair Mac McCutcheon, District 6 Commissioner Violet Edwards, Bryan Primm, Director of Outreach, Madison County Commission and President Daniel K Wims, Vice President of Research and Economic Development Majed Dweik, Alabama A&M University.



Partnerships: Working Together

Making lasting connections

"If we could align 2 organizations or 3 organizations around that same like-minded ability to serve our clients, then we knew the sky would be the limit. In some cases, the sky may be in the way!"

- Myron Thomas, CEO, ELI Thrive

Alabama Extension builds connections that last because we care about people and the communities where they live. We seek the same qualities in our partners so that by working together we can transform lives and communities for the better.

Why Partner with Alabama Extension?

- Cooperative Extension has been a trusted source of information for more than 110 years!
- Our programs are developed using the latest research to increase knowledge and promote effective results through positive changes in human behavior.
- We offer programming in seven areas: Urban agriculture; Alabama 4-H at AAMU; consumer sciences and personal financial management; community resource management; forestry, wildlife and natural resources; family and child development; and human nutrition, diet and health.
- We work with our partners to address current societal issues that lead to major state and national impacts.
- We work in nine Urban Centers with a statewide reach in 48 of Alabama's 67 counties.

Alabama Extension Week

Statewide awareness campaign

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey proclaimed October 23-28, 2023, as Alabama Extension Week. Throughout the state, Alabama Cooperative Extension System staff held various activities and encouraged residents to find out what their county Extension offices have to offer. The Alabama Extension state headquarters located on the campus of AAMU also had many different events throughout the week in support of the inaugural Alabama Extension Week as follows:

Monday, October 23: Mobile vehicles for STEM and nutrition education were stationed at James Crawford Park and at the Martin Luther King Elementary School in Huntsville.

Tuesday, October 24: An open house was held at the Family Life Center in Huntsville, as staff shared educational resources with the public.

Wednesday, October 25: For USDA Day, Drenda Williams, associate director of operations for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the United States Department of Agriculture, visited the campus. Williams engaged with 1890 students, faculty, and staff, including Extension specialists.

Thursday, October 26: The virtual session “Don’t Trip: Major Steps vs Missteps in Starting a Business” was delivered via Zoom and Facebook Live. In addition, an Alabama Extension Week Fair was held on the Quad for the AAMU community.

Friday and Saturday, October 27-28: The week culminated with Jefferson County Extension staff engaging in tailgate activities at the Magic City Classic in Birmingham featuring the AAMU Bulldogs and the Alabama State Hornets.

AAMU Extension made more than 6.3 million digital contacts during Alabama Extension Week.



Governor Kay Ivey signs the declaration for Alabama Extension Week.





Rodeo at the Agrabition Center.



Older adults gather at the Agrabition Venter for a program.



NASA's Break the Ice Lunar Challenge Phase 2 Winners, husband-and-wife duo of Terra Engineering, Valerie and Todd Mendenhall, at the AAMU Agrabition Center following the competition.



Walking Horse Association attendees September, 2023.



Satellite Facilities

The Agribition Center

A multipurpose venue

Alabama A&M University's Agribition Center is a multipurpose facility situated a few miles east of the AAMU campus on approximately 40 acres of land. Daily operations are managed by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System with assistance from the College of Agricultural, Life, and Natural Sciences.

The Center is the ideal venue for livestock shows, festivals, expos, educational workshops, and other events. As a multipurpose facility, the front portion of the Agribition Center is formal and climate controlled to accommodate meetings and receptions. The arena, which seats 1,500 people, and pavilion are covered and allow for any outdoor activities you can imagine. Call (256) 689-0274 for more information.

Paint Rock

A communiversity initiative

The Paint Rock Valley High School (Paint Rock) is being repurposed as a communiversity facility. The Paint Rock Valley Collaboration Project (PRVCP), which includes the Jackson County Board of Education, AAMU and Alabama Extension, is working alongside the Graham Farm and Nature Center, Jackson County Commission, Singing River Trails and other organizations to repurpose the facility and offer activities that include the following:

- Extension programming, such as 4-H, environmental stewardship, family and child development
- Small business and community development
- Agricultural research, including forestry and small ruminants
- Community fundraising

"Working with the PRVCP is a chance for Alabama A&M and Alabama Extension to make Alabama better by expanding outreach to diverse audiences in North Alabama." -Majed El-Dweik



extension
SCHOOL OF LAND & ENVIRONMENT
Dr. Millie
Murphree



Escambia County Extension Coordinator, Millie Murphree, is all smiles for hosting the Small Ruminant Team's FAMACHA Card Use Certification Workshop on April 4, 2024! (Photo: Millie Murphree)

Urban Agriculture

Rethink Ag Learning

Breeding for Parasite Control

Gastrointestinal parasitism is among the leading causes of death and decreased production among goats in the southeast. Parasitic infections can delay growth, cause weight loss, and lead to higher mortality rates. Initiatives like Alabama Extension's Breeding for Sustainable Control of Gastrointestinal Parasites in Meat Goats builds the capacity of producers to test and treat goats for parasites and to raise goat breeds that are less prone to parasites.

