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Third Thursday 10-2007

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Recommended Citation

Institute of Agriculture, "Third Thursday 10-2007" (2007). *Third Thursday*.
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_thirdthursday/9

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UT INSTITUTE OF Agriculture

News for Employees, Students & Friends

October 2007

UT VETERINARY DEAN TO RETIRE

Michael Blackwell, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine has announced his plans to retire. Blackwell, who came to UT in 2000, will leave his position January 1, 2008, with his retirement effective March 1.

In 2000, Blackwell became the second African-American dean in the university's history. He came to UT from the federal Office of the Surgeon General, where he served as Chief of Staff. Prior to that position, he was deputy director of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine.

Blackwell says he came to Knoxville with specific goals in mind for the college, and he found the faculty, staff and students have provided support and guidance to achieve them. "Over the past seven years we have pulled together to move the college forward by expanding our programs, personnel, curriculum, budget and facilities," Blackwell said in a letter to the college. "We have developed and implemented progressive policies and procedures, especially relative to personnel management. In addition, we have achieved national and international relevance in public health, homeland security, and veterinary social work. For this, I am most proud." Blackwell added the strong programs will continue to flourish under new leadership.

Joe DiPietro, vice president for agriculture, is planning to meet with college faculty and administration to discuss a national search for a new dean. "We are grateful to Dean Blackwell for the strong and effective leadership and service he has provided the college and University of Tennessee during his tenure," DiPietro said. "We wish him the very best with new ventures and opportunities upon his retirement."

UT BOARD APPROVES BIOFUELS BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

The executive committee of the UT Board of Trustees has approved a business partnership between the university and cellulosic biofuels pioneer Mascoma Corporation to establish Tennessee as a biofuels industry leader.

The University of Tennessee and Mascoma plan to jointly build and operate a five million gallon per year cellulosic ethanol biorefinery in Monroe County.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT: STATE OF THE INSTITUTE GROWS, CHANGES

In late September, I had the pleasure of giving my second State of the Institute address. As with my first in 2006, there was a tremendous amount of positive news to report. I'm excited about what we've accomplished together. We had a very, very good year, and in my address I outlined the positive trends that our programs, enrollment, and research funding have achieved.



Joe DiPietro

One of the Institute's strengths lies in the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) majors we produce. The Institute graduates some 28 percent of the UT system's B.S. STEM majors, 10 percent of the system's M.S. STEM majors, and 14 percent of the system's STEM Ph.D.s. Graduation of STEM majors is a key issue in higher education nationally.

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Michael Blackwell

Economic impacts of Family and Consumer Sciences, inside



Go Big Orange— Plant Sciences doctoral student **Jason Abercrombie** showed his Big Orange spirit by painting fluorescent proteins in the shape of the Power T in tobacco using a technique called agroinfiltration—a temporary tattoo of sorts for the plant.

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FCS INITIATIVES: AN INVESTMENT IN FAMILIES

by Shirley Hastings,
Associate Dean, UT Extension



Shirley Hastings

One of our greatest strengths as a state is our people. Tennessee has a long and proud heritage of independent and productive families who have shaped our state and contributed to our nation. This is still true today: however, societal trends, shifts from rural to urban living, and changes in our demographics have contributed to a complex situation that leaves many families struggling to manage their resources and provide a strong family base. Without strong families, schools, communities, and other public entities suffer. Ultimately, the success of individual families shapes the success of our state.

The state of Tennessee continues to have among the lowest rankings in child and family well being. Tennessee ranks 43 out of 50 states in the latest rankings that are based on best to worst. In addition, Tennessee ranks second nationally in the rate of bankruptcies and fourth nationally in the rate of divorces. These rankings indicate that Tennessee families need educational programs to help them make wiser choices.

To address these and other important issues, the Family and Consumer Sciences Department has developed a strategic plan featuring comprehensive, interdisciplinary initiatives. The initiatives are based on one or more of the four knowledge areas of Family and Consumer Sciences: Family Economics, Health and Safety, Human Development, and Nutrition and Food Safety. For example, they address critical issues of parenting, diet, health and wellness, and money management.

