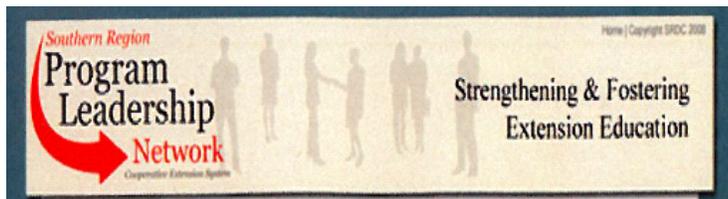


# NEW HEIGHTS

Southern Region Middle Managers Newsletter

May 2016



## Middle Managers Highlight the Importance of Succession Planning



**Blake Lanford, Extension Agent and Regional Lead Agent; Clemson University; [blakel@clemson.edu](mailto:blakel@clemson.edu)**

Succession planning for Cooperative Extension leadership roles is an issue of preeminent importance due to permanent system-wide organizational transformation.

Recent research conducted by Dr. Tammy Denise Kelly of N.C. State Cooperative Extension explores and describes succession plans and

components of importance as perceived by the organizational leadership within the Southern Region of the Cooperative Extension System.

Cooperative Extension Systems continue to be faced with a reduction in force, primarily due to retirements, budget cuts and organizational restructuring. Resulting impacts to the organization include, but are not limited to, the loss of a leadership proficiency and knowledge and the difficulty of backfilling positions with staff possessing a commensurate level experience.

Though Dr. Kelly's research revealed that the majority of the states have some form of succession plan, the greater majority of the plans are informal. Such information reinforces the sense that Cooperative Extension organizations view the practice as important, but in most cases, have not taken steps to incorporate a formal succession framework into long term plans.

*Succession Planning Continued on page 3*

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# Middle Manager News

## Update of the MM Best Practices Manual

As part of the 2016 PLN Middle Managers Plan of Work, Blake Lanford (Clemson University), Judy Ashley (University of Georgia) and Brenda Rogers (University of Florida) have been tasked to update the publication “Words of Wisdom from Middle Managers.... for Middle Managers” (last revised in November 2012). While many of the messages in this document are timeless, there are some in need to editing. In addition, new and creative ideas from a new generation of middle managers will be included as well.

## What is “The Collective Impact Framework”?

Sheri Schwab

Collective Impact is a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. It is an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, philanthropy, non-profit organizations and citizens to achieve significant and lasting social change. It perfectly fits what Extension is trying to do, especially in large communities.

For more information, visit <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>

## 2017 MM Conference: Mark your calendars and get engaged!

The organizers have confirmed that our next MM Conference will be held on March 13-16, 2017 at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel in Downtown Asheville, NC.

If you are interested in joining the program development team (Sheri Schwab, NC; Lonnie Johnson, VA; Blake Lanford, SC), please contact Sheri ([sheri\\_schwab@ncsu.edu](mailto:sheri_schwab@ncsu.edu)) before June 1, 2016.



Asheville, North Carolina

## Succession Planning (Cont'd)

The identification of limited consistency in the development, implementation, and evaluation of succession plans points to the opportunity for model framework creation and testing within the SR Program Leaders Network program.

For more information on the above referenced study, see Kelly, Tammy Denise. Succession Planning for the 1862 Institutions in the Southern Region of the Cooperative Extension System.

Discussions on the topic held during the most recent SRMM Committee meeting in Orlando, FL highlight both the importance and continued need for organizational succession planning. A number of existing formal mechanisms such as LEAD 21 and Georgia's ExTend Leadership trainings were identified as programs that some institutions utilize. Virtually all institutions suggest that the responsibility for succession planning rests with existing leadership. Committee members discussed the importance of identifying leadership potential among staff and the need for resource deployment in the further development of identified attributes.

Whether through support of formal programs such as those mentioned above or less formal initiatives such as Clemson's Regional Lead Agent Internship, continued investment in the Extension leaders of tomorrow will be critical to the sustained success of the system's future.