2023 Impacts

- **2,530** participated in the Small Ruminant Production Webinar Series.
- **6,541** participants participated in the Small Ruminants Program.

As a result of this training, goat and sheep producers can lower animal mortality rates; implement strategic deworming practices; propagate resistance breeds; use integrated pasture management; apply best practices in reproductive management; reduce veterinary drug expenses; and increase the availability of lamb and goat meat for consumer food markets.

Adopting parasite management practices helps small ruminant producers to keep animals healthy, thus reducing mortality rates.

ROI: 436:1 – *Using small ruminant practices reduces animal replacement costs.*







2:01 min.

Veteran gardener, Booker poses in his barn.



The Booker Farm:

Helping a Community in Need

A fresh start for an Alabama veteran

In 2006, J. D. Booker retired and returned home to Alabama. Like other African Americans of the New Great Migration, he longed to escape the city life and return to quieter surroundings like where he was born and raised. Booker found his quiet spot, 17.5 acres of untamed land in Toney, Alabama, which he eventually named The Booker Farm.

“I bought the farm three years before I retired,” Booker said. “I wanted to get out of the noise, get away and get back to streams and hear water running and relax to help me recover.”

Unfortunately, the land came with many challenges. However, with some help from the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, The Booker Farm is now on a mission to conserve natural resources. The farm also serves as a helping hand in the community and a source of farming therapy for Booker and other military veterans who experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Early Days of The Booker Farm

In earlier days, The Booker Farm experienced flooding, and with flooding came problems such as soil erosion and debris.

“I knew farming but had not farmed for 25 to 30 years, 40 years really,” Booker said with a chuckle. “There were so many problems with erosion, invasive weeds and all kinds of growth. It was a really bad-shaped farm, but I wanted to do conservation. I wanted to make sure we did soil control, the plants, the trees and clean out the dry creek because it was filled with debris. It was a mountain of work, so I reached out to Alabama A&M. I knew how to farm but I had no sense of conservation.”

Booker was referred to Alabama Extension. Marcus Garner, an urban regional Extension agent, and Karnita Garner, an environmental Extension specialist, were among the first to respond. Developing gardening plots, a wildlife habitat and a research demonstration site were some of the options presented to Booker for his land and the rest is history.

“Alabama A&M (Alabama Extension) helped me with workshops and doing various types of vegetables and planting,” Booker said.

Alabama Extension also referred Booker to conservation agencies that assisted with the flooding.

“Now we have terraces (to control flooding), and our hayfield has no erosion problems,” Booker said.

Helping the Community

Today, The Booker Farm is a limited liability company with a mission to preserve and conserve natural resources while maximizing farm operations. Over the years, the farm has served as an outreach venue for Alabama Extension and other community programs for youth, older adults and disabled veterans.

“I started out with just one little plot of vegetables and then the neighborhood was looking at the farm,” Booker said. “There was one lady just walking up and down the road and she said, ‘Oh that farm looks good.’ She was on a walker, and I found out she was an elderly person. So, I picked her some vegetables and took them down to her house. She was shocked and started crying because she had no idea that it was not going to cost her anything.”

Booker said the farm has helped him realize that there was a need accessing fresh vegetables in his community. He made flyers to let people know there was free produce available on his farm, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Booker’s impact on the community did not stop there.

“I am a combat veteran and I have PTSD,” Booker said. “In California, they taught us how to manage PTSD, and farming is therapy for us, so I started planning and doing workshops for veterans.”

Growth of The Booker Farm

The back acreage of The Booker Farm is used to grow hay, while vegetable planting is reserved for the three main garden plots that are visible to visitors as they arrive. The garden has yielded kale, cabbage, greens, okra, tomatoes, an assortment of peppers, butter beans, sweet corn and other vegetables. At Alabama Extension’s urging, Booker now sells his produce at three farmer’s markets in the area, although he has probably given away more than he sold.

Discover Alabama Extension

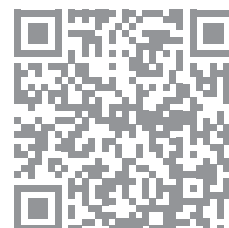
When the farm was first established, Booker had a lot of questions. He is grateful to Alabama Extension for answering most of them, from soil testing to keeping better business records. He encourages everyone to reach out to Extension.

“Alabama Extension is there to help people,” he said.

Like Alabama Extension, Booker and his farm are also there to help people. Booker developed The Booker Farm as a quiet place of refuge. With Alabama Extension’s help, he also turned it into a community resource for therapeutic gardening and fresh vegetables.

Supporting entrepreneurs, landowners and small farmers is just one of the many ways Alabama Extension delivers solutions for life’s everyday challenges. Extension educators are strong community partners, bringing practical ways to support homes, farms, people and communities.

Follow the QR code on the first page to watch Booker’s interview or go to www.aces.edu/go/4470.



2:01 min.