Each initiative features a background statement, comprehensive curriculum, implementation strategies, evaluation instruments, and impact indicators. Specific initiatives are introduced annually during a professional development conference, which is held in late July to allow agents time to learn about the initiatives before writing their Individual Action agendas for the following year. Since 2004 eleven initiatives have been introduced. Each FCS agent is expected to plan county programs in at least two areas each year. This approach has allowed resources to be focused on the highest priority areas and with agents utilizing the same curriculum and impact indicators, it is possible to aggregate data and demonstrate impact of educational programs. For example one of the first initiatives introduced in 2004 was Tennessee Saves. To date the Tennessee Saves curriculum has been implemented in 65 counties with over 80,000 direct contacts and four million contacted through media. In addition, economic impacts to the state are a total estimated savings and investment generated of \$6,152,082 and annual debt reduction of more than 9.5 million.

A key component of the planning and implementing of the initiatives are the Leadership Teams and work groups. The teams and work groups are made up of agents representing each region, program leaders, and UT and TSU Extension Specialist(s). Teams have been instrumental in helping design and pilot curricula and evaluation instruments.

The concept of program initiatives allows us to leverage resources to increase the measurable impacts of programs. The results of this expanded effort have improved the quality of life for Tennessee families and communities. The long term impact is an economic one.

WHAT'S NEWS

The College of Veterinary Medicine's International Multi-Task Cooperative and Exchange Program with China fosters an educational exchange between the U.S. and China. In December, a college faculty member will travel to China to learn about Eastern medicine and will offer pain management training to Chinese veterinarians.

Dean Michael Blackwell has been asked to join **Governor Phil Bredesen's** delegation on a trade

mission to China this fall. Officials from China, recognizing the need to strengthen the country's public health infrastructure, have asked the college to provide a public health short course. The college will be a major force in the development of veterinary medicine and its role in public health in China.

Books & Blooms in the UT Gardens is a free and fun family story time held at 10:30 a.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays from September to November. The fall programs include

stories and nature craft projects. On **October 25**, book lady Dottie Stamper will tell Halloween stories, and children will learn how to make a leaf mask using colorful leaves collected at the UT Gardens. Experienced UT librarian Sandy Leach will tell fall harvest stories on **November 8**, and garden staff will provide children with nature art projects using fruit and seeds harvested at the gardens. Events are open to children of all ages. Pack your lunch and picnic in the gardens afterward. Follow

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NEW TOBACCO GROWER RESEARCH CENTER

Since the federal tobacco program ended in 2005, tobacco production has changed and reliable data about the industry has not kept pace with the transition.

To support the long-term sustainability and vitality of U.S. tobacco production, **Philip Morris USA has funded the establishment of the Center for Tobacco Grower Research at the Institute of Agriculture.** The center will coordinate with other land grant universities in tobacco producing states to provide timely research in the areas of U.S. tobacco production, economics, and markets.

Daniel Green, familiar throughout the tobacco community for his work with the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association and as a former Extension associate working on tobacco policy issues, coordinates the new center. Green is working with UT's well known tobacco policy analyst **Kelly Tiller**.

The center is charged with publishing regular summaries of industry-related research. The information will be available to the entire industry, including agricultural organizations and leadership, manufacturers and former, current, and potential future growers.

Philip Morris USA provided \$445,000 in funding to establish the center. Among the center's first projects is to create a database of growers. Green said the center needs the database to gather information about U.S. tobacco production. Grower participation is voluntary and only summary data will be available to the public. Green plans to publish the first summaries early in 2008.

For more information, visit www.TobaccoGrowerResearch.com or contact Green at 1-866-974-0414, e-mail dgreen19@utk.edu.



An estimated 1,400 alumni and friends participated in Ag Day 2007. The event, held on a sunny Saturday afternoon, showcased how units and initiatives at the Institute are having an impact across the state and nation. Also included were an array of fun activities. In a public address, UT President John Petersen spoke of the excitement surrounding the Biofuels Initiative and the "smart ideas and leadership" that drive the Institute and its programs.



TENNESSEE'S CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR

Rob Holland has been appointed director for the UT Center for Profitable Agriculture. A partnership between the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation and **UT Extension**, the center's mission is to add value to Tennessee's economy through new, expanded and improved processing and marketing of agricultural commodities and farm resources.

