

# 2008 JOINT MEETING ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT



*Program Leadership Network,  
Association of Extension Administrators and  
Association of Southern Region Extension Directors  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
August 25-29*



## PLC CHAIR COVER LETTER

On behalf of the Southern Region Program Leadership Committee, I am pleased to present the 2008 Accomplishments Report of the Southern Region Program Leadership Network (PLN).

This report was developed to showcase the impacts of the Program Leadership Network on each Program Committee over the past year. Each committee shared insights on the following points:

- What has the committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?
- What has the committee accomplished together that could not have been accomplished without PLN; and
- Provide some examples of specific benefits to individual states who participate in PLN.

I hope that you find the information contained in this Accomplishment Report beneficial. More importantly, I hope that the Southern Region's Extension clientele can profit from the activities of the committees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nelson Daniels".

Nelson Daniels  
2008 Chair, Program Leadership Committee

## **AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES (ANR)**

### **1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?**

- We completed a successful meeting whereby we discussed the implications of the Farm Bill, the reorganization of USDA and implications about programs in each of our institutions.
- We discussed ways to interact with North Central Regional ANR program leaders on visit to Washington, D.C. to discuss full integration of Extension into grants program with National Program Leaders.
- We discussed and shared reports from our multi-state committees and discussed opportunities for further collaboration.
- We discussed the future of the Water Quality program and how to have more effective communication with EPA, setting priorities, funding, and quality education programs.
- We discussed planning for National ANR program leaders meeting to be held in Orlando, February, 24-26, 2009.
- We continue to plan on regional approaches to curriculum development and interactions with eXtension.
- We shared budget issues and exchanged ideas to deal with reduced budgets and increased demand for programs.

### **2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?**

- Most of what we have done and the ideas generated could not be accomplished unless there were face-to-face meetings.
- We continue to find ways to collaborate on multi-state programs.
- Networking with other program leaders has led to sharing and access to educational programs.

### **3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.**

- Program and resource sharing has led to increased collaborative programs, i.e. training, eXtension collaborations and grant submittal, training modules (CECP).
- PLN allows us to discuss critical issues and how each state is addressing them so that we can utilize these programs in our individual states.
- PLN allows for networking with all program leaders, specialized areas, and directors that would not happen except at PLN.

## COMMUNICATIONS (COMM)

### 1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?

- Our committee had five conference calls as scheduled for 2007-08, and through those calls, we planned topics for the 2008 annual meeting. Topics covered were cost centers, e-commerce, the Cooperative Extension Curriculum Project (CECP), and the communication unit's involvement in eXtension.
- We continued working on a document addressing costs, royalties and permissions, realizing it should not be considered standards but rather "Best Practices for Production and Dissemination of Extension Publications and Other Communication Products in The Southern Region"
- The committee also completed and posted meeting minutes, promoted the eXtension rollout in February and used a wiki to complete some state reports.

### 2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?

- Networking is the primary benefit and accomplishment of PLN: professional relationships that develop both within and beyond the organizational structure of PLN. At meetings, we are able to discuss and gain new ideas about cost centers, e-commerce, marketing products and practices, educational products and practices, professional development, and other topics.

### 3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.

- Extension in Alabama wanted to see how its practices regarding charging for publications, giving permission to reprint, and other issues involving production and dissemination of communication products compared with other states' practices and if there might be enough commonality to establish policies the entire region could agree on. This was not the case because states vary in these practices. The benefit is knowing the facts.
- North Carolina has used a baby calendar produced in Alabama to reach Latino audiences. We would not have known this publication existed were it not for SRPLN. We have also sought and received information about printing operations. This information may influence the future of our print shop.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (CD)

### 1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?

- Business Retention and Expansion training was held in Clemson, South Carolina in January 2008. Training was also held in Galveston, Texas in July 2008. A total of 51 individuals were trained with 28 of those being Extension.
- A proposal was submitted to Kettering Foundation to support regional training on public deliberation.
- An e-commerce webinar series has been developed for launching Fall 2008.
- Information on distressed and low-wealth communities across the United States was incorporated into the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) Web site as a resource for practitioners.
- The SRDC held several roundtables in 2006, and the results of these conversations were used extensively by PLN members to develop strategic plans for their community development programming.
- Discussions with Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) at PLN led to a multi-state effort to successfully secure Smith-Lever funding focused on community-level disaster preparedness and recovery.

### 2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?

- The Community Development Extension community is relatively small, and PLN is attended by a significant majority of the specialists in the area. As such, all of the accomplishments listed above in question one (1) are truly a result of our collaboration during the face-to-face PLN meeting.

### 3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.

- All 28 states who participated in the National E-Commerce Extension Initiative training, led by the SRDC, reported establishing e-commerce networks in their state.
- The SRDC state roundtables have been the foundation upon which many of our states based their strategic planning for their individual community development programs. Key examples include the following:
  - Tennessee developed the Sustainable Tennessee program.
  - Alabama changed programming to emphasize leadership, led to adding staff and development of a statewide network of community development programs.
  - Louisiana, Arkansas, South Carolina and Kentucky adopted e-commerce curriculum for statewide deployment.