Okra plant (Photo by Janet Guynn)



Calhoun county youth learn more about natural water resources. (Photo by Hayes Jackson)



Urban Extension Agent Allyson Shabel demonstrates container gardening as a means of water conservation. (Photo by Hayes Jackson)



Urban Agriculture

Urban Green

Slow drip to savings

The Earth's surface is 71 percent water, yet only 3 percent is freshwater that helps to sustain life. This makes water one of the most valuable natural resources in the world. Yet according to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans use an average of 82 gallons of water a day or 570 gallons a week. Alabama Extension's Urban Green program educates consumers about various conservation practices to better manage and conserve natural resources like water.

2023 Impacts

- 15,950 individuals were trained.

Pre- and post-test surveys among 957 individuals revealed the following:

- 88 percent (842) learned four ways to conserve water in landscapes.
- 71 percent (679) increased their knowledge of how irrigation systems impact water conservation.
- 66 percent (632) increased their knowledge overall in understanding the importance of water conservation.

Water conservation strategies protect the valuable resource that sustains all life.

ROI: 48:1 – Drip irrigation systems can save consumers up to 50% on their water bills.



Morgan County Beekeeper

A Longtime Friend of Extension

A retired teacher learns beekeeping.

When Penny Roy, a beekeeper in Morgan County, had a major surgery, she worried about who would be able to care for her backyard bees while she recovered. However, with one phone call, her friend Allyson Shabel — an Alabama Cooperative Extension System urban regional agent — was there to help.

“They (Extension agents) are so hospitable, genuine and community oriented,” Roy said. “She came out twice and treated my hives, and I was very surprised and thankful. Not just anybody could have done that for me.”

This is just one of the many interactions that Roy has had with Alabama Extension over the years. From helping get her started with beekeeping to providing current management information, Extension has been there for Roy every step of the way on her beekeeping journey.

Getting Started

The National Honey Board estimates there are approximately 115,000 to 125,000 beekeepers in the United States. Most of these keepers are hobbyists with less than 25 hives. Roy, who is a retired schoolteacher, is glad to be among them. As an elementary science teacher for 25 years, Roy was fortunate to find her way into beekeeping

when a parent during a field day offered her hives. Because she didn’t know much about bees, she turned to Alabama Extension for help, and that is where she met Shabel.

That first interaction was nine years ago. Today, Roy continues to partner with Alabama Extension to share her knowledge of beekeeping with others in the community. Roy said she turns to Extension to learn the best management practices for her apiary.

“When you know that you have a research-backed authority that is freely giving you answers to questions, that helps you to narrow down and choose what you want to do in your beehive,” Roy said.

Roy gathers information from other beekeepers as she manages her hives, but always keeps Alabama Extension’s information in the back of her mind.

Beekeeping Benefits

While beekeeping is not without its painful stings, there are benefits to being a beekeeper. Roy has built up an immunity to pollen and other air pollutants. In addition, she provides her products to the community.

“I have sold bees before and I have gifted honey to family, friends and my pastor — and I love doing



that,” Roy said. “I make a salve out of the beeswax that has become very popular with family and friends, and people call and ask me for it now.”

Another benefit is forging strong relationships with Alabama Extension staff.

History with Extension

Roy’s relationship with Alabama Extension did not just start with beekeeping.

“I was a science teacher and I found that Extension was really good to provide for me,” Roy said. “There were many times that I had them come into my classroom and help me teach subjects. They had so much in-depth knowledge and the kids loved seeing a different face.”

Although she was aware of what Extension offered as a science teacher, she soon discovered other Extension resources.

“I learned that Extension offered classes to the public and in subjects that I was interested in, so I have taken as many classes as I can,” Roy said. “I am always shocked at how available the agents are. I had no idea that was available in Alabama, and I am very glad to find them as a resource for me now in retirement.”

Discover Alabama Extension

In the same way the Extension staff is dedicated to her, Roy, a beekeeping hobbyist, is a true and longtime friend of Alabama Extension. Roy advises people to stop by their local Extension office to pick up some additional information and discover what Alabama Extension can offer.

“They need to get in touch with Alabama Extension if they have an agricultural need,” Roy said. “I have called them about pecan trees. I have talked to them concerning my raised beds, my greenhouse, diseases in my plants and beekeeping. I’ve been pleasantly surprised that Alabama provides this to the community.”

Supporting Alabama beekeepers is just one of the many ways Alabama Extension delivers solutions for life’s everyday challenges. Extension educators are strong community partners, bringing practical ways to support homes, farms, people and communities.

Follow the QR code to watch Roy’s interview or go to www.aces.edu/go/4469.



1:31 min.

Urban Agriculture

Be Bug-Free

Integrated Pest Management and Community Farms

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a new program area, and educational programs are in development. IPM assistance, however, is routinely provided to the Madison County community farm – The People's Patch and other farm operations across the state.

IPM programs and services deliver research-based strategies, as well as sustainable and timely solutions to resolve pest problems many small fruit and vegetable farmers encounter every day. By following these practices, farmers can improve on-farm revenue (income) and reduce the negative impacts of pest management practices on the environment.







Escambia County FAMACHA Card Use Certification Workshop participants test their knowledge hands-on by scoring goats with the Small Ruminant Team with the FAMACHA Scoring System. (Photo: Millie Murphree)



Let's Grow a M.E.A.L. (Montgomery, Elmore, Autauga) participants plant potatoes.



