

WINTER 2026



# *The Messenger*

Newsletter of the Eastern Region Family and Community Education

Website: [Eastern.Tennessee.edu](http://Eastern.Tennessee.edu), then Click on **Family and Consumer Science**

Facebook: **Eastern Region FCE**

## **A note from your Eastern President: Marti Agler**

Welcome to the Holiday Season. We are all busy shopping, baking, visiting, and enjoying this wonderful celebration of joy!

Many things have been happening since we last made contact and, if you were not at State Conference, you may be not be in the "know"! So, let's catch-up!

Your Board reversed itself on the decision to not host the 2026 State Conference with certain conditions. Our method of organizing and curating it will be designed to serve as a model for subsequent years of greater efficiency, lesser cost, and more decision-making at the host (Region) level. Please volunteer your counties to serve in some capacity so we can show all TAFCE members how it can be done!! A lot is riding on our execution next year!

Members approved our suggested amendments to the Regional Bylaws at the Member Meeting in Murfreesboro. We will be supplying them to you as soon as the final modifications to the document are complete. The major changes were to allow for digital member meeting and voting when needed; to define "member in good standing" as one who has met all financial obligations to the organization at all levels; and to restate "emergency meeting" as "immediate need". Other changes were grammar, syntax, and punctuation corrections.

In planning for 2026, the decision was made to try something new by combining the summer Leadership Day and Spring Event into one overnight event in April. Details to help you can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Fall Conference will be held in Roane County in September.

Speaking of this newsletter, please do all Eastern Region members a favor by sharing the doings of your county and clubs. We can all benefit from good ideas successfully executed. It is NOT theft when someone complements you by using your ideas!

By the time you read this, your county will have been supplied the information for 2026 needed to complete your Planners. If you are not sure how to proceed, just ask, that is why you elected a Regional Board!

Welcome new Board members Joni Witherite (Cumberland) as Secretary and Leslie Sharpe (Union) as VP of Programs and 2026 Conference Chair. We will also be appointing, for Board review, new Action, Cultural Arts, and Education Chairs. If you are interested in serving on your Regional Board or know someone you might recommend, you have my email and number, let us know. We will also have a new UT Extension Regional Advisor in Megan Shelton, Sullivan County.

To all FCE members in the Eastern Region, thank you for your confidence in electing us to serve as your administrative leaders. We are very conscious of our responsibilities and confirm our intentions to serve you to the best of our abilities. Merry Christmas to each of you and your families and we hope 2026 is the best for you and our TAFCE Eastern Region!

Marti



**"Moving Mountains with FCE"**

**A note from Eastern Region President Advisor: Cindy Mishtal**

The last three years that I spent on the Eastern Region Board were the most exciting years of my life. I have learned more than I ever thought was possible. Thank you for the kindness and dedication you all have had in making our Eastern Region successful.

Our first event is scheduled for April 21 and April 22. This event will be held at the Westgate Resorts: River Terrace; 240 River Road, Gatlinburg. This is a new event that will be our spring retreat/leadership day combined. Please save the date and try your best to attend if possible. I have already booked my room and cannot wait for a new event in the Eastern Region.

Now to keep up the tradition of being a successful region, we need EVERYONE to be active in our 2026 TAFCE State Conference. Remember: There are No SMALL parts, just small actors! Quoted from the Best Christmas Pageant Ever! The dates for 2026 TAFCE State Conference are Sunday, November 15 through Wednesday, November 18, 2026. We will be at the same venue; River Terrace Resort & Convention Center, 240 River Road, Gatlinburg. The Eastern Region is "HOSTING" this event, and we need all Hands-on Deck. If you cannot be there, you have plenty of opportunities to help Plan the event. You can make phone calls to remind folks, help with preparation in making crafts to sell at the store, provide prepackaged food for the hospitality room or give a financial donation. Again, I have already booked my room and cannot wait to be part of this exciting event. If you have never attended State, this is a perfect and inexpensive place to be part of.

Thank you all, for allowing me the opportunity to serve you on the Region level. As I leave you all, keep me in mind as I am now on the State level following in Ella Parker's footsteps as I chair the Cultural Arts Event at our State Conference. Oh, and I can use all the help I can get with this if you are so led.

Love to all.

**Our mission is to educate ourselves so we can uplift our families and communities. Officer roles are the perfect way to live that mission out loud. Volunteer!**

**A message from Cultural Arts Chair: Tammy Haliburton**

Happy Holidays to you all. I pray your Thanksgiving was full of fun, family, and food.

It has been a blessing to serve as your Cultural Arts chair. I have seen very talented members in our region do amazing things. I hope you continue to craft and share your talent with others.