## **FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES (FCS)**

### **1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?**

- A total of four conference calls engaged Program Leaders in discussions addressing CECP, obesity and funding opportunities and other relevant educational outreach programs.
- We also completed an inventory of resources utilized to address adult and youth obesity initiatives.
- Committee members agreed to support the establishment of the Caring Hands Account. Each would donate personal checks of \$25.00 to be used to recognize PLN - FCS Committee members upon their retirement. From this fund cards will be sent to members upon loss of parents, siblings or children as well as marriages.
- One of the highlights of the May Spring meeting held in Nashville, TN was the Securities Exchange Commission Partnership presentation.
- We completed an inventory of Health curricula being used in Southern Region states.

### **2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?**

- The survey of the Southern Region Childhood Overweight and Obesity Program provided valuable data to measure the impact from the South.
- Quality modules for CECP were developed in Health, Nutrition, and Financial Management.
- Plans are being developed to conduct a Health Disparities Conference.
- Leadership and participation in eXtension CoPs have been strengthened by face to face meetings.

### **3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.**

- Specialists benefited from the opportunity to travel and work with other colleagues in the South, which resulted in relevant fact sheets written and published.
- Access to educational resources and speakers (colleagues) supported base program initiatives and federal goals.
- FCS strategic plan in process for mentoring and succession.
- PLN has facilitated the replication of successful programs in states throughout the region.
- PLN allows discussion of critical issues facing the states in the region and innovative ways to address.

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (4-H)

### 1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?

- Fourteen jury approved CECP modules were coordinated and completed.
- The Biennial 4-H Staff Development Conference for specialists was attended by 115 participants who experienced 24 juried workshops and 11 roundtable presentations that were strengthened by 10 posters.
- Southern Region Volunteer Forum, which has a long tradition in the region, was held with over 600 volunteers participating.
- We participated in a collective action in support of the Science, Engineering and Technology mission mandate with curriculum and marketing.
- We maintained a strong presence in liaison roles at regional and national levels.

### 2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?

- The completion of the 14 CECP modules was the result of a collaboration of state leaders and a commitment of \$500 from each state totaling \$8,000.
- The depth and quality of information and contacts associated with the healthy living and science, engineering and technology curriculum were enhanced by this PLN.
- Diverse leadership for 4-H Program Leader group was accomplished through PLN.
- PLN fostered engagement between 1890 and 1862 staff.
- We were able to establish protocols/handled issues about jointly sponsored ongoing events and advance national mission mandates.
- PLN facilitated the development of partnership and supported opportunities with the technology group for Access 4-H, the community development group for Youth Entrepreneurship, and family and consumer sciences for 4-H Healthy Living. Committee members from various states have been assigned to ensure positive productivity.

### 3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.

- Program and resource sharing through state reports, quarterly teleconference calls and the Biennial seminars have resulted in: CECP professional development for staff at county and state levels, new research ideas, and resources that aided in the prevention of potential problems. One state has identified at least 20 items to replicate based on program sharing.
- PLN has encouraged the replication of successful programs and resource development strategies:
  - Louisiana is now producing a 4-H youth Development Research Review similar to one shared by Texas.
  - Tennessee implemented “Project Citizen” as a result of the Biennial 4-H Professional Development Conference.
  - Arkansas is holding its first “4-H Gala” patterned after North Carolina and Georgia’s programs.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

### 1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?

- We created a resource list of social networking tools at Web2 where Extension professionals can become familiar with various tools, learn about their potential uses, and select appropriate tools for adoption in program delivery and engagement.
- We created a best practices document, IT and Disaster Management, which addresses disaster preparedness and information security. The document includes overarching resources that are critical to the success of disaster preparedness and recovery policies and procedures in Extension.
- We began creating a professional development course on Information Security. The course combines IT security training material from Alabama, Louisiana and Texas into a Moodle training module at <http://pdc.extension.org>.
- We established a national virtual Extension collaborative consisting of Instructional Designers within land-grant institutions. We also conducted a national Instructional Design & Development survey of Extension faculty and staff involved in or interested in instructional design, soliciting information about distance learning tools they use, extent of involvement in distance learning, as well as ideas for establishing this collaborative.
- We served as a resource to other PLN committees, creating the Accomplishment Report wiki for all committees and creating the State Report wiki for Middle Managers, Program & Staff Development, Communications and Information Technology.

### 2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?

- All accomplishments identified in question one (1) are the result of PLN collaboration.
- The continuing collaborative agreement among five member states to use Centra grew specifically out of the committee discussions.
- The increased adoption of the Bomgar remote desktop appliance is a direct result of committee discussions and has progressed into discussions of reciprocal back-up agreements.

