**DATE:** November 9, 2020

**Technology Talks.** This year has been unlike any other with COVID-19 changing how we do many things. Between keeping your glasses free from mask fog and searching for the ever-elusive disinfectant, we are also attempting to adapt to virtual communication. However, figuring out Zoom or Facetime (or one of the other hundred virtual platforms) can be quite a struggle. Even those comfortable with technology under normal circumstances are often left scratching their head. Tech companies release new platforms and devices at a surprisingly rapid rate, simple phones have become a thing of the past and many are left feeling uncomfortable using their phone even for simple tasks. Upgrading to a smart phone can be intimidating and it comes with steep learning curve. Getting comfortable with a new device takes time and patience. The past few months provided us with a great deal of unexpected time, but patience was not necessarily included.

Ninety-six percent of Americans own some sort of cellular phone and 81% of those own a smartphone, a 35% increase from 2011. Furthermore, 53% of the 65-year-old and up population have traded in their trusty flip phone and transitioned to a smart phone (Pew Research, 2020). If you are new to the smart phone world or if this virtual communication norm has pushed you to the edge, please know I understand and I want to help!

Rains County AgriLife Extension is hosting Technology Talks, an introductory course on understanding (and using) your smart phone; this course will cover texting, email, internet use, and apps (virtual communication apps like Zoom and Facetime). Technology Talks is geared toward individuals new to their smart phone or those needing assistance using their current device. This course will meet for two extended sessions, Friday, December 4th and Friday, December 11th from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon at the Rains County Extension Office, 410 Tawakoni Drive, Emory, TX. Attendees need to bring their smart device (phone or tablet) to both sessions.

This is a welcoming and fun learning environment where no question is too basic. This course is free of charge and we welcome everyone to come and learn. Please call (903) 473-4580 or email (address below) to reserve your spot; due to social distancing requirements, space is limited and have your handkerchief ready to wipe those glasses because yes, masks are required.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me, (903) 473-4580 or email Sarah.Latham@ag.tamu.edu. You may also read more about this and many more topics on my blog, http://agentsarah.blogspot.com/. Follow Rains County AgriLife on Facebook for additional information and upcoming events.

References:

Pew Research Center. (2020). *Mobile Fact Sheet*. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/