I leave Cultural Arts chair in very capable hands, Barbara Mills of Meigs County.

Will see you all in the 2026 planned events. Merry Christmas,

**News from Monroe County Council, Tammye Miller, Author**

In September Callie Cobb FCE donated school supplies, snacks, craft items and games to Circle G which is an after-school program in Tellico Plains.

In October we donated Feminine Products in a decorative box to Tellico Plains High School, Jr High and Elementary

Callie Cobb held their annual Thanksgiving Dinner on November 19, 2025. We had a huge crowd and lots of wonderful food. We also had a Parade of Prizes and there were three tables full of gifts that we used to raise money for our Service Project. Our Service Project is to help raise money for the new K-9 officer "TIG" of Monroe County Sheriff's Department. We want to raise enough money so that we can provide the K-9 officer with a bullet and knife proof vest which cost anywhere from \$300-\$3000 dollars and any other things that this K-9 officer will need. Officer Brian Miller "TIGs" owner came to our Thanksgiving Luncheon and talked to us about him and his dog and his training. We had lots of questions about Tig's training. In the Spring we will be having a Luncheon at Grain Bins Commodities and all proceeds will help with Tig's expenses.

We also brought donations for Toys for Tots. We purchased items for the teenage boys and girls.

### **A message from the VP of Public Policy: Ella Parker**

I hope this newsletter finds everyone getting into the Christmas Spirit. "My Christmas Thing" is Nativity scenes. I have big ones and small ones, and in between sized ones. I have some that are only the Holy Family and some that have Angles, Shepherds, Wisemen, Camels, Sheep, and Cows! I even have Nativity Ornaments to put on my Christmas tree! Anyway, Christmas is almost upon us, don't let it slip up on you as this newsletter deadline slipped up on Me!

The main duties of the VP of Public Policy involve the FCL Classes and the reporting of CVU's. This year we only had one participant from Eastern Region to attend both sessions of the FCL classes. That was Sandra (Sandy) Hill of McMinn County. I understand that next year several members are planning to attend so they can be recognized at the State Convention presented by the Eastern Region in Gatlinburg in November. Get your applications in.

As for CVUs, Eastern Region had 85,900 hours, and came in 2<sup>nd</sup> behind Central Region, and in front of Western Region. We did improve the number of Hours turned in from last year, and I hope this trend continues, and we turn in even more next year! Thank You for all the Volunteer Activities you participate in. Besides counting for FCE it is a great help to people in our communities, who would have to do without, if not for you.

### **A message from Eastern Region Treasurer: Pat Malbrough**

Happy Holidays to you and your family.

If you missed the State Conference in Murfreesboro last month, you missed a good one! Lots of crafts and educational classes. The banquet was great and Elvis even made an appearance!! Please plan to make it next year as Eastern Region hosts the State Conference in Gatlinburg!!

If for some reason you have not sent in your 2026 dues, please know you can still do so. If you have recruited new members, that is awesome! Send me their dues. Our membership numbers are down, so recruiting efforts are a must!!

Your membership with the National FCE organization expires December 31. If I did not receive a renewal membership form for 2026 from you and you somehow missed the deadline or didn't have the new 2026 form, please contact me.

Looking forward to 2026 with FCE!

### Message on Dress Review: Tammye Miller

We had several ladies that entered in the Dress Revue this year at the TAFCE State Conference. We also had several winners. Those ladies that entered Dress Revue from Eastern Region were: Pat Malbrough, Tammye Miller, Deborah Paxton, Nicola Briddon, Leslye Beria, and Cindy Mishtal. In Category 8- Nicola Briddon won 2<sup>nd</sup>, Category 10- Tammye Miller won 1<sup>st</sup>, Category 11- Doris FoxFeathers won 2<sup>nd</sup> and Category 13- Nicola Briddon won 1<sup>st</sup>. Janie Jones the Fashion Revue Chair for State led us in the ballroom to the Tennessee Waltz and then we broke out into Rocky Top Shaking our orange Pom Poms while modeling or showing off our entries.



**A message from Gloria Fisher, Interim Secretary:**

I have served on many committees and boards from local to international levels. Being part of this Eastern Region FCE board has been rewarding. The officers sincerely care for you and your organizations. They have dedicated much personal time to make this region effective and cohesive. The officers have served members with grace, knowledge, dignity, and skill.

Joni Witherite will be a great addition to the Eastern Region Board as she assumes the office of Secretary. I have the honor to be in the same club as Joni and have worked beside her and served with her on several boards and levels of FCE. She always brings knowledge and skill to the position for which she has been elected or appointed.

I wish each of you and your clubs the best in the coming year. May you have a wonderful Christmas and may God continue to bless you in a mighty way.