### 2015 Southern Region Middle Managers Officers

**Chair:** Jeff Young (University of Kentucky)

**Vice-Chair:** Sheri Schwab (North Carolina State University)

**Secretary:** Dee Cooper (Oklahoma State University)

**Past Chair:** Loni Johnson (Virginia Cooperative Extension)

**Newsletter Editors:** Eric Simonne and Julie Wilson (University of Florida)

## Readings: Three Ways to Stay Sane and Upbeat When You're a Middle Manager



Sheri Schwab (sheri\_schwab@ncsu.edu) and Eric Simonne (esimonne@ufl.edu)

Are you insane? Well, this was a rhetorical question.... "Insane" is defined as "in a state of mind that prevents normal perception, behavior, or social interaction; seriously mentally ill; in a state of extreme annoyance or distraction". Hummmm... Rhetorical, yet very practical. Looks like this definition describes MM state of mind in o-so-many occasions. Recognizing that being a MM is "downright stressful", Jo Miller who is the founding editor of Be Leaderly and CEO of Women's Leadership Coaching, Inc., proposes three tips: 1. Align personal passion with the company's mission; 2. Re-define what a good day at work means; and 3. Negotiate authority. Does this apply to you?

The whole article may be accessed at <https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-ways-to-stay-sane-and-upbeat-when-youre-a-middle-manager>.



# Building Emotional Bank Accounts to Strengthen Relationships



**Matt Benge, Extension Assistant Professor, UF/IFAS Dept. of Agricultural Education & Communication; mattbenge@ufl.edu**

Maintaining high quality relationships is a priority of managers, supervisors, and directors. High quality relationships lead to increases in employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and decreases in employee burnout and turnover. It is clear, whether by reviewing the science literature or thinking about our work relationships, that being in positive, healthy relationships is better than being in negative, unhealthy relationships.

Stephen Covey, author of *“The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”* (1984) asserts that trust in a relationship, whether professional or personal, can be stored in an emotional bank account. Both deposits and withdrawals can be made, and the strength of a relationship is determined by the balance in the account. A deposit is something that makes the other person trust you more, and acts such as kindness, honesty, and keeping a commitment strengthens the relationship. A withdrawal, the complete opposite of a deposit, is anything that makes someone trust you less, such as disrespect, overreacting, and threats. Covey (1984) identified six major deposits that can strengthen a relationship:

Just as with a financial bank account, deposits must be made to cover any withdrawals that are taken – so the account balance remains positive at all times. Professionals in supervisory positions need to take a long-hard look at whether they are making more deposits than they are withdrawals. Southern Region MM manage many emotional bank accounts should consider the following:

1. Am I making enough deposits in the accounts of my newly-hired employees?
2. How am I making deposits (and withdrawals) from the emotional bank accounts of all my unit employees?
3. Are there specific employees that have a low balance? If so, why is it low?  
When was the last time I made a deposit in my unit employees' accounts?



Relationships are easy to create, but difficult to maintain. Time is a precious commodity, but so is our human capital! As Middle Managers, are we doing what we need to get the most out of our employees? Several resources are available to Extension Middle Managers to develop and build relationships:

Covey, S. R. (1984). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Lombardo, M. M., & Eichinger, R. W. (2009). *FYI for your improvement: A guide for development and coaching* (5th ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Korn/Ferry International.

## New Heights: Helping Middle Managers Rise to the Top

The MM Newsletter seeks to make us become better MM by (1) serving as the repository for presentations and discussions during our annual meetings, (2) providing communication about current and future events of interest to us, (3) making us know each other better, and (4) encouraging our own professional development.

### LAST CHANCE!

Vote on a group logo by sending an email to Dr. Eric Simonne at [esimonne@ufl.edu](mailto:esimonne@ufl.edu) by June 1, 2016.

## Remember to participate in our MM Conference Calls

(10:00am EST/9:00am Central)  
by dialing (712) 432-0931  
enter participant code 911522#

Thursday June 9, 2016

Thursday July 14, 2016

A.



**NEW HEIGHTS**

B. **Southern Region  
Middle Managers**



**NEW HEIGHTS**

C. **Southern Region  
Middle Managers**



# Know Your Middle Managers



## Anita Neal (FL)

**South District Extension Director; [asn@ufl.edu](mailto:asn@ufl.edu)**

When do you start in this middle manager position? *May 9, 2016*

Where are you from and where did you grow up? *I was born and raised in upstate New York, a small town with one traffic light called Walworth. It was approximately 12 miles from Lake Ontario.*

How and when did you decide you wanted to be an Extension Middle Manager? *I have thought about this position on and off for about five years and really only made up my mind when several of my associates encouraged me to apply. Their support and confidence in me was all I needed to move forward.*

What are your hobbies? *Insect collecting, walking, watching soccer, and reading*

Describe yourself in one word. *Epistemophile [According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, "one who loves knowledge; specifically: one who shows excessive striving for or preoccupation with knowledge]*