### 3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.

- Social media is the “next frontier” in interacting with the younger generation of clientele. The Extension IT staff in several Southern region states have been promoting these tools among agents and specialists. As each state begins integrating social media tools into program delivery, we are sharing our experiences and developing common approaches.
- As Extension’s reliance on information technology continues to grow, so must each state prepare for disasters that may interrupt internal operations and impact local communities. Although local situations may differ, each state benefits from the individual experiences of other states that have dealt with various disasters.
- IT security is a common concern throughout Extension. As agents and specialists have become more mobile with various devices and interact more with non-Extension online resources, proper education about information security is necessary to ensure that users and information are protected. Combining training material developed in a few states will result in a comprehensive professional development course that will benefit all states.
- The Instructional Design & Development survey resulted in 47 individuals from 27 states joined a mailing list ([idd@lists.extension.org](mailto:idd@lists.extension.org)) to facilitate communications and exchange of ideas related to instructional design and development. The results of this survey were also shared during a session at the 2008 National Extension Technology Conference, further expanding interest in this work.
- Arkansas purchased the Bomgar remote desktop appliance the year it was first discussed at PLN. The deployment of that device contributed directly to the establishment of a central help desk, significantly reducing staff and travel costs while increasing the level of support.
- Kentucky also became aware of the Bomgar appliance through the PLN IT committee. It has helped them reduce travel costs, increase the number of problems resolved remotely, and increased the level of support.



## MIDDLE MANAGERS (MM)

### 1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?

- We began a connection with the PSD committee to develop succession plan.
- Representatives implemented a plan developed at PLN to attend the North Central Region MM training conference for the purpose of sharing ideas and exploring collaborative interests.
- We pursued common interests pertaining to MMs and discussed possibility of future joint meetings with other regions.
- We planned national MM session for Galaxy III.
- The development of the Urban Task Force was initiated during PLN.
- We planned and hosted an Urban pre-PLN Conference Tour.
- We shared ideas on staff recruitment, professional development, program evaluation, staff retention and other issues confronting MMs.
- Planning began for 2009 Southern Region MM Conference in Athens, Georgia.
- We prepared background information, e.g., characteristics of an effective MM, positive reasons to become a MM, and barriers that will be used to plan a succession strategy.

### 2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?

- Most of these tasks could not have been performed without PLN and some were totally dependent on PLN, i.e., PLN, face-to-face discussions resulted in better outcomes.
- eXtension updates and collaborations with PSD would not have occurred without PLN.
- Pre-conference tour and discussions with local Extension staff would not have occurred.

### 3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.

- PLN allows more in-depth discussions of critical issues that we all address in our respective states and allows us to bring back to our states effective techniques and strategies used by others.
- Discussions and sharing ideas about the development of performance appraisal tools and career ladders result in improved practices in all member states.
- PLN enhances our ability to begin planning for our biannual professional development conference.
- PLN serves as a dynamic catalyst for uniform change with directors, administrators and MM being exposed to the same information.
- PLN results in outcomes that have been adopted by states outside of our region so that the entire system benefits.
- When states are going through economic down-turns or difficulties, it is helpful to hear of previous approaches that other states have used for similar situations.
- It is most beneficial when all member institutions are involved in our deliberations of issues.

## **PROGRAM AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT (PSD)**

### **1. What has your committee accomplished together in the last year as a result of PLN?**

- We planned and hosted the Southern Region PSD Conference, which other states attended from throughout the nation.
- PLN afforded the creation of the Inventory of Middle Management Leadership resources.
- We created the National Extension Professional Development Directory, which included 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions.
- We provided a network for multi-state research and multi-state projects, i.e., "How Farmers Learn Southern - A SARE Research Project," "Building Effective On-line Course Design", and "Excellence in Extension."
- A strong presence on the NEPD Steering Committee was preserved through PLN.
- We completed online modules on the History of Extension and Presentation Skills.
- During PLN, we were able to make plans for the 2009 PSD Conference.
- We provided leadership and implementation for focus group research on the value of PLN.
- We conducted a survey of nationwide Web-based new agent orientation training for professional development.
- After a meeting with Middle Managers during PLN, we have begun to formulate the components of a succession plan for Extension County Directors and Middle Managers.

### **2. What has your committee accomplished together that it could not have accomplished without PLN?**

- PLN allowed networking and joint grant opportunities, including multi-state grant partnerships.
- All other accomplishments identified in question one (1) are the result of PSD networking and collaborative efforts.

### **3. Please give a few examples of specific benefits to individual states.**

- We will use the CECP modules to supplement the New Faculty Orientation process and other in-state training.
- PLN presented the opportunity for Faculty and Staff Program Development to collaborate through the PSD Conference, i.e., was able to find merit reviewers for the federal plan of work requirements.
- PLN fostered the addition of staff, i.e., instructional designer to address distance education.
- Trusting relationships for multi-state Extension projects have been built during PLN.
- PLN has enhanced our influence at the state, regional, and national levels. An example is the formation of a national professional development association.
- Two national awards have been won as a result of networking among PLN members.
- Each state has an opportunity to benchmark their progress against other states.
- PLN saved dollars for equipment, technology, time, and energy.
- PLN helps enhance relationships within the states but also helps build the bond between 1862 and 1890 institutions.
- PLN also provides support for interpreting federal plan of work guidelines.
- Through PLN, we have implemented surveys which have benefited states and regions.
- We gained input for promotion and tenure packet reviews for peers.