

FALL 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**

A few remarks (and reminders)

Fall in the Eastern Region is being very busy! First, we will enjoy the FCE Day at the TVA Fair where we are honored to make Veteran's Day cards for those who gave so our great country could have a 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We cannot thank them enough for protecting those freedoms we tend to take for granted. As said, freedom is NOT free.

These cards, with accompanying fast food gift cards, will be delivered to veterans at the Mountain Home VA Hospital in Johnson City.

Second, we will enjoy our Fall Assembly and see all the creative work our talented members do so well. As a "craft challenged" member, I particularly love those competitions. We will also create our own assembly line to prepare the Poke Sacks for the TAFCE Conference in November. Thanks to McMinn County FCE for leading on this project.

At the October Regional Board Meeting in McMinn County, your board will be planning our 2027 programs and events. If any member or county has ideas to help with this process, please share with your board. Whether your county can host an event, has an idea for a new and more exciting event, or wants to give input into the planning, PLEASE, feel free to share. We need your help to make Eastern the best region ever!

We are also excited to hold a Meet and Greet in Knox County on October 19. With the help of Lauren Woods, FCS Agent in Knox County, this will be our first effort to renew FCE in our largest county by population. If you have friends in Knox County, please make them aware of this event. We can provide additional information to you.

Thank you for your support of all members of your Eastern Region Board. I hope to see each of you at all the events planned.

Marti

### **A note from Eastern Region Secretary- Joni Witherite**

Members who will be attending the State Conference in Gatlinburg in November, please plan to attend the annual meeting in the morning on Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. We will need to vote on a couple officer positions that will be up for election this year and will review the 2027 budget. This meeting usually lasts about an hour. I know everyone is anxious to get on the road by then so we try to be quick about it. It's a good opportunity to see your officers in action. Hope to see you all there!

### **A note from Eastern Region Treasurer- Pat Malbrough**

Happy Fall Y'all!!

These cooler temps only mean 1 thing --- it's time to send in your 2027 dues!! I hope all County Presidents and Treasurers received my email with the 2027 forms for Region/State and for National Dues. If you're reading this, the deadline has probably passed. No problem. I will take dues anytime!!

As our President has been stressing this year, our main source of income is membership dues. Our goal in 2027 is to get our membership numbers back to where they were pre-Covid!!

Please ramp up your recruiting efforts!! Talk to your neighbors or the ladies in your Silver Sneakers class. Set up a table at any of your local events and talk to people about FCE. Pass out flyers. Have a tea party and invite your local community to introduce them to the benefits of joining FCE (plus the fun we have!). Get creative.

If anyone needs any assistance you can contact me at any time.

### **A note from the VP of Public Policy- Ella Parker**

As we approach the end of the year, I would like to extend my appreciation to our members for their assistance with various roles and responsibilities during this year.

The participation in both CVU's and FCL was appreciated, gathering CVU's can be "Like pulling teeth", this year I was more like a dental assistant than the Dentist! This year it was a little easier. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! It is beneficial to you and the ones you serve.

We had Eastern Region attendees for both sessions; this is an improvement from last year. The April Session was attended by Debbie Smith, of McMinn County and the August Session was attended by Sue McDonald and Brenda Cravin, both from McMinn County. I'm sure there are other counties that would benefit from sending participants. The sessions, although an all-day affair, are helpful in learning the principles/basics of FCE, and meeting members from other regions. The classes consist of lectures, group discussions, skits, and other activities, so you are not just sitting the entire time. Hope more of you will take advantage of this opportunity which is available, and free of charge after you finish your 30 hours. (two sessions).

## **A note from Fashion Review and Monroe County- Tammye Miller**

### **Fashion revue**

Ladies, I'm looking forward to seeing all the hard work that you have put in this year to complete garments for the fashion review. I hope that next year everyone will at least enter category 16 and 17 which is the purchase casual and best dress category. I know that all you ladies love a bargain and love to talk about your bargain so next year enter that bargain see you on September 22.

### **The Bear Necessities shop**

If anyone would like to help out in the shop at the state conference, please let me know. You can text me at 504-450-5538. Just remember if you help you get first look at all the wonderful crafts that have been made. If your club is having trouble with coming up with ideas, let me know. I have some ideas.

### **Monroe County FCE**

Monroe County FCE along with the click for animals raised \$3000 for officer, Brian Miller and his canine "Tigue" for him to buy a bullet and knife proof vest.

### **Callie Cobb FCE Monroe County**

Our club has donated to several local organizations in the past months. We furnished snacks, water, coffee, etc., to the police officers in Tellico Plains. We furnished undergarments socks, shirts, and pants to the elementary school in Tellico Plains. We furnished games snacks and craft materials for a local after school program Circle G in Tellico Plains. We also furnished non-perishable food items and hygiene items to two blessing boxes in Tellico Plains. We furnished blankets socks, hygiene items, gloves, hats to veterans in Monroe County.

## **A note from McMinn County Council President- Leslye Beria**

Hello Autumn/Fall from McMinn County, TN. Time is really running away from us. Do you know that in 102 days it will be Christmas and, as summer usually is, it has been hot. We had lots of rain then we didn't. It should be a beautiful Fall!

Today we are getting ready to go to the Tennessee Valley Fair tomorrow. It is Senior/FCE Day. Our Eastern Region FCE and FCS Agents always do an amazing program. We will be collecting vases for Random Acts of Flowers, also. We have around 35 collected. Thank you, ladies of McMinn County! After our fair program we also will be making cards for veterans. Thank you to those who donated fast food gift cards and the vases!