People's Patch Community Farm on the AAMU campus.



Autauga, and Lowndes) elementary school



MU campus



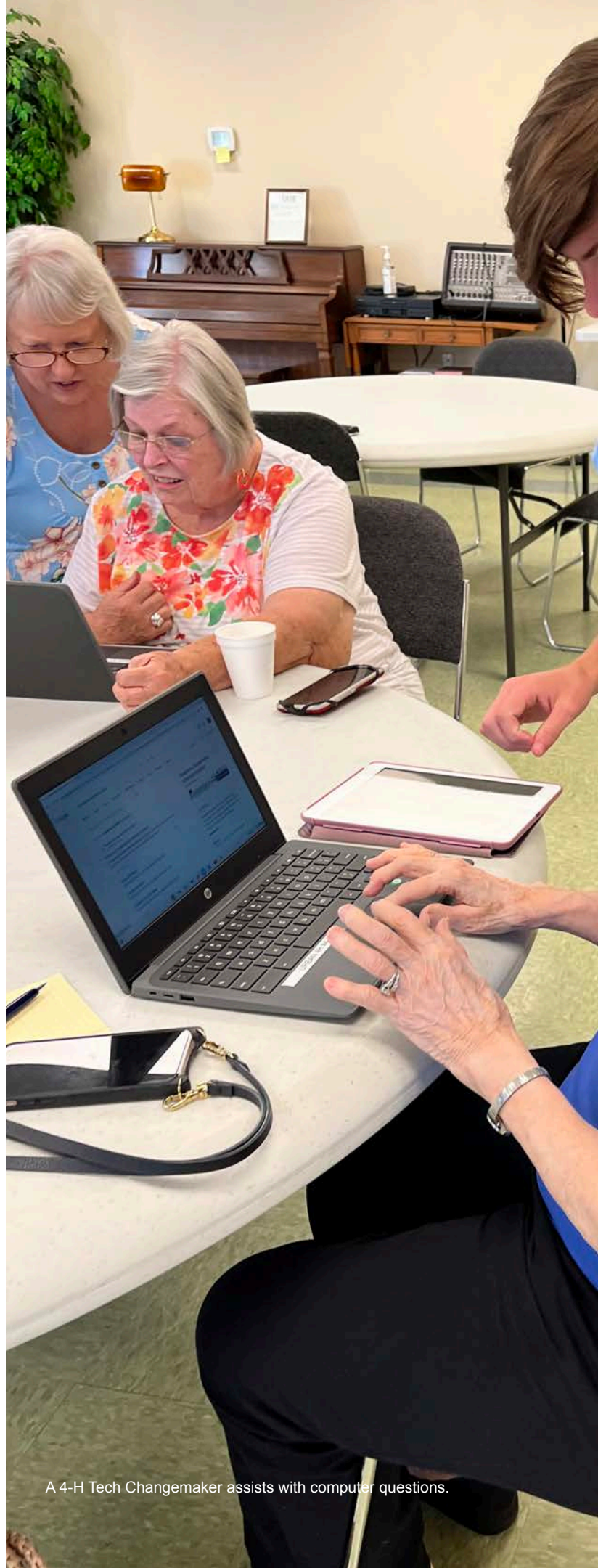
Plasticulture demonstration at the AAMU Agribition Center.



AAMU 4-H Tech Changemakers pose at the SAI 2023 conference.



4-H Tech Changemakers



A 4-H Tech Changemaker assists with computer questions.



Alabama 4-H at AAMU

A Path to Digital Literacy

4-H Tech Changemakers

The Alabama Digital Expansion Division of ADECA (The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs) developed the Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan to ensure that all Alabamians not only have affordable and reliable Internet access, but the opportunity to learn digital literacy skills. In developing this plan, there was evidence of a direct link between Internet access and digital skills development. For example, individuals living in low-income households, those over the age of 60, and people living with disabilities who encountered barriers to broadband access were less likely to have adequate digital literacy skills.

The National Skills Coalition further reports that individuals with just one digital skill can earn an average of 23 percent more than those in a job requiring no digital skills. Programs like 4-H Tech Changemakers was designed to close the digital divide by offering digital skills training. Alabama 4-H Tech Changemakers also close the digital divide by targeting underserved people ages 18-45 who lack digital literacy skills and who seek to enhance their workforce development skills.

2023 Impacts

In 2023, 23 Alabama 4-H Tech Changemakers reached 2,091 adults and trained them on how to use drones, workforce development resources, and digital marketing strategies on social media. As a result of this training, individuals revised their resumes and landed interviews where they were previously denied. In addition, a volunteer firefighter expressed more interest in drone certification and shared ways in how he can use drones as a firefighter.

Digital skills enable people to be competitive in the job market.

ROI: 572:1 – Knowledge of one digital skill boosts annual earnings by 23%.



Sign up for Alabama 4-H at www.aces.edu/AAMU4H



4-H participant with VR headset.



Students gather inside the Mobile STEM Lab.



4-H students working on a robotics model.



Learning about drone capabilities.



