

**Partnership Working Group Teleconference Minutes
December 17, 2008**

Present: Suzanne Le Menestrel, Dan Kugler, Glenn Applebee, Dorothy McCargo Freeman, Don Floyd, Johnathan Despain, Bo Ryles, Barb Schirmer, Cheri Booth

1. Review of Roles at National 4-H Headquarters

As of December 8, Suzanne Le Menestrel is Acting Director for Youth Development until April 8. Suzanne, Glenn and Dan described their respective roles and how they differ. Suzanne, as Acting Director through April, will be focused on internal management, including the day to day administration of Headquarters as well as helping to provide leadership and direction for 4-H. Glenn will continue to focus on the transition to the National Institute for Food and Agriculture and will still be the point of contact for Shooting Sports. Dan will continue his role as Acting Deputy Administrator for Families, 4-H and Nutrition with oversight for this unit as well as the Natural Resources and Environment Unit.

2. National 4-H Leadership Annual Meeting

Johnathan provided a report on the National 4-H Leadership Annual meeting. The meeting will be held on April 20-23 in Portland, Oregon, with a possible preconference on the 19th. The PWG will meet from 2 p.m.- 6 p.m. plus a working dinner on the day prior to the conference or the preconference, depending on whether a preconference is held. Preliminary plans for the meeting include a discussion of NIFA; a dialogue with foundation directors; and an opportunity to address different topics through breakout discussion groups.

ACTION ITEM: By January 15, please e-mail to Johnathan priority topics for the breakout discussion groups. These topics can be gathered by asking the following question, "As a state program leader, what would you like to know more about that would help you in your role?"

ACTION ITEM: By January 15, please e-mail to both Suzanne Le Menestrel and Maria Arnold any feedback on the need to hold a preconference orientation or professional development session on the 19th.

**3. Programs of Distinction Peer Reviewer Application Deadline –
Extended to JANUARY 7, 2009**

The deadline for Programs of Distinction peer reviewer applications has been extended to January 7. Please refer to a recent e-mail from Maria Arnold and please contact Maria with any questions, marnold@csrees.usda.gov. We are in need of state specialists so that we have a balance of agents/county faculty and specialists on the review teams. We have the Programs of Distinction review process tied into more and more national awards and have a need for a fairly large pool of reviewers.

ACTION ITEM: Please send out a request for reviewers to your regions. We are looking for individuals with some prior review experience at the national, state or local level and who can commit to a 2-year volunteer term.

4. Official USDA 4-H Charter

Electronic charters, and instructions for using them, are posted on the State 4-H Leader Intranet site, www.4hstateleaders.org. These include color and black & white charters. The 4-H CHARTER is an official U.S. Department of Agriculture document and may not be re-created or altered – beyond the fields allowed by USDA. National 4-H Headquarters can “customize” 4-H CHARTERS using high-resolution files of the Extension Director and State 4-H Program Leader. Allow 1-3 weeks for custom charters, depending on holiday, travel and work schedules. Please ensure that for future charters, you are using the updated one with Dan Kugler’s signature.

Below are responses to questions that were asked during the call:

- Are current charters with Cathann Kress’ signature still valid? Yes, they are.
- Will the signature change from Dan Kugler to Suzanne Le Menestrel? No.
- Does adding an electronic signature of a state leader or Extension director considered to be altering the USDA charter? The 4-H CHARTER may not be altered beyond the fields allowed; signatures are necessary for the charters. Signatures can be added. For further questions, please contact Maria Arnold, marnold@csrees.usda.gov

