

ASRED Report– August 2021

1. Administrative News

- a. Dr. Ashley Stokes is Dean and Director, University of Tennessee, as of February 2021.
- b. Dr. J. Mike Phillips is Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System as of March 2021.
- c. The University of Florida is in the search process to replace Dr. Nick Place, who moved to the role of Dean at the University of Georgia.
- d. About half the Extension Directors in the region have been in their current roles less than two years.
- e. Dr. Kevin Kephart is NIFA Liaison to the Southern Region.
- f. Andrea Putman has been hired as the APLU Assistant Vice President, Communications and External Partnerships; Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources (FANR).
- g. Dr. John Green has been hired as Director of the Southern Rural Development Center.

2. Awards

- a. Dr. Gary Lemme, retired Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, was recognized in April 2021 as winner of the ASRED Distinguished Leadership Award.
- b. Dr. Ed Jones, Associate Dean and Director, Virginia Tech, has been selected to receive the 2021 National Ruby Award from Epsilon Sigma Phi, the national honor society for extension professionals. The National Ruby Award is the most prestigious recognition presented by ESP and recognizes truly outstanding thinking, performance and leadership in Extension.
- c. The highest award recognizing programmatic excellence nationally is the National Excellence in Extension Award, given by ECOP and NIFA. The Southern Region has won this award the last two years (James D. Ellis, University of Florida, 2020, and Matthew Devereaux, 2019, University of Tennessee) and six of the last ten years. Our region is once again a strong contender for the National award.
- d. The Southern Region has won the National Extension Diversity Award three times in the last decade, most recently by Ronald Cox, Oklahoma State University, in 2018. Our region being chosen as the national winner again this year is a likely possibility.

3. The recently renamed Extension Foundation has announced a new tool for inventorying Extension programs, the National Registry of Cooperative Extension Programs and Assets (NRCEPA). It is being piloted by the National Extension Climate Initiative (NECI). This is planned to be a living inventory tool useful for program planning as well as supportive of partnership development and legislative advocacy.
4. National 4-H Congress was not held in 2020, which was the 100th anniversary year. The 100th anniversary theme will be carried forward into the in-person event planned for

November 2021. Some states will be sending both 2020 and 2021 4-H delegations. Although being planned as a face to face meeting, some virtual components will be added.

5. ASRED Directors recently met with Wendy Powers, incoming Chair of ECOP, to provide input regarding ECOP priorities for 2022. Strategic Directions 1 and 3 were judged most important and are:
 - a. Increase visibility and recognition of the Cooperative Extension System as a provider of evidence-based education and services and as a valuable partner to federal and national non-federal entities through improved communications of program impacts and successes.
 - b. Expand federal and non-federal resources available to Extension. The more frequently mentioned advocacy areas were health, broadband and 4-H youth. However considerable discussion occurred, with broad consensus, that our advocacy areas should also include Food and Fiber Production, Processing, Marketing and Safety.
6. The ECOP Program Committee and the Budget and Legislative Committee are working together on six concept papers that can be used in advocacy and program development. In addition, the Program Committee, with involvement of southern region leaders and a NIFA liaison, is working on Program Action Teams in each area. They are:
 - a. Workforce Development and Recovery
 - b. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 - c. Urban Agriculture and Extension
 - d. Broadband Infrastructure, Access and Literacy
 - e. Climate Extension
 - f. Health Extension
 - g. 4-H Positive Youth Development Pathways Project

Each of these teams includes Extension program leaders from across the nation and a NIFA NPL, as well as non-LGU representatives. Each team will design a national leadership model for a particular program and work together to secure funding. All of the teams have some startup funds either from ECOP, appropriate Foundations, and/or from NIFA via the Extension Foundation National Technology in Agriculture Extension program. In addition to the more traditional ANR, FCS, CRD and 4-H programs important to our region, each of the above provide opportunities for funding and program development.