Community Resource Development

Possibilities Beyond High School

Career Countdown

In 2023, the graduation rate for high school students in Alabama was 90.04 percent, which was a 1.84 increase from 2022. However, there was a 6-percentage point gap between the graduation rate and the college and career readiness rate of 84 percent among high school students in 2023. In Alabama, college readiness involves achieving certain scores on the ACT or ACT WorkKeys tests, earning college credit, taking a series of career technical education courses, earning an industry certification, participating in an apprenticeship program, or enlisting in the armed forces. Research indicates that students who engage in college and career readiness activities are more likely to graduate from college and earn higher salaries than their peers with just high school diplomas or less.

Alabama Extension's Career Countdown is an effective college and career readiness program that helps students identify career possibilities beyond high school. Participants engage in real-life simulations of career choices and lifestyles and learn how to create an education plan and a career plan. Educational plans may involve undergoing vocational training or attending a two-year or four-year college or university to ultimately achieve career goals.

2023 Impacts

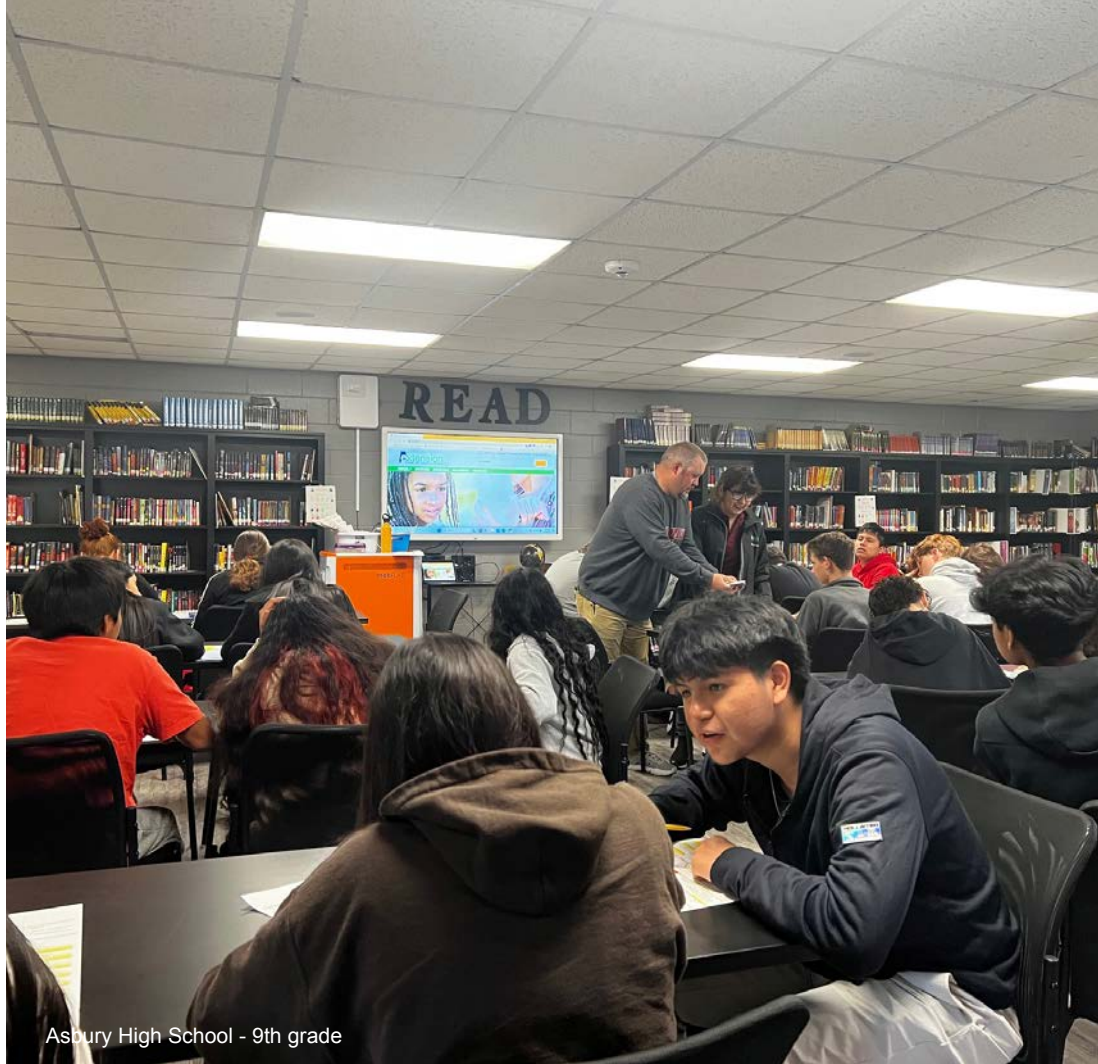
Last year the Career Countdown program reached 1,321 students. Survey data among 1,029 students indicated the following:

- 597 students (58%) believed they would need more education after high school for their career.
- 628 (61%) students will choose high school courses based upon their career choice.
- 617 (60%) believed they would need to use a budget to manage their money as an adult.

