

ABIGAIL CLARK

HOKE COUNTY

This year I had the opportunity to be a part of the Cooperative Extension Centennial Celebration on May 19-20, where we celebrated 100 wonderful years of Cooperative Extension.

On Monday, May 19, 2014, we celebrated by having a dinner and taking a look back at some of the things Extension has accomplished in North Carolina and some of the people who have helped make those things happen. We also received a glimpse of what Extension is accomplishing in our everyday lives by watching video presentations of how Extension has helped people by giving them the tools they need to prosper.

In one of the presentations we saw how Extension had helped a local North Carolina farmer by providing him with the information needed to begin farming crawfish, and selling them to different businesses around his community, in order to begin a successful Crawfish Farming Business.

On Tuesday, May 20, 2014, I, along with my 4-H Agent and County Extension Director, visited our State Legislators at the Legislative Building in Raleigh. We first met with Representative Garland Pierce and discussed the events and programs provided by Extension to Hoke County. He also expressed much enthusiasm about our visit. Rep. Pierce also expressed gratitude for the invitation to our Annual 4-H Achievement Night and boasted about how much he enjoyed himself at that event. He proceeded to grant us a tour of the House Chambers where the House Representatives meet during the General Assembly.

After our visit with Representative Pierce we had the opportunity to meet with Representative Ken Goodman. Rep. Goodman expressed his appreciation and interest in the work of Extension and the services Extension provides to the community.

During my time I had the opportunity to ask the Representatives a few questions. I was interested in knowing how large of a role the County Commissioners play when it comes time for laws to be passed and how close the Representatives work with the County Commissioners in their district. The Representatives then informed me that they work as closely as possible with the County Leaders in their Districts and also that the County Commissioners play a significant role, along with the people from their districts, when new laws needed approval from the state.

During my experience I not only learned how the State Legislature operates, but also how significant of a role my County Leaders play in my State Legislature. The entire experience helped me understand how the government operates and how the system is organized so everyone has a voice and can make a difference. The experience gave me a perspective on how important it is to vote for your Federal and State leaders, as well as your County and City Leaders. Through my experience during the Cooperative Extension Centennial Celebration I gain the understanding that although one may never have the opportunity to a personal meeting with a Governor or a Federal legislator in Washington D.C. one can still have a voice through your local City and County Leaders. Through our City and County Leaders we have a voice because our City and County Leaders influence our State Leaders. Our State Leaders influence our Federal Leaders and all these Leaders are elected by us, which in turn gives us a voice.