5. Tax Exemption: December 11, 2008 E-mail message

- Please review the email from 12/11 carefully and craft messages that work for your system as you manage your 4-H subsidiaries and financial reporting requirements.
- State 4-H Leaders and others can find basic information about filing 990-N e-Postcard at www.irs.gov (enter 990-N or ePostcard in the search box). In addition to this information, the link to the electronic 990-N form takes viewers to a vendor. That site, <https://epostcard.form990.org/> includes a “Support” tab with FAQs and a Quick Start Guide. By familiarizing yourself with this information, you can be prepared to guide your subsidiaries and be ready to respond to questions, such as public disclosure and the searchable database of 990-N filers.
- 990-N filers need to keep a copy of evidence that their success or failure with the 990-N filing attempt. Some State 4-H Program Leaders are collecting the acceptance and rejection notices as part of their 4-H subsidiaries’ financial reporting requirements.
- When failure to successfully file an ePostcard occurs, filers should not call the IRS number provided on the screen. Please instead continue to direct questions to the State 4-H Office and in this case, please assure the

organization that the IRS and National 4-H Headquarters are working together to resolve issues with 4-H tax exemption.

- Both National 4-H Headquarters and our IRS contacts appreciate that having some instructions on “hold” and some on “go” creates challenges beyond our original plans for managing lists of tax exempt 4-H subsidiaries. The IRS is being supportive, and we look forward to resolutions. Thanks to all for your hard work on this.

6. Discussion about Tax Exemption

Glenn provided an update about the work that has been going on with the IRS. We have asked the IRS for a position paper on all tax issues. The paper is currently in draft form. There have been a series of meetings with the IRS to work on resolving issues. The IRS has been investing a lot of resources and intends to get this work done on time and done right. We will provide updates to everyone once these become available. We intend to have full documentation of how everything has been addressed to avoid ongoing trials and tests in the future. We do know that not-for-profit law does not apply to 4-H. We do not want 4-H to be defined as either a non-profit or a Subordinate Government Organization. We want to keep our options open in order to be able to move in both worlds. There was a question about whether we would be providing states with a new version of the “Kirby letter.” This has not yet been determined and will be communicated to everyone.

7. The National Institute and 4-H Transition Data Collection

Dan provided an update on the agency’s work on transitioning to the National Institute on Food and Agriculture (The National Institute). There is not much visible at this point to share. The following committees have been formed and are working on the transition: Vision Group for NIFA (Operating principles); Structure and Functions (what do these look like); Core Group (overall developments and movement of agency to NIFA); Executive Council (Supervisors and administrators); Communications (Internal and external communications). There will be a Federal Register noticed posted in early January for public comment on the transition. We are collecting input from internal and external stakeholders. The draft structure will be in place by the end of February. There is an extensive approval process afterwards.

Glenn provided an update on the work of the Extension Directors group. 4-H is moving forward quickly and has the process for gathering input well underway. Glenn noted that 4-H is ahead of the curve in the planning. A request for Tier 3 data collection has gone out. Thanks to State 4-H Program Leaders for sharing their responses to the question from the Director’s Group.

ACTION STEP: January 15 is the deadline for TIER 3 data – State 4-H Constituents:

- i. State 4-H Leaders pose the question to their constituencies (mostly staff, but State 4-H Leaders can decide how broadly they cast "the ask" in their states).
- ii. The question is, "Give us one idea of the most important thing to you, our organization or institutions in this transition of the 4-H Youth Development Program to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture."
- iii. State 4-H Program Leaders synthesize the data collected within their states and send this synthesis to their PWG representative **no later than January 15, 2009**. PWG members then compile and forward to marnold@csress.usda.gov the syntheses reports from states in their region **no later than January 22, 2009**.

Regional summaries will be shared with the PWG.

8. National 4-H Congress Update

Don gave everyone an update regarding National 4-H Congress. About 18 months ago, Doug Steele approached Council to manage the business side of National 4-H Congress. Don said that they looked at the finances and looked at a draft MOU. They are working on getting an MOU to a place where it is doable on the business side.

9. Other Updates

Johnathan mentioned that his charge to examine National Competitive Events is on hold until National 4-H Headquarters works through the transition to NIFA.

10. Next Meeting: 1 pm ET, Wednesday, January 28, 2009