Where did you go on your last vacation? *Wears Valley, Tennessee*

What was the last book you read? *We Don't Make Widgets*

What is the most memorable situation you had to deal with as a Middle Manager? *I have not started yet, but I believe it might be assisting a faculty member achieve promotion.*

Do you play a musical instrument? *No, but I like to make weird noises*

What is the most exciting place you have ever visited? *Zamorano University in Honduras, collecting insects at night, and my high school visit to Auschwitz Concentration Camp, which left a lasting impression*

What gives you the most satisfaction in your job? *When faculty and staff excel at reaching their goals and objectives and are recognized by their community for their educational efforts.*



## **Willie Howard, Jr. (KY)**

**Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service;  
whowardj@uky.edu**

When do you start in this middle manager position? *Monday, May 2, 2016.*

Where are you from and where did you grow up?  
*Currently, I live in Louisville, Kentucky and have lived in Louisville for 20 years. I'm originally from Taylorsville, Mississippi.*

How and when did you decide you wanted to be an Extension Middle Manager? *A few years ago I decided that I wanted to work in middle management with UK Extension. It all started when new agents began approaching me for advice with their programs, and later on, those agents coming back to thank me for sharing my knowledge and expertise that helped their programs to be successful. It helped to boost my interest in seeking opportunities to work as a District Director.*

What are your hobbies? *Traveling with family and enjoying sporting events with friends.*

Describe yourself in one word. *Personable*

Where did you go on your last vacation? *I had the opportunity to visit the Prairie Grove's suburb outside of Chicago during a family reunion. My first time visiting the city and found it to be a wonderful suburb of Chicago. The people there were friendly and hospitable to my family during the time we were there.*

What was the last book you read? *Rush to Judgement: The Simeon Rice Story. It gives a personal account of "playing the game" within the game of football.*

What is the most memorable situation you had to deal with as a Middle Manager?  
*Though I've only been working as a District Director for one week, I look forward to the many memorable events and opportunities ahead.*

Do you play a musical instrument? *No, unfortunately I have no musical talent. However, if I ever have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, it would be the "silky smooth" Saxophone.*



What is the most exciting place you have ever visited? *By far the Grand Canyon. It was truly amazing to see the wonders surrounding this earthly beauty. Just wish I had more time to visit the site and to see more of its beauty.*

What gives you the most satisfaction in your job? *Knowing that I am making a difference in the lives of people that I've touched, and using my talents and skills in helping Kentucky Extension Agents to be all that they can be.*

# What's New About Urban Extension

## Expand your alphabet soup: NUEL!

The National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) is an organization with the goal of advancing the strategic importance and long term value of urban Extension. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) now focuses on urban Extension as a top national priority. To find out more information, visit [nuelaction.org](http://nuelaction.org).

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*“Let’s work together so Extension can be as successful in the city as we have been everywhere else.”*

*- Deno DeCiantis,  
PILD 2016*

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## National report from NUEL to ECOP

After the assessment of national trends and a review of the Extension literature, the report from the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) entitled “A National Framework for Urban Extension” (September 2015) identified the three primary shifts that influence Extension’s work in urban communities (demographics, community conditions and urban-suburban-rural interdependencies). NUEL believes that if the Cooperative Extension Service is to achieve the level of success in the 21st century similar to those of the 20th, it must have a substantial presence in cities and metropolitan area. NUEL also recognizes that Extension programs need to reflect the interdependence between the urban and rural communities. The full report may be accessed at [http://cityextension.osu.edu/sites/urban/files/imce/Natl%20Framework%20for%20Urban%20Extension%209%2015%20\(2\)%20final%20\(004\)\\_0.pdf](http://cityextension.osu.edu/sites/urban/files/imce/Natl%20Framework%20for%20Urban%20Extension%209%2015%20(2)%20final%20(004)_0.pdf)



Columbus, Ohio

## What to know the latest? Make plans to attend the NUEL Conference!

The NUEL bi-annual meeting will be held on May 24-26, 2016 in Columbus, OH. A special pre-meeting Policy workshop is scheduled for Monday, May 23. Bi-annual events are held in the Downtown, Short North, Arena District, University, and surrounding areas of Columbus, OH. Visit the

conference site at [http://cityextension.osu.edu/NUEL\\_meeting](http://cityextension.osu.edu/NUEL_meeting) for program and

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## West Virginia

VACANT



*“Don’t let failure define you. Overcome it!.”*

*- Anonymous*