News **from Sevier County Council, Marti Agler, Author**

Sevier County FCE provided registration assistance on October 4 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Pink & Teal Run/Walk sponsored by UT Extension Sevier County. More than 50 entrants from teenagers to families supporting members combatting either breast or ovarian cancer, completed the route beginning on The Island in Pigeon Forge, running along the Pigeon Forge Greenway, and ending back at The Island. The weather was in a 100% cooperative mood and created a perfect day for the event!

Another instance of the mutual aid society enjoyed between TAFCE and UT Extension.



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I to r, Tracey Smith, Vice President, Sevier County FCE Council; Kaysie Adkins, FCS Agent, UT Extension Sevier County; Marti Agler, President, Sevier County FCE Council

## News from McMinn County Council, Leslye Beria, Author

Happy Holidays from McMinn County, TN. It has been a very busy fall and holiday season in our county in FCE.

Our July County Council Meeting was most fun. It was a Picnic in the evening in order to invite husbands and guests. Our speaker for this meeting was the Athens City Manager, Randall Dowling. It was very interesting to hear of all the changes and new businesses coming to town to make our city better. We also had our Fashion Revue. I will say it again; we have very talented people here.



In July we also had a Heart book folding class taught by Perry Riden. Many attended with lots of fun. These are only a few who attended.



A couple of our ladies went to National Conference in Erlanger, KY.



We also went to the Tennessee Valley Fair for Senior/FCE Day on Sept. 9. We were able to help with a ministry called Random Acts of Flowers, which is great. Beautiful flowers!

It is always a lot of fun at the fair! We also enjoyed our Region's Fall Festival in Sullivan County on the 15th of Sept.

At our October County Council Meeting new officers were installed and our project was the McMinn County Humane Society. We were able to collect many supplies and money for them.



Our Heart & Home Club went to the Chattanooga Railroad Museum recently. The train ride and the tea were amazing and filling. What a wonderful and educational trip!



Our Claxton Club organized lots of clothes, etc, a few months ago for our local Shower Bus ministry for the homeless. They also had a booth at the McMinn County Senior Activity Center Bazaar to raise money for their many projects. They will also host a Christmas party for our County, as well as Monroe County FCE. Merry Christmas!

The TAFCE State Conference in Nov. in Murfreesboro was loads of fun. There were 11 of us from our county who attended. The crafts, the education classes, and seeing old friends and making new ones is always so special. And at the Banquet we got to see and hear "Elvis".

As we gear up for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year, remember to be gentle, kind, loving, forgiving, and thankful! Serve those who really need your help and serve those who don't. Help to make a better life for those around you. That is what FCE is all about!

Have a blessed winter and Happy New Year and stay warm!

Love to you all from McMinn County FCE

# 2026 TAFCE State Conference

Hosted by Eastern Region

***"MOVING MOUNTAINS WITH FCE"***

Sunday, November 15-Wednesday November 18  
(3 Nights)

River Terrace Hotel and Conference Center, a Westgate Property  
240 River Road  
Gatlinburg

Rooms range from \$80-\$134/night plus 12.75% Tax

Parking is included with room rental

Rate will be honored for 3 days before and 3 days after the event.

**Link to Book Hotel Rooms:**

<https://resort.to/TN-TAFCE-RT>

**Booking Code:**

60-197

Booking Code WILL NOT WORK on the Westgate reservation website,  
use the link above.

Registration Packets will be available mid-summer.

Eastern Region Conference Committee still needs assistance from all  
FCE members in the Region. Contact ANY member of your board to  
find out how you can help!

# 2026 TAFCE Eastern Region Spring Event

1PM EST Tuesday, April 21 through Dinner Wednesday, April 22  
(2 Nights)

River Terrace Resort and Conference Center, a Westgate Property  
240 River Road  
Gatlinburg

Rooms range from \$80-\$134/night plus 12.75% Tax

Parking is included with room rental.

Rate will be honored for 3 days before and 3 days after the event.

Link to Book Hotel Rooms:

<https://resort.to/TN-TAFCE-Spring-Regional-Meeting-RT>

Booking Code:

69-707

Booking Code WILL NOT WORK on the Westgate reservation website,  
use the link above.

Registration Forms for classes, etc. will be available in early spring.

This event will combine both our normal Spring Event and Summer  
Leadership Day.

FUN, Learning, FUN, Creating, FUN, dry run for State Conference!!!

Still More FUN!!

*"And we heard him exclaim, as he rose out of sight,  
Merry Christmas to all and to all a Goodnight!"  
The Night Before Christmas, Clement Clarke Moore*



**TAFCE Mission Statement**

To strengthen the home and community by improving the quality of life of individuals and families through continuing education, leadership development, and community service.