By Stewart MacInnis

A Virginia Tech-developed prototype of a web-based version of the USDA’s Food and Agriculture Education Information System, or FAEIS, will be presented this weekend when the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges meets in Chicago.

AHNR (Agriculture Human Natural Resources) Information Technology developed the prototype after being awarded a $733,778 cooperative agreement by the USDA this summer.

FAEIS is a tool used by the USDA’s Higher Education Programs to develop and disseminate essential national baseline data on higher-education matters related to agriculture, forestry, natural resources, human resources, veterinary medicine, and other allied fields. The information is used in analyzing the higher-education system and for assessing the availability of and demand for scientific and professional expertise by field. Data are collected from departments nation-wide involved in two-year, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs in those fields.

“This is a remarkably complex project,” said Tim Mack, assistant dean for information technology in CALS. “It speaks highly of this college that we were entrusted with this project by USDA. There are very few land-grant institutions with the agricultural, human and natural-resource information-technology unit that is large enough to address this project.”

AHNR-IT was tapped for the project July 1, 2002. USDA required a working prototype be ready at the NASULGC meeting November 9 and 10, that the system be ready for more than 100 institutions nation-wide to begin entering data into the system in December, and that a fully functional final version be ready during the coming spring semester. AHNR-IT will manage the system through October 2004, when the cooperative agreement can be renewed.

Texas A&M University conducted the FAEIS project for 10 years using a paper-based system. Mack said a challenge the Virginia Tech team is addressing is not only creating a system to collect current data nation-wide, but to also have information from previous years accessible through the system. That is a complicated matter, Mack said, because the data were collected in several formats and the design of forms used to make reports evolved over the years.

“AHNR-IT can complete this project because we have economies of scale developed from combining smaller IT units in Extension and teaching into a larger unit,” Mack said. “We already have several spin-off benefits for agricultural research and cooperative Extension because the project is based here.”

The goal is to make the system easy to use, Mack said. It will include a web-based survey form for data entry, it will self-check the data, it will allow custom searches for information, and it will produce output reports in a variety of standardized formats. If some users find the information is not quite in the desired format, they can use the system to collect and standardize it.

Any user can enter the system after creating a user name, and they can then choose how they want to view the information. The system can be accessed from home or work, or from any computer with internet access.

According to Ben Lebow, director of the Center for Economic Resources, one of theoutputs of the system is to collect current data nation-wide, but also to have information from previous years accessible through the system. That is a complicated matter, Lebow said, because the data were collected in different formats and the design of forms used to make reports evolved over the years.

“Agriculture professionals win national, regional teaching awards

By Stewart MacInnis

Two professors in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will receive Food and Agriculture Sciences Excellence in Teaching awards November 10.

Michael J. Ellerbrock, associate professor of agricultural and applied economics, is to receive one of the association’s two national teaching awards, a $20,000 stipend, in a ceremony in Chicago at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, or NASULGC.

James W. Knight, professor of animal and poultry sciences, will receive one of two regional awards from the association’s Southern region. A total of eight regional awards will be presented, with two being awarded in each of four regions.

The program under which both faculty members were recognized was authorized by Congress in 1990, and seeks to acknowledge the contributions of the best teachers in the country in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, veterinary science, and human sciences. The awards, jointly sponsored by the USDA and the NASULGC, include a $5,000 stipend for Ellerbrock and a $2,000 stipend for Knight.

“I’m just humbled by this award,” said Ellerbrock. “It’s mind-boggling to me that I’m being recognized by my peers at this level for doing something I truly love to do.”

Ellerbrock joined the Virginia Tech faculty in 1992. In addition to his duty as a professor, he is the director of the Center for Economic Education.

He teaches undergraduate courses in macro-economics as related to the food and fiber system, as well as courses in agricultural/environmental ethics and a new course he developed entitled “Science and Religion: Friends or Foes?” As director of the Center for Economic Education, he develops and implements a state-wide economic-education program directed toward public school teachers, 4-H youth leaders, and other youth educators.

Ellerbrock has received the University Sporn Award for excellence in undergraduate teaching, the only teaching award for which the winner is selected by the entire student body at the university. He has also received the Outstanding Teaching Award from the Southern Agricultural Economics Association.

