4-H state leader to coordinate youth programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 5, 2009

Fairbanks, Alaska— Deb Jones has been hired as the state 4-H program leader for the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service.

Jones has worked as a 4-H agent in Alaska, New Hampshire and Virginia, and as 4-H state specialist for the past eight years in Utah. In her new job, she will coordinate 4-H youth development programs in Alaska. More than 13,000 Alaska youth participated in 4-H-sponsored activities in 2008.

Cooperative Extension Service Director Fred Schlutt, said, “We are very excited that Deb has joined our 4-H youth development team. She brings many years of experience in positive youth development and volunteerism.”

Jones earned a doctorate in conflict analysis and resolution this spring, and said she applied for the job in Fairbanks because it provided a new challenge and an opportunity to return to Alaska.

“I’ve always had a special place in my heart for Alaska,” she said.

Jones, who grew up in Virginia, volunteered with Fairbanks area 4-H camps one summer before earning a graduate degree in Extension education at Mississippi State. She worked as a 4-H agent in Fairbanks from 1984–1987.

One of the things Jones likes about 4-H is that the youth program involves the family in learning and having fun together, she said.

Jones will serve as a catalyst for expanding 4-H programs, by providing needed infrastructure and resources to paid staff and community volunteers. Many people think of sewing, cooking and raising livestock when they think of 4-H, she said. Jones wants to continue these strong traditional programs, while supporting new areas — science, engineering and technology, citizenship and healthy living.

The 4-H program, which is affiliated with land-grant universities in every state, emphasizes a hands-on approach to learning. Six full-time 4-H agents work out of Fairbanks, Anchorage, Palmer and Soldotna, and other Extension faculty work with 4-H programs in Fairbanks, Soldotna, Bethel, Juneau and Nome. More than 1,100 volunteers support the program.

Jones will work out of the Extension state office in Fairbanks. She welcomes comments and questions about the 4-H program, and may be reached at 474-6356 or by e-mail at deb.jones@alaska.edu. She would also like to hear from 4-H alumni about their experiences.

CONTACT: State 4-H Program Leader Deb Jones at 907-474-6356 or or via e-mail at deb.jones@alaska.edu; or Debbie Carter, Cooperative Extension Service public information officer, at 907-474-5406 or dscarter@alaska.edu.