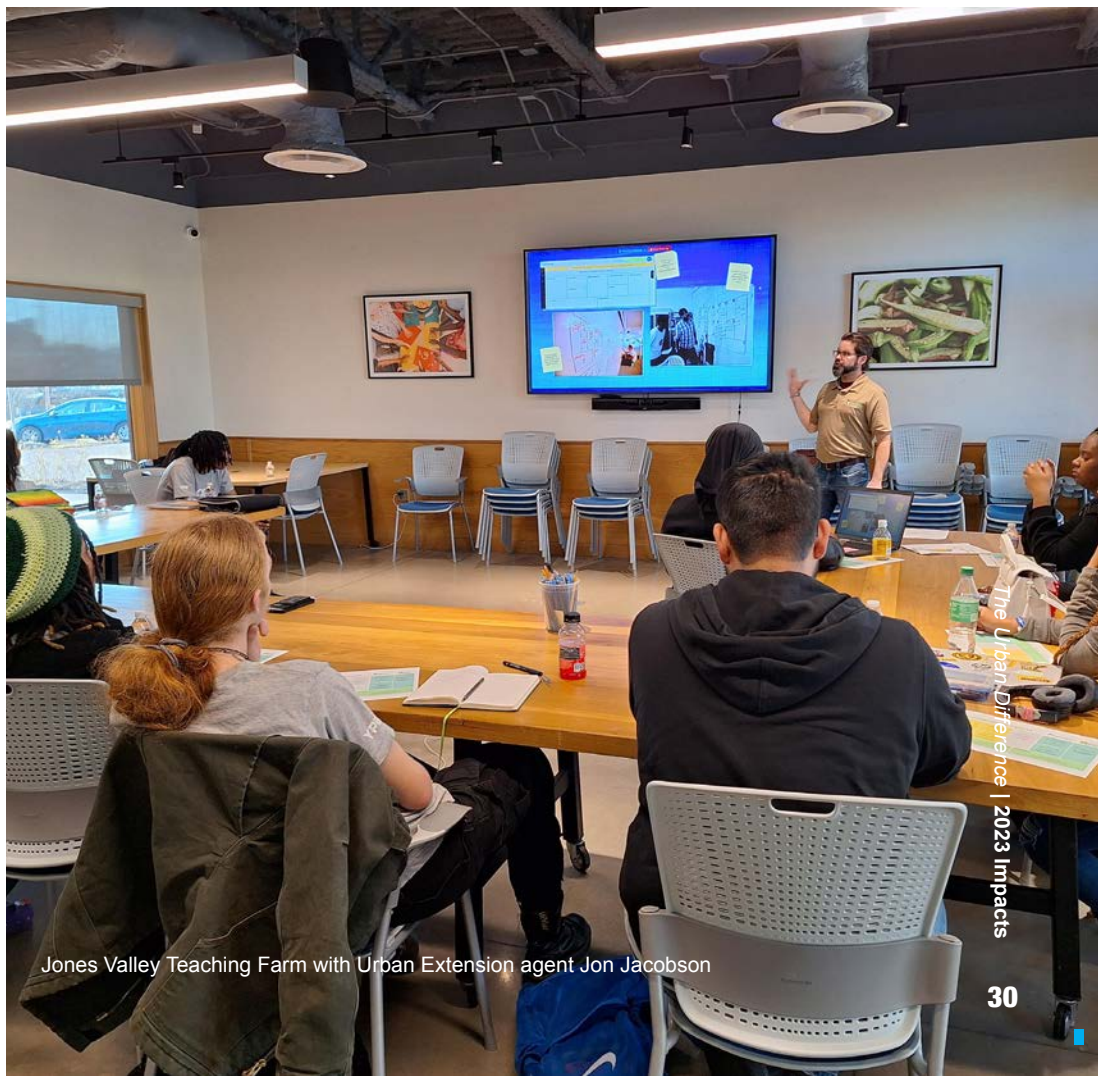
Career training enables students to create a roadmap to educational and career success.

ROI: 267: 1 – *Earning power is greater with education beyond high school.*





Asbury High School - 9th grade



Jones Valley Teaching Farm with Urban Extension agent Jon Jacobson



DRC PREP participants learn about soft skills.



Consumer Sciences and Personal Financial Management

Prepping for the Job Market

PREP: Promoting Readiness for Employment Possibilities

The Alabama Workforce Council is working with partners to place 500,000 highly skilled people in the workforce by 2025. Many young people, however, lack the skills necessary for job success. These skills include soft skills such as analytical and creative thinking that are listed among the top skills workers need in 2023 and beyond. Programs like Promoting Readiness for Employment Possibilities (PREP) not only strengthens job search skills, but individuals can explore career paths and soft skills that are critical in today's job market. These skills help people to navigate the job market and to enter or re-enter Alabama's workforce. They also help to reduce the average time a person is unemployed from five to three months.

2023 Impacts

Last year 779 people participated in PREP. After completing the program, participants were significantly more confident in their ability to interview, dress appropriately for interviews, search for a job, improve soft skills, complete digital and paper job applications, and develop a resume.

A post-delayed survey taken three months after training among 77 participants indicated the following:

- 88 percent (68) revised their resume to fit specific jobs.
- 86 percent (66) used their resume to obtain employment.
- 97 percent (75) completed job applications.
- 95 percent (73) answered questions appropriately in interviews.
- 94 percent (72) dressed appropriately for interviews.