Knight has been a member of the Virginia Tech faculty since 1976, and also served as director of the university’s Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching from 1993 to 1995.

Knight teaches undergraduate and graduate (See AGRICULTURE on 3)
### Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday, 8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YMCA Crafts Fair, noon to 8 p.m., Squiresballrooms (through 11-10).</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Club Program, 5 to 6:30 p.m., CranwellCenter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Program, 8 p.m., Squires Recital Salon: Ensemble Concert.</td>
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<th>Saturday, 9</th>
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<tr>
<td>VT Open House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA Crafts Fair, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Squiresballrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Exhibit, noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday; Friday, noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, Armory Gallery (through 11-15).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Football, 3:30 p.m., Syracuse: ESPN.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music Program, 8 p.m., Squires Recital Salon: ChamberMusic.</td>
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<th>Sunday, 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Visitors Meet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VT Open House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Public TV, noon: Technology Today: Nanotechnology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA Crafts Fair, noon to 5 p.m., Squiresballrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA Hike, 1:30 p.m., YMCA parking lot.</td>
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### Seminars

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<tr>
<th>Friday, 8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geological Sciences, 3:30 p.m., 4069 Derring: SusanBeck, University of Arizona.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSE, 3:30 p.m., 100 Hancock: SumitraSubrahmanyan.</td>
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<th>Monday, 11</th>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry, 4 p.m., 223 Engel: Yuping Deng, Eastern Virginia Medical School.</td>
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<th>Wednesday, 13</th>
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<tr>
<td>Women in Mathematics Career Day, 9:30 a.m. to 1:40 p.m., Math Emporium.</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA Noon Slide Show, noon, Cranwell Center: JosephWong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Women’s Club Fall Luncheon, noon, Best WesternRed Lion Inn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“With Good Reason,” 7 p.m., WVTF.</td>
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<th>Thursday, 14</th>
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<tr>
<td>Women Faculty Research Series, 4 to 5:30 p.m., DBHCC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre Event, 8 p.m., Squires Studio Theatre: “Riddley Walker.” (Through 11-17).</td>
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<th>Friday, 15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay Day for Faculty and Staff Members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Club Program, 5 to 6:30 p.m., CranwellCenter.</td>
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### Service-learning course registration under way

Those who plan to use service-learning in a course, research project, or outreach activity during the Spring 2003 Semester should plan to register now by downloading a course-registration form at [http://www.majbill.vt.edu/faculty.html](http://www.majbill.vt.edu/faculty.html). The Service-Learning Center is in the process of identifying site placements and developing resources for spring semester activities.

For more information, contact Michele James-Deramo at deramo@vt.edu or 1-6947.

### Women Faculty Research Series event set

The November Women Faculty Research Series event “How Should We Teach Science?” will be Thursday, Nov. 14, at 4 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Executive Conference Room.

Muriel Lederman, associate professor of molecular and cellular biology, will present material connected to her book *The Gender and Science Reader*. The program is sponsored by the Women’s Center and the Organization of Women Faculty.

For more information, contact Rachel Christensen at 1-7806 or rachrist@vt.edu.

### Information-technology executive forum planned

An Executive Forum in Information Technology is being planned for December 11 at the Williamsburg Community Building, Williamsburg.

“The Last Mile to Virtual Communities—Telecommunications Issues and Answers” is the fifth seminar in a series outlining issues and potential solutions for going the “last mile” in providing high bandwidth access to localities. In addition to describing in plain language particular broadband-network options—wired and wireless—available in Virginia communities today, local community leaders will showcase network-based projects under way where they live and work. The forum will also address issues related to the security of community networks, giving participants an opportunity to ask experts about their security concerns.

Jointly sponsored by the Virginia Institute for Government, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Innovation Groups, and Virginia Tech, this forum event also provides an opportunity for people to meet and exchange views with leaders in the information-technology sector.