As director, Holland will be responsible for leading and managing the educational programs offered by the center. He will work with other staff members to extend information from faculty at the university and from other state value-added centers to individual entrepreneurs, producer groups, commodity associations, and other state and federal agencies. The center offers one-on-one assistance with value-added projects, conducts educational programs for groups, and collaborates with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, USDA Rural Development, and others to conduct projects focused on adding value to agriculture and forest products.

Holland joined UT Extension in 1993 as an area specialist in farm management. In 1998, he was appointed Assistant Extension Specialist in the Agricultural Development Center, which grew to become the Center for Profitable Agriculture and moved from Knoxville to Spring Hill in 2002.

Since 2002, Holland has served as a financial feasibility specialist for

the center and has authored numerous publications, news articles, and teaching curricula.

Charles Goan, interim dean of UT Extension, and **Lacy Upchurch**, president

of the Tennessee Farm Bureau, expressed excitement over Holland's appointment, his achievements, and the leadership he is expected to bring to the center. Holland replaces **Dan Wheeler**, former state commissioner of agriculture and first director for the center. Wheeler retired June 30, after years of public service.



Rob Holland

SOFTWARE COURSE OFFERED FOR FARMERS, BUSINESSES

Earlier this month **six UT Extension offices in East Tennessee offered outreach training to interested producers and business owners** on use of the Quicken® record-keeping program.

While effective management of records for tax preparation and making production decisions is important at any time, this year is expected to be particularly challenging due to paperwork associated with the tough conditions farmers find themselves in because of the spring freeze and ongoing drought. Extension has responded with low-cost training on the popular software program.

WHAT'S NEWS, from page 2

signs for special parking on the day of the program.

John Riley, professor of agricultural economics, was among 323 attendees of the 2007 **Phi Kappa Phi National Triennial Convention** in Orlando, Fla., last month. Riley is a member of the UT Knoxville chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest, largest, and most selective all-discipline honor society.

The **Southeastern Sun Grant Center kicked off its Brown Bag Seminar Series** with two presentations in September. Others will follow in fall and spring semesters. Watch for updates at <http://sungrant.tennessee.edu/BBSeminar.htm>.

State animal emergency coordinator and retired College of Veterinary Medicine professor **Robert "Bob" Linnabary has been recognized for his contributions to animal care emergency planning and preparedness by the Tennessee Office of Homeland Security.** Linnabary was awarded an honorary commission as "Colonel, Aide de Camp" signed by Governor Phil Bredesen and presented by Rick Shipkowski, deputy director of the Tennessee Office of Homeland Security. He was presented the citation during a joint state and federal animal health officials meeting in Nashville.

VICE PRESIDENT, from page 1

Our record of STEM graduations is a good reason for students and parents to invest in us. Other metrics that stand out include being responsible for nearly 22 percent of UT system inventions; a 30 percent growth in CASNR M.S. and Ph.D. enrollment since 2004; and a 7.25% or \$2.2 million increase since fiscal year 2006 in total sponsored expenditures for the Institute as a whole.

In a competitive environment for research funding, I am particularly proud of our success to secure more than \$60 million in state research and capital funding for the Tennessee Biofuels Initiative. This initiative and the CVM's Center for Food Security and Preparedness demonstrate the

value of having the right people in place at the right time. We're providing national leadership in areas critical to the nation and its future.

Also in my address, I reported on the results of the Institute's first-ever Report Card. Grading is now underway for the second report card, to assess how we feel the Institute is performing. Contact my office at (865) 974-8265 if you haven't received an email about this effort. Lastly, in reviewing all we accomplished during the past year not only was I proud, but more importantly grateful for all our faculty, staff and students do that make it happen.

All the best,



WHAT'S NEWS, continued

Cattle producers interested in improving their production and management practices are invited to attend a beef cattle conference titled "**Beef Cattle Selection Decisions: Using EPDs and EID.**" Hosted by UT Martin and the Institute, the free public event will be held **October 30**, starting at 9:30 a.m. (CDT). The location will be the conference center at UT's Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center.

The Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program is now accepting farmer research grant applications. Applications are due by **November 15**. Farmers, ranchers or producer organizations in the U.S. Southern Region are eligible to apply for a Producer Grant. Full information and instructions can be found on the Web at: <http://www.southernsare.org>.

UTIA News is published monthly by the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture
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E11-1101-00-001-07

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