All our clubs have been busy making items for the State Conference in Nov. The Claxton Club continues to collect items for nursing homes for their Bingo Games as well as personal items for the residents.



Our Heart and Home Club held their June meeting at the Peach Street Grill in Tellico Plains, toured the Everhart Lumber Co., and went to see Bald River Falls.

Our county ladies also got together several times to make our 300 items for the Poke Sacks. We had all our clubs come together to finish making them and to pack them all up. Thank you to all who participated.

Our July County Council meeting was much fun. We had many guests and the food was great. We had our Fashion Revue and a very young new member won one-1st and three-2nd place ribbons. Great job, Cassidy!

Sept. 15, today, several of us went to the TN Valley Fair. Our FCE day was wonderful with 2 speakers, a wonderful decorated veteran shared much about the United States of America and how proud we are of our soldiers, and Darrell Benton shared about Benton Hams in Madisonville. We made cards for the veterans in the Veteran's Hospital in Johnson City. It was a beautiful day!

We look very forward to the Fall Event on the 22nd of September. Please remember to bring your County 1st and 2nd place winner items for Cultural Arts and Fashion Revue, as well as your new and used quality "White Elephant" items for the Bargain Store.

Let us all enjoy this wonderful Autumn to come, of teaching and helping others to have a better life, and invite others to FCE!

**A note from Cumberland County- Joni Witherite**

Cumberland County FCE Clubs have been active this summer. We held our Cultural Arts judging event on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> and followed that up with a luncheon so everyone could come and see all the entries on Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. It was a potluck luncheon with many members participating. Our luncheon speaker showed members how to make a family history wall hanging that requires no sewing.

In August, Cumberland County FCE Clubs operate the Country Store from August 17<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Cumberland County Fair. We serve our world famous (at least they should be) ribeye sandwiches and pinto beans with cornbread. Fairgoers look forward to both entrees. We're the only vendor that serves them and people come to the fair just to pick up sandwiches.

Taylor's Chapel Club invited county FCE members to join them in a tour of the UT Gardens in Crossville on September 11<sup>th</sup>. I hope we'll have photos of the tour for the next newsletter.

### **A note from the Action Chair- Rebecca Burnette**

Looking forward to our Fall Event September 22 at Kingston. We will be taking Donations for Hands of Mercy Food Bank in Roane County. In November, our charity for the State convention is Wears Valley Ranch, a Christian Boarding School. Hope to see everyone these Events. I Can't Wait!

### **2026 FCE Day at the TVA Fair**



Great Speakers, Wonderful Food, +100 Cards for Veterans, 97 Gift Cards, more than \$300 donations for more gift cards. 65 Eastern Region FCE'ers in Attendance, Happy Fellowship!

## **A note from Sevier County Council President- Marti Agler**

### **Sevier County Awards Sewing Prize**

Thanks to a grant received from the Eastern Region, the Sevier County FCE Council has been able to encourage participation in homemaker skills at the Sevier County Fair by awarding a Best in Show prize of \$50.00 and a large rosette. The fair staff has recommended the area in which they see a need for encouragement and the Council has followed their recommendation.

For 2026, the award was presented in Sewing. The winner entered a very well-made fleece Tennessee Volunteer bathrobe (suitable for watching the games on tv??). The entry was judged by several FCE Council members who are also accomplished seamstresses.

Congratulations to the winner and thank you to the Eastern Region for allowing grant money to be used in this way.



## Adding a Category to Cultural Arts- Marti Agler

At the most recent TAFCE Board meeting, the process for adding a new class to the list of categories in Cultural Arts was addressed and clarified. There seemed to be some misunderstanding that a new class had to be tested three years at both the county and region levels before a three-year testing period at the state level. Not so, not 9 years!! Here is the defined process:

- A county that wants to test a new category will advise their region and include it in their County Cultural Arts Competition; winners will not advance to the regional competition.
- That region will advise the other counties in the region of the testing so any other county can test the same category, if desired.
- Any county who is testing will advise the region in each of three years of the number of entries they received in the tested category.
- If there has been success in multiple counties with entries for the three-year testing period, the region will recommend inclusion in the Cultural Arts List of Categories.
- The final decision rests with the TAFCE Board based on the regional recommendations.

In addition, each of the three regions are preparing a historic record of the number of items that have advanced to the region level so there can also be an efficient method for the TAFCE board to make the decision to remove unused categories.



## **2026 TAFCE State Conference**

Poke Sacks  
The Bear Necessities Shop  
Smoky Mountain Snack Shop

### **What is YOUR County Doing to Assist with Filling the Poke Sacks?**

Remember, no Bank marketing materials! Bags will be assembled at the Fall Event on September 22.

Items Committed:

Purse Tape Measure  
Gatlinburg Maps and Guides and Trolley Maps  
RFID Credit Card Holder  
Travel Survival Kit  
Prayer Quilt  
Travel Dental Pick Pack  
Homemade Key Ring  
Letter Openers  
Candies

### **Are you making items to sell in The Bear Necessities Shop?**

Prefer only 10 of any one item.

### **Donations to stock The Smoky Mountain Snack Shop?**

Send a County Donation of at least \$10  
Food items MUST be prepackaged, single serve

**Have you volunteered** to help in the Snack Shop, Bear Necessities Shop, Registration, Class Hostessing?

### **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.