For more information, visit the seminar series web site at [http://www.mvs.vt.edu/ITForum/](http://www.mvs.vt.edu/ITForum/) or contact Tecd Povar at tep@virginia.edu/804-371-0202 or Judy Alford at jualford@vt.edu/540-231-2309. The program fee is $95, which includes all materials, breaks, and a luncheon. For information regarding registration procedures, contact the conference registrar at 1-5182.

### Marching Virginians sponsor canned-food drive

The Marching Virginians will sponsor a canned-food drive in conjunction with the WVU football game on Wednesday, Nov. 20. The goal of the sixth-annual Hokies for the Hungry drive is to collect 65,115 cans of food.

Drop-off points for cans will be established at all four corners of Lane Stadium and at the Marching Virginians’ practice field at the corner of Southgate Drive and Spring Road (across from Lane Stadium), and various locations near the stadium where tailgate pep bands will be performing before the 7 p.m. kick-off.

All contributions will be distributed through the Montgomery County Christmas Store. For more information, contact Eileen Oviatt at the Marching Virginians. (r ov iatt @ v t. e d u , 3 5 7 - 0 4 9 3 ).

### Annual Women in Mathematics: Career Day activities scheduled for Wednesday

Virginia Tech faculty members, students, and alumnae will join approximately 250 young women Wednesday, Nov. 13, for an intergenerational, multi-media, mathematical celebration.

Sixth-graders from 20 area schools have been invited to participate.

The eighth annual Women in Mathematics: Career Day at Virginia Tech will begin at 9:30 a.m. with a welcome session at the Math Emporium on University City Boulevard in Blacksburg, featuring Bevlee Watford, associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Engineering, and John Rossi, head of the Department of Mathematics. From 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., students will participate in two 40-minute sessions. From noon to 12:40 p.m., students will interact with the Career Day panel. From 12:45 p.m. to 1:25 p.m., students will participate in the final session.

Career Day activities are sponsored by the Department of Mathematics and the National Security Agency. Co-sponsors include the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Multicultural Affairs, Montgomery County NOW, the Math Club, and Womanspace.

For more information, contact Susan Anderson at 1-8041, e-mail anderson@math.vt.edu, or by mail at c/o Mathematics Department, 0123.

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### CALS

**Continued from 1**

system hard to use, Mack said, AHNRI-IT will also staff a help desk for the system.

The project is being managed by Tom McAnge, and involves the participation of a number of programmers with specific kinds of expertise, Mack said. He said Andy Swiger, dean of agriculture, deserves much of the credit for the cooperative agreement being award to the Virginia Tech.

“Dean Swiger really was the force behind creating AHNRI-IT,” Mack said. “It was his vision that it would be a unit that crosses four colleges at the university, Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, and Virginia State University. It also crosses the three missions of teaching, Extension, and research in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. To accomplish that requires significant capabilities and expertise, and similar capabilities and expertise are required for the FAEIS project.”

### MINORITIES

**Continued from 1**

In recent years, programs designed to increase minority representation at colleges and universities have come under much scrutiny. Challenges to targeted programs and hiring policies have created considerable uncertainty about the allowable strategies for creating an inclusive institution. This first-of-a-kind dialogue, Dixon said, “is for the primary benefit of informing, sharing multiple perspectives, and developing a community consensus for individual and collective practices on the opportunities and challenges of a public higher-education institution attempting to insure equitable access for all, in a nondiscriminatory and inclusive manner.”

For more information, contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs at 1-820.
Over 2,700 individuals in the Virginia Tech community participated in National Depression Screening Day, October 10. Hundreds of individuals took advantage of the on-line screening offered on the Cook Counseling Center web site and substantial numbers came by McComas Hall for personal screening for depression and anxiety. It was heartening to see that in many instances individuals came to the screening center with a friend or were personally referred by a supportive member of the faculty, staff or student body.

National survey data indicates that one in 10 college students suffers from clinical depression serious enough to interfere with daily functioning. Suicide remains the third leading cause of death among individuals ages 15 to 24. Depression is a disease that responds well to treatment yet it is through each of us increasing our awareness about the signs and symptoms of depression that the most effective prevention can occur.