Job readiness programs boost the confidence of candidates and increase the chances of successful employment.

ROI: 296:1 – *Job search education can reduce the length of unemployment.*

Successful Aging with Mother Draper

A first-hand account of Extension's benefits.

Willie Mae Draper of Madison County, Alabama experienced a magical, once-in-a-lifetime moment – she became a centenarian. Over the years, Draper has been a faithful participant of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's Successful Aging Initiative (SAI) Conference. The SAI program and conference help older adults maintain their quality of life as they go through the aging process. Draper has a special connection to the conference. The same conference that she has faithfully attended for years was first started by her own grandson.

Humble Beginnings

Upon entering the room with the help of a walker, Draper still moves faster than some people nearly 20 or 30 years her junior.

Although her hearing is not what it used to be, her eyes and mind are clear. While setting up for the interview, she shared some information about her life.

"I grew up in Triana," Draper said. "There were five of us children – two girls and three boys."

At the age of 10, Draper developed diphtheria, a serious bacterial infection, and almost succumbed to the disease. Yet, by a miracle, she is still here.

"I really liked school, but my mother did not want me to go to school," Draper said.

You can still see the longing in her eyes when she said, "I did go back and get my GED, though."



The role Draper is most proud of is the role of wife and mother. She proudly tells people that she was married to Dave Draper, Senior for 51 years, 7 months and 3 days. Together, they have three children – a daughter and two sons (Betty, Dave Jr. and Jesse).

Like her late husband, Draper is a pillar of the Huntsville community and is affectionately called Mother Draper. Mother is a title given to older women in African-American churches who serve as leaders, educators and mentors to younger women. Even at nearly 100 years old, Draper continues to mentor younger generations.

The SAI Conference

Draper's grandson, attorney Kevin Crenshaw, was one of the founders of the SAI Conference. He, along with Alabama Extension family and child development specialists and the late Extension 1890 Administrator, Virginia Caples, launched the conference in Madison County in 2002. The Virginia Caples Lifelong Learning Institute (VCLLI) – named in honor of Caples – was also created out of this initiative.

The VCLLI staff and county Extension agents now coordinate the SAI Conference statewide with support from a program specialist in Calhoun, Lauderdale,

Madison, Mobile and Montgomery counties. Both the SAI Conference and the VCLLI are designed to help the older population, their family and caregivers through the aging process.

“You don’t have to reach a certain age to need help,” Draper said. “Sometimes people just need help or need someone to come by and talk to them. When you get older and you think somebody cares about you and thinks about you, it makes you feel better,”

Draper has a live-in caretaker, Brenda Toney, who has taken care of Draper since Draper’s husband passed in 1998. She is responsible for taking notes during the SAI Conference and uses the information to assist in her role as a caregiver. Draper, on the other hand, is there to support the program her grandson began and encourages others to attend the event as well. She said the SAI Conference is an outing she looks forward to every year.

“She (Toney) will take me to help me and to encourage me, and wherever I go, I’m gonna meet a friend,” Draper said.

Discover Alabama Extension

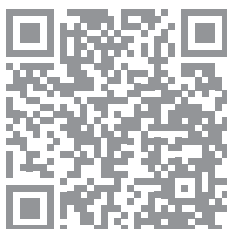
While the SAI Conference has helped Draper in her golden years, she has her own secret to living a long and successful life.

“My mama always taught me, before I got saved, how to treat people,” Draper said. “You treat them right regardless of if they don’t treat you right. I feel like these are some of the things that helped me to live, because I want to treat people just like I want to be treated.”

Draper believes that kindness has added years to her life. On November 25, 2023, Draper will celebrate her 100th birthday.

Supporting older adults to age successfully is just one of the many ways Alabama Extension delivers solutions for life’s everyday challenges. Extension educators are strong community partners, bringing practical ways to support homes, farms, people and communities.

Follow the QR code to watch Mother Draper’s interview.



1:14 min.



Calhoun County SAI 2023 Participants learn useful aging facts.



Madison County SAI 2023 Participants learn about spine health.



Madison County SAI 2023 participants pose for the camera after the panel discussion.

Family and Child Development

Balancing Acts

Successful Aging Initiative

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 36 million falls occur each year among older adults over the age of 65, resulting in hospitalization and even death. In Alabama, there were 85,275 falls resulting in injury with 28 percent (23,877) occurring among adults over 65. Unfortunately falls can threaten a senior's quality of life and prevent them from independent living.

Alabama Extension at AAMU's Successful Aging Initiative was designed to help seniors to live in their own homes in good health and as an active member of their community. That's why fall prevention is a valuable part of this training.

2023 Impacts

In 2023, 4,127 participated in educational sessions. Pre- and post-test survey scores among 347 older adults indicated the following:

- 25 percent increase in identifying five things in their home that would reduce fall risks.
- 19 percent increase in knowing how to check their home for fall risks.

