

Middle Managers Conference Call, Thursday, February 09, 2017

Attendees:

Doug Steele - Texas  
Sheri Schwab, Chair – North Carolina  
Dee Cooper, Vice Chair – Oklahoma  
Beth Phelps-Arkansas  
Sharon Reynolds - Arkansas  
Joann Milam – Georgia  
Gerald Jones - Mississippi  
Lonnelle Marsh – North Carolina  
Lonnie Johnson - Virginia  
Barbara Board – North Carolina  
Eric Simonne - Florida  
Judy Ashley - Georgia

Doug Steele reported on the situation with new leadership in Washington:

“Lots of moving parts with new sec of Ag.” Caret will meet March 5-8 and begin conversation with new administration.

“Lots of noise around SNAP and EFNEP funding”.

Are wondering if it would be possible to move SNAP \$\$\$ to NIFA and fund SNAP directly.

There is Interest in the 2018 farm bill.

There is talk and interest of a line item in farm bill for youth and health and wellness

ASRED is interested in working with middle managers to sponsor a Professional development meeting focusing on (1) Health and Wellness, (2) Urban Agriculture and (3) ?

Sheri asked if the Professional dvlp conference is envisioned as a pre-conf to PLN in August.

ASRED Admin was very complimentary of Middle Manager’s newsletter under the leadership of Eric Simonne, Florida.

Doug Steele also said that the Southern Region seen as leader in innovative programming.

Sheri Schwab opened the discussion of the upcoming Middle Manager’s conference and introduced Barbara Board to give an overview of the staff development sessions planned for the conference:  
Here are the proposals that have been submitted:

- (1) Two models for onboarding – TN and NC
- (2) Competencies for county directors, GA & FL – -
- (3) Retaining 4-H agents - LA
- (4) Local food hub and model = Western NC

The day long session at the Center for Creative Leadership is the centerpiece of conference. The topics will include, leadership, change, and conflict mgmt. Planning committee is in discussion with CCL to add another session based on the book, Be the Boss Everyone Wants to Work For, by adjunct professor at CCL, William A. Gentry, Ph.D.

Sheri said that CCL – will provide certificates to mm participating.

At this time 50 participants have registered for MM Conf in Asheville. Please recruit additional middle managers. We usually have around 60-75 participants.

Sheri gave an overview of agenda. Registration will be extended to Feb. 17. The planning committee would like to open registration to other regions.

Doug Steele asked that communication and invitation be extended through ECOP.

Sheri stated that the Hotel is not keen on bringing in food products for the hospitality room and will charge \$1.00 per item. She offered alternatives. Non-food items can be mailed ahead of time and put swag bags AND/OR snacks can be shared at the Biltmore or Mountain Horticulture Research and Extension Center. Sheri will send instructions on providing state products to share.

Eric Simonne asked if the following topic could be discussed at the middle manager's conference: – "What can we do as MM to make the work environment more inviting to millennials?" Sheri said may not have time at MM so will add to PLN conf for August.

Eric said that Florida is offering to host next mm conf.

Sheri reviewed the Middle Managers Plan of Work items. Here is the status of Plan of Work:

- Initiate an Innovative PLN Pre-Conference in 2017. Establish a committee of representative from other PLN committees to identify topics and prioritize for conference – ***in progress***
- Planning for the 2017 Middle Managers Conference – ***well underway***
- Enhance productivity of MM listserv communication by providing a quarterly newsletter with pre-established topics to be determined. ***Eric will send out a call after this MM conference call to solicit news articles for the next newsletter.***
- Confirm state point persons for both the 1862 and 1890 point persons. ***Gerald Jones, 1890 and Lonnie Johnson, 1862.***
- Review and update the 2012 MM best practices document. Post on SRPLN MM website. ***Document has been finalized and is ready to post on SRPLN MM website.***
- Identify person to receive free MM Conference Registration for MM Best Practice participation. ***Congratulations to Blake Lanford for being the winner.***
- Develop webinar series on Management Development/best practices topics to be held in off years of MM conference. ***This item will be placed on the August PLN meeting***
- Support the National Urban Extension Leaders Annual Meeting and Southern Region Caucus. ***No report - Sheldon Hammond was not in attendance.***

The next discussion centered around PLN Annual conference Feedback. Gerald Jones, reported that after surveys of last year's conference, committees were asked 3 questions:

How can committee time be shortened?

How much time is needed with administrator advisors?

How could the structure of the meeting accommodate people who are on more than one committee?

The results from the survey were that the entire conference would have to be reformatted to shorten the committee time and allow for persons to spend time on more than one committee. The challenges are that the conference is a very long week for Extension Directors and there is a great variation in the amount of time each committee needs for planning POW. Some committees are very efficient and hit the ground running because of preparation done throughout the year through quarterly conference calls and other committees, not so much.

PLN dates: Fort Worth August - 21-25, 2017

Doug Steele stated that there are potential openings in Ext Director positions over next few months. If there are any mm interested in applying, he would be happy to assist in helping them follow through with applying.

###