Readers are encouraged to visit the Thomas E. Cook Counseling Center web site (www.ccc.vt.edu) for more information on how to identify and refer a distressed student. Students or concerned individuals can contact Cook Counseling Center at 1-6557 for more information and to schedule appointments. The on-line depression and anxiety-screening instrument will remain available on our web site and all members of the university community are invited to use the service.

Robert Miller, director, Thomas E. Cook Counseling Center.
Alumni group creates $10,000 incentive for College of Engineering

By Lynn A. Nystrom

A group of Virginia Tech alumni, in conjunction with the College of Engineering, has awarded its first $10,000 prize to Virginia Tech’s Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) for improving its Ph.D. program during the past year.

The alumni, members of the college’s Committee of 100, created the award as one of several efforts to assist engineering in its attempt to improve its national ranking from its typical 65 percent of the number of Ph.D.s students to 25 percent. Currently the number of Ph.D. students per engineering faculty member is 1.3. The goal is to increase this number within five years to 2.5. The top 10 schools now average 3.5.

“The CEE Department is very appreciative of the financial support being provided by members of the College’s Advisory Board. We continue to place strong emphasis on the recruitment of high-quality Ph.D. students to our programs. We intend to use the $10,000 provided by the board to fund special fellowshipships to aid in the recruitment of new Ph.D. students for next fall,” said William Knocke, department head.

The alumni who contributed to the award are members of the College’s Advisory Board and a Marketing Committee formed by former Dean P. Charles W. Johnson. The committee formed a subcommittee to investigate how to improve the number of doctoral students in the college. Electrical engineering alumus Hyde Tucker, retired CEO and president of Bell Atlantic International, chaired the Marketing Committee and Larry Marshall, senior research fellow at E.I. DuPont, headed the Ph.D. Subcommittee.

Tucker spearheaded the efforts to raise the $10,000. In addition, he and Malcolm McPherson, interim dean of the college, and John Casali, the John Grado professor of industrial and systems engineering, decided on the award criteria. Ed Heneke, associate dean of research and graduate studies, gathered data from the departments and made a recommendation on behalf of the college.

“The Advisory Board of the College of Engineering does far more than just give advice. The members are active participants in advancing the progress of the college and living up to its needs. In creating this award, they recognized the severe competition among engineering schools for high-quality graduate students and the importance of increasing our number of Ph.D. enrollees. The college is grateful to our board and, particularly, to Hyde Tucker and Larry Marshall who led the effort. We are, indeed, fortunate to have an Advisory Board that shows such dedication and loyalty,” McPherson said.

An Award Committee composed of four alumni, Mary Berry, Jerry Balkeneng, Marshall and Tucker reviewed the available information. They also contributed to the award along with John DeBell, Jim George, and John Rovovich.

The committee determined the CEE department was one of only three in the college that increased the number of Ph.D. students per tenured-track faculty member when compared to numbers in 1997 and also to 2000. The award committee gave favorable consideration to CEE’s several innovative measures. One measure was finding sufficient funding for multi-year financial support for Ph.D. students.

The CEE department also emphasized the recruitment of female and minority candidates in its recruiting sessions at the research seminars of other institutions, and provided a fully mentored teaching experience for Ph.D. students who teach an entire undergraduate course. CEE also provided the best rising CEE seniors an opportunity to have a funded research experience with a faculty advisor, aggressively pursued new part time Ph.D. students in Northern Virginia, and provided opportunities for direct Ph.D. admission.

New development director joins Engineering

By Liz Cunningham

Lori A. Lewis has joined Virginia Tech as director of development for the College of Engineering. Since 1999 Lewis has been assistant dean of Ohio University’s Russ College of Engineering and Technology, where she was in charge of strategic advancement planning, donor relations and major gifts.

“Lori is an accomplished fund raiser,” said Thim Corvin, associate vice-president for development at Virginia Tech. “She received the highest percentage of revenue goal among all Ohio University development officers for three consecutive years.”

Lewis received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in special education at Ohio University. She has worked as a special education teacher and supervisor and as an early childhood director for the Athens, Ohio, public schools. She also taught at Ohio University for four years as a part-time instructor of educational technology and media.

From 1997 to 1999, Lewis was assistant dean of special education and alumni affairs for Ohio University’s College of Health and Human Services, where her fund raising exceeded the revenue goal by 235 percent.

