

SRPLN Middle Managers News

Southern Region
**Program
Leadership
Network**
Cooperatively Extension System

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The Middle Managers Conference, April 9–12, 2013

By Louise Moore

We hope you are planning to come to the Mid-Manager's Conference Kentucky, April 9-12, 2013, as we plan to "Run for the Roses-Continuing extension's Excellence."

Kentucky is known for our horse industry, and we will make the connection throughout the conference.

Included in the Conference will be presentations about the topics that YOU identified at PLN which are important to middle managers, such as retention, hiring and marketing.

In addition, we have planned tours to Keeneland, Toyota and a bourbon distillery; a performance by the Kentucky 4-H Troupe, and a panel on the important research done at UK concerning the Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome.

Another highlight will be a tour of our 1890's partner, Kentucky State University, where we can hear about their aquaculture work and enjoy one of their delicious catfish dinners.



Registration:

Conference registration fee is \$250. The link below will allow you to register for the conference as well as the hotel, Embassy Suites.

<http://www.regonline.com/2013SRMMCONFERENCE>

Flights:

You will need to fly into the Bluegrass Airport, Lexington Kentucky. This is only minutes away from the conference hotel. Flight information and ground transportation information can be accessed through

<http://www.bluegrassairport.com/>

Meals:

If you need vegetarian or gluten free meals, please email me directly.

Contact Louise Moore
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We hope to see you in April.

PLN Urban Pre-Conference Workshop

By Connie Heiskell
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Urban Programming – Working with the Media

- Agents that do regular programming present as a group what they do, how they maintain the relationship, etc.
- A newscaster from a Nashville local channel to address the ins and outs of working with the media.
- Tennessee State University Agents working with the media.
- Partnerships to enhance and strengthen media coverage (Vanderbilt University has its own media person who works to promote Extension coverage).
- Working with the newspaper media.



PLN Developments

By Carolyn Nobles
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- Evaluation of the 2012 conference got very good reviews. Significant discussion on cross-committee topics and how to move those initiatives forward.
- Due to credit card fees being charged that impact the conference budget, a new pricing structure was approved for 2013. This will cover the credit card fees and put approximately \$5,000 to pay speaker fees. **Early Registration PLN only \$350; Regular Registration (7/15-8/10) \$400; Late \$450. Early Registration PLN+AEA/ASRED \$425; Regular Registration (7/15-8/10) \$475; Late \$525.** To receive discounted rates, (early or regular), participants must register and either pay by check or credit card, or provide a purchase order by the deadline.
- Conference theme selected: **“Connecting with Communities: Preparing for the next 100 years.”** A committee was established to solicit proposals from the LGU system that would be high energy, high take-away value, 90-minute concurrent sessions. Potential topics: Social media, Marketing, Impacts, New Audiences (diversity, underserved, non-traditional, military families), Urban settings, Agent training, Partnerships, Funding, Vision/Leadership.
- Smith Lever celebration: presentation will be made during Tuesday’s lunch on plans for the celebration.

PLN Conference theme:
**“Connecting with Communities:
 Preparing for the Next 100 years.”**



Strengthening Extension Advisory Leadership

By Eric Kaufman

The Strengthening Extension Advisory Leaders (SEAL) program is a multi-state collaborative for sharing curricula and related resources to support volunteer involvement in Extension's marketing, programming, and advocacy efforts. The next SEAL webinar is scheduled for February 11th and will highlight steps to increase public engagement; details are posted at <https://learn.extension.org/events/762>. Other resources related to the SEAL program have been posted at <http://campus.extension.org/course/view.php?id=595>. For more information about the SEAL program, contact Eric Kaufman, ekaufman@vt.edu or 540-231-6258.



CRD Cross Committee Effort

By Susan Jakes/Sheri Schwab

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The CRD Committee has had conversations about advancing the training opportunities in CRD. The desire is to identify the programs that have the biggest impact as opposed to trying to catalog what everyone that is doing CRD. CRD will build the strongest case by identifying 3-4 areas/ programs where the SR is having the biggest impact. So instead of populating a huge database with a lot of programs, we will collect data on the biggest impact programs. In several states there are few dedicated CRD FTE. We don't want to put ourselves in a position where CRD is defined as "everyone's Job" and we have no dedicated FTEs, so the work of the CRD program doesn't get done. We want to know also, how successful is the program? How much real effort is behind each program? For the list of programs, we will develop a few categories that build over time. Brian Whitacre (CRD Chair) is going to develop a spreadsheet of programs that have significant impact over time. Brian has gotten no response on his invitation to form a cross committee team to look at this issue, so he is going to call all the other PLN committees to get a committee together on Middle Managers action item.

Middle Managers Best Practices

By Dan Goerlich

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The Middle Managers Best Practices document was completed on schedule in November 2012. It should be posted to the MM website by now, but was not as of this notice.



National MM Discussion at Galaxy

By Joe Schaefer

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The Galaxy planning team was contacted and they do not have a date and time confirmed for our MM meeting, but we were assured that it would be taken care of and on the program agenda. Joe Schaefer sent out an email to all of the MMers on his list (compiled at the previous Galaxy) telling them of the MMers on his list (compiled at the previous Galaxy) telling them of MM meeting to be held at Galaxy- Pittsburgh, and asked to please spread the word using their lists and that he would follow-up with details when received.