Pre- and post-test scores among 109 participants measuring their confidence in handling falls indicated the following:

- 214 percent increase in showing others how to get up from a fall.
- 188 percent increase in creating a fall plan.
- 87 percent increase in safely getting up from a fall.
- 56 percent increase in recovery from a fall.

Fall prevention education helps older adults to identify home risks that could lead to serious, if not fatal, injuries.

ROI: 109:1 – *Fall prevention training reduces medical costs.*





Dr. Dorothy Brandon goes over information during a learning session.



Tim Smith, and Destinee Simmons collect e-waste during a SAI Waste Drive in Madison County. (Photo: Jerome Saintjones).



Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources

E-cycling for Consumers

EMEP: E-waste Management Education Program

Proper discarding of electronic waste (e-waste) will remain a global concern as people continue to rely on digital technology. Today, the United States generates nearly seven tons of electronic waste. By the year 2030, the Global Economic Forum reports that the world will generate nearly 82 tons of waste. This is a major concern since only 17.4 percent of e-waste is properly recycled. Local e-waste drives can help to properly dispose of e-waste before being discarded in public landfills.

The EMEP: E-waste Management Education Program educates Alabama residents about the hazards of e-waste, the importance of recycling, and how to be good environmental stewards.

2023 Impacts

- 5,479 pounds of e-waste was collected from two e-waste drives and other activities.
- 116 printer cartridges were recycled via the small electronics recycling program

The e-Stewards Global Impact E-waste Calculator indicated:

- 17,700 (8.85 tons) pounds of e-waste was collected from 6 recycling drives.
- 24,671 pounds of CO2 was diverted from entering the atmosphere.
- 508 pounds of toxic metals were diverted from local landfills, protecting nearby soil and water resources.
- The initiatives saved over 5,977 pounds of critical precious metals, including 781 pounds of copper, 362 pounds of aluminum, 0.45 pounds (204 ounces) of gold, and 4,832 pounds of steel.

Recycling reduces landfill pollution and helps to reclaim precious metals and other materials.

ROI: 41:1 – E-waste recycling saves precious metals.



A participants at the Sunbelt Ago Expo tour the Mobile Nutrition Lab with Urban SNAP-Ed agent Adriane Langham.





Elementary school children learn proper handwashing in the Mobile Nutrition Lab.



Urban SNAP-Ed Agent Della Taylor conducts a cooking demonstration.





Human Nutrition, Diet and Health

Thrifty Food Shopping

Urban SNAP-Ed

One thing is certain, you must eat to survive. But how do you stretch your budget as food costs continue to climb? Eating on the go offers convenience, but the average cost for a decent meal is around \$15. That money adds up when a family is involved. Eating at home not only helps consumers to stretch their food dollars, but they have control over what they eat, including the ingredients, portion sizes, and the overall nutritional value.

Urban SNAP-Ed strives to make meals easy, tasty, and affordable. This program is funded by Alabama Extension and the SNAP division of the Alabama Department of Human Resources under the umbrella of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. The program targets limited-resource individuals and offers basic nutrition classes in an easy and fun format that allows participants to adopt healthy eating habits. In addition, it teaches participants how to select and prepare tasty nutritional meals at home by providing ways to make food purchases more affordable.

2023 Impacts

5,403 participated in the program. In addition, approximately 2,762 adult participants completed the pre- and post-assessments resulting in the following:

- 65 percent (1,795) identified foods on sale or used coupons to save money.
- 77 percent (2,127) used a grocery list.
- 71 percent (1,961) compared prices before shopping.
- 72 percent (1,989) chose healthy foods.
- 66 percent (1,823) read nutrition facts labels and nutrition ingredient lists.

Nutrition education enables consumers to not only save money, but to prepare healthier meals at home.

ROI: 4:1 – *Consumers save money by cooking meals at home.*

Human Nutrition, Diet and Health

Walk to Good Health

Walking like a CHAMPION

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 1 in 2 adults in the United States do not get enough physical activity. In Alabama, 30.1 percent of adults are inactive outside routine work. Such inactivity leads to more than one hundred billion dollars in health care costs. Just thirty minutes of physical activity such as walking can improve cardiovascular health, strengthen bones, reduce body weight, and boost physical endurance.

To help Alabamians improve their health, Alabama Extension offers the Walking Like a CHAMPION (WLAC) campaign. WLAC encourages Alabama residents to improve their overall health by eating the right foods and adding physical activity outside their work environment to their daily routines. Walking is a great form of exercise for people of all age groups.

2023 Impacts

Last year 8,523 direct contacts were made, and 508 WLAC participants logged a total of 5,155,904 steps or 2,132 miles.

A post-delayed assessment among 97 participants indicated that participants maintained physical activity and lost anywhere from 5 to 32 pounds.

Routine physical activity like walking helps people to manage health risks associated with chronic diseases.

ROI: 423:1 – *Physical activity can reduce health risks and medical costs.*



Walking like a CHAMPION participant holding naturally flav
Juani Christian)



NAREB-Huntsville joins in on the Walking Like a CHAM
Tamarra Warren)



y flavored water (Photo



CHAMPION fun. (Photo by



Measuring Glucose Levels (Photo by Janet Guynn)



Thank You to our 2023 Partners

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