During the three years with the Russ Col-
lege, Lewis raised 65 percent of the college’s $30-million campaign goal; assisted in securing the $5.8-million endowment for the Fritz J. and Dolores H. Russ Prize, one of the top engineering prizes world-wide; and secured endowments for five new professorships and eight new scholarships.

Geology student mapping West Virginia’s wealth

By Susan Trulove

In the Mississippian Age, 335 million years ago, West Virginia was south of the equator and had a climate that resembled today’s Persian Gulf—arid and at the edge of an ocean. Now there are riches layered beneath the valleys and mountains of the “Almost Heaven” state.

Geological sciences doctoral student Thomas Wynn is mapping the layers of rock from the Mississippian age across the entire state. He has two goals. One is to find and map oolites within the carbonate-siliciclastic layer of rocks known as the Greenbrier Group. Oolites often contain natural gas. His second aim is to better understand the transition from greenhouse conditions similar to today’s climate to global ice-house conditions—an extreme ice age in Earth’s history.

Wynn was scheduled to present his completed map at the Geological Society of America’s 114th annual meeting in Denver in October.

As companies have drilled for oil over the years in West Virginia, they collected the chips that the drills brought up, noting each five- or 10-foot interval. The West Virginia Geological Survey has preserved these well cuttings. Wynn is now using well cuttings from 200 wells to create a three-dimensional map of the state’s subsurface. In effect, he is connecting the dots between the wells.

“If you were at the beach and observed the distances from the ocean, for instance,” Wynn has located significant oolites. “There are pretty good reservoirs of natural gas in West Virginia—and throughout the United States,” he said. But to access the reservoirs, drillers need to understand the rock. “The oo-
ilites are not uniform, they are controlled by faults and other topographic highs, or high areas.”

Previous researchers located the faults but did not document their influence on the formation of oolite.

What about that climate change? “The Mississippian Age, from 335 to 327 million years ago, was an important time in world history. There was a major climate change on earth,” Wynn said. “Little is known about how carbonate systems or any system reacts to such changes.”

Carbonate rocks are those that are formed from carbon-based or biological materials. Clas-
tic rocks are formed by water erosion of older rock. “During the time of deposition of the Greenbrier, as we go from older to younger material, we can see the rock change from carbonate to elastic. The climate went from dry to wetter. The question is, what was the influence of tectonics—the movement of the plate from 25 degrees south of the equator and subsequent climate change? And what was the influence of the ice age and the forming, melt-
ing, and reforming of ice caps with subsequent changes in ocean levels? In addition to the complex influence of tectonics, we are seeing wet to dry shifts with the waxing and waning of glaciers. Hopefully my study will be able to answer some of these questions.”

GSA symposium honors Tech’s Bambach

By Susan Trulove

The former students and present colleagues of Professor Emeritus of Paleontology Richard K. Bambach, who retired in 2000 after 30 years at Virginia Tech, honored him with a day-long symposium during the Geological Society of America’s 114th annual meeting in Denver in October.

The program, “Seafood Through Time—The Ecologic Context of the History of Life,” recognized “the tremendous impact of Bambach’s research on our understanding of how marine ecosystems evolved and changed through the history of life,” said Michal Kowalewski, a Virginia Tech faculty member.

Bambach was a champion of studying evolu-
tionary processes in their ecological context, and whimsically titled one of his papers, “Sea-
food through Time.”

“Richard pioneered many important mod-
els for how ecological systems evolved through time and introduced the concept of time-aver-
aging that is now considered the cornerstone of paleo-ecological analysis,” Kowalewski said. “Research programs of many prominent schol-
ars can be viewed as a direct outgrowth of his work.”

According to Kowalewski, Bambach’s contributions to the field of paleontology cover evolution of marine ecosystems, long-term di-


CVC Winner

Janice Herzog of the Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine won last week’s Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) drawing. She received a Virginia Tech Baseball sweatshirt, donated by the Athletic Department. Her name was chosen at random from all who had returned CVC pledge cards by October 29. The CVC goal is $230,000 and 20-percent participation. The campaign runs through November.