Ingredients for an Effective Formal Interpretation Event

By Darrell A. Dromgoole
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Formal interpretation Events are very valuable settings to communicate Extension's impact in a county and an important component in any initiative to strengthen governmental relations at the local, state and federal level. As District Extension Administrators and County Extension Directors work with agents to develop interpretation plans, it is imperative that county faculty have a planned strategy to conduct effective formal interpretation events. The following are some ingredients for an effective formal interpretation event:

- **A Plan** - A plan should be developed to conduct formal interpretation events. Effective interpretation events don't just happen-- adequate time and preparation should be devoted to ensuring that this opportunity is not a just another meeting with elected officials to report Extension program activities, but rather to interpret impact and public value of Extension programs.
- **Venue**- The location or venue for the interpretation event is extremely important to the success of an event. It must be decided if the interpretation event will be conducted during a regular commissioner's court meeting or a special event. Many times a venue other than a regular court meeting is more effective because the court member's entire focus is on Extension programs rather than other business matters facing the court, and staying on time, etc. Some of the special events around the state that have proven successful include luncheons, "Breakfast with Extension," receptions, etc.
- **The Messenger** - Who will ultimately address various topics is extremely important in developing an effective interpretation message during formal interpretation events. A decision should be made regarding which agents will cover specific topics, if a District Extension Administrator or County Extension Director is to be involved, and if volunteers/stakeholders/committee members will be involved. The utilization of volunteers/stakeholders/committee members is a very effective strategy and should be utilized whenever possible.
- **The Content** - The content of an effective program interpretation event should include the communication of measurable programmatic outcomes and should ultimately convey to elected officials that an investment in Extension programs is an investment that provides a return to the county in terms of economic, environmental and/or social outcomes. It is extremely important that agents understand the difference between reporting and interpreting. Reporting is conveying to elected officials accomplishments in terms of number of programs conducted and number of participants. Interpretation is communicating the impacts of the program, value of the program to the community in general and beyond those who personally participated and how Extension programs are an investment in the well-being of the county.
- **Document** - Every formal event should be supplemented with a well written and attractive interpretative document. This document should be succinct with appropriate subject matter and terminology.

Southern Region Urban Network

By Joan Jacobsen
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Our next Southern Region Urban Network conference call is set for Mon., February 11, at 10:00 a.m. CT or 11:00 a.m. ET. The topic will be **"Engaging Hispanic Audiences"** and our facilitator will be Terrie James from Arkansas, who has lots of experience doing just that! Call in 877 807 4596 Code: 437439



Kentucky Forum Explores Unique Challenges of Urban Extension

By Jeff Young

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Defining the success of Urban Extension units is sometimes elusive. Very limited work has been done to identify what makes certain units successful and others not. For those that have worked in both rural and urban communities, the unique challenges associated with working in urban Extension are obvious, but difficult to solve. Many times we seek to address urban issues using the same methods that have served us well in rural communities for over a century, with less than optimal results.

On January 24th, 2013, Kentucky Extension hosted an Urban Extension Forum, which included the Dean of the College of Agriculture and over seventy-five support staff, agents, associates, specialists and administrators. The purpose of the Forum was to foster an understanding of the structural issues that make urban Extension work unique and challenging.

Dr. Charles S. Vavrina, District Extension Director with the University of Florida, IFAS, served as keynote speaker, educating and challenging the group with examples of work being conducted in the state of Florida. Dr. Vavrina's presentation noted that the population and political influence of rural America is shrinking and that "traditional thinking" and an inability to successfully market the impact of our programs to users and the general public leaves Extension vulnerable to funding competition from other agencies, especially in urban communities.

A major portion of the Urban Forum incorporated the use of five discussion groups. Attendees rotated throughout the day between these groups and were tasked with examining barriers and solutions to five success factors. Those factors were: adequate financial resources, addressing local priorities, developing high levels of teamwork, strong communication/interaction between urban government leaders and developing creative/visionary leadership.

While in-depth analysis of forum work has yet to be finalized, common themes did appear during discussion group "report outs": 1) Extension must respond more quickly to urban issues; 2) Extension must be relevant to both users and non-users (public value) and 3) the overall communication "foot print" of Extension must grow.



Parting Shots

By Charles Vavrina

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So what do you think? This newsletter work for you? I do want to thank all those who contributed, all busy folks who stepped up and responded in short order ... thank you, thank you, thank you! While the conference call has been our usual protocol, this format may reach more MMs in the long run and it doesn't take that much more time to deliver.

I pledged when becoming Chair, to raise the level of communication and sharing and in some small way I think that's working. Why just yesterday morning Jeff sent us that wonderful TEDTalks video and others have been offering bits and pieces along the way to keep us engaged with MM ... it shouldn't just be an annual event at PLN. But we can always share more. You never know how what you are doing might help another MM or their county agents on the ground. We're all in this together, so keep sharing those new ideas and concepts!

In the meantime, I'm looking forward to spring in Kentucky at the MM Conference in Lexington. Having just been there in 12 degree weather (Floridians don't do cold!) I can say the hotel is really great so if that's any indication we're all in for a treat! I know Louise and Jeff have a great meeting planned so come join us. See you there!

