



New Heights – Winter 2018

Southern Region Middle Managers Newsletter

Contents:

- **Lead On: Your Influence is Powerful**
- **Flipping the Script for New Extension Leaders**
- **I care – We serve**
- **IT Tools for Extension: Wireless Printing from your iPhone or iPad**
- **MM Tools: The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)**
- **Mark Your Calendars and Get Engaged: MM2019 Conference Updates**
- **Passionate, interested or involved in Urban Extension? Mark the 2018 NUEL Conference on your Calendars!**

- **MM Committee Work on HR Best Practices - Update**
- **Leadership Skills that Require Zero Talent**
- **Don't tell your Agents/educators what to do– Ask them Questions, Make them Think!**
- **Success Stories: Fine Arts Extension Agents Make a Huge Impact in Kentucky**
- **Writing Position Descriptions that Attract Strong Applicant Pools**
- **Expectations of New County Extension Agent in Arkansas**
- **State Updates: Oklahoma**

Words from Our Administrative Advisors

Lead On: Your Influence is Powerful



Carolyn Williams, 1890 Administrative Advisor to the MM, and Associate Administrator, Cooperative Extension Program, Prairie View University (cjwilliams@pvamu.edu)

It is an honor to engage with some of the most effective and passionate Extension Leaders in the southern region, referred to as “Middle Managers”. I recently read an article by Lin Pophal entitled “*Must have Leadership Skills for the 21st Century*”. I thought of you as I read the characteristics stated in the article. We are zealous about our ability to effect change in the lives of individuals and the value of Extension education to our communities. We are real leaders who serve a diverse group of people and cultures and connect with a wide range of constituencies. I believe we are a first-class outreach organization because we possess and exercise the necessary leadership skills. **The must-have leadership skills include are: character, vision, passion, communication, coaching skills, the ability to create value, flexibility, comfort with ambiguity, collaboration, and knowledge seekers.**

Let us continue to lead by example so that our future Middle Managers will continue the legacy.

Flipping the Script for New Extension Leaders



Matt Bengé, Extension Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Education & Communication, University of Florida / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (mattbenge@ufl.edu)

Becoming a new Extension leader is great! Many times our leaders are promoted from within the organization, such as from a county educator to county director, or state specialists to a department chair, center director or district director. Regardless of the transition, becoming a leader brings with it many rewards, such as a bigger office with bigger budget, a pay increase, as well as providing a new challenge for the Extension professional.

Becoming a new Extension leader is difficult! The same leaders making the transition from county to district, or specialist to unit leader, now have to lead a team of individuals, sometimes for the first time and with little to no guidance. It's sink or swim! But, does it have to be this way? How do we help our new Extension leaders find their place within a promotion to administrative, managerial, and supervisory responsibilities?

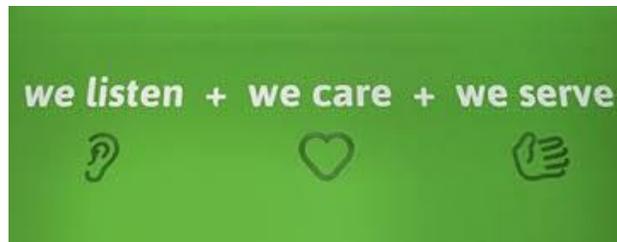


In his book *"Be the Boss Everyone Wants to Work for"*, William Gentry suggests that new leaders need to flip their skills from being an "individual contributor" and "technical" expertise to skills that affect their new team members. Gentry identified the following four skills that new leaders often struggle with the most: (1) Communication, (2) Influence, (3) Leading team achievement, and (4) Developing others.

Organizationally we perceive the transition of professionals as easy and smooth if they come from within. However, just because a leader knows the organization does not mean his/her toolbox is developed and complete. We should take the time to assess the new leader's leadership capacities and intentionally create a development plan. If you're unsure of where to begin, start with the four skills Gentry identified as being difficult for new leaders to flip!

I CARE--WE SERVE





Rick Cartwright, 1862 Administrative Advisor to the MM and Associate Vice President for Agriculture – Extension, University of Arkansas (rcartwright@uaex.edu)

During my first communication with the MM group in the Fall 2017 issue of “New Heights”, I focused on the big issue of the moment – the hurricanes that had recently devastated Puerto Rico. Let me now introduce myself more formally to the group.

It is a singular privilege to serve as your administrative advisor. I am Rick Cartwright and currently Director of the Cooperative Extension Service in Arkansas. I have a Bachelor’s and Master’s from the Univ. of Arkansas, a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from UC Davis, and worked in middle management in the Ag Industry for several years. I was extension plant pathologist in Arkansas from 1996 to late 2010, then Assoc. Director, ANR from 2011 to Sept. 2016. I then became Interim Director, and appointed Director in Aug 2017. I grew up in the Ozarks of Arkansas during the 1950s-60s, and that rural life was difficult at the time. The Cooperative Extension Service made a huge impact in that life, and is the main reason I went to college and have lived much differently than my parents. So, when it comes to our profession, I am a believer, I am committed. Arkansas mission statement and values follow:

Mission: We strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices.

Values: Integrity. Collaboration. Accountability. Relevance. Excellence.

Promise: We serve with a zeal to help others. We are committed to service.

Regional Salary Survey received in December 2017 (Southern Region)

FY16/17	AHA Salary Survey					State Appropriation		Local Appropriation	
	District	County Agent			Avg. Salary of	Retirement	Experiment Station		Extension Service
Institute	Directors	B.S.	M.S.	PhD		Contribution			
Arkansas	\$101,686	\$36,000	\$40,000		\$53,811	up to 10%	\$36,753,269	\$32,000,000	\$4,144,629
Auburn	\$132,360	\$36,892	\$40,892	N/A	\$51,526	Tier 1 - 7.5% Tier 2 - 6%	\$31,524,293	\$37,439,303	\$2,258,222
Clemson	\$86,832	\$36,000	\$38,000	Negotiated	\$56,300	12.89%	\$16,845,050	\$18,861,174	\$507,632
Florida	\$143,561	\$40,000	\$47,000	\$54,000	\$67,821	8.10%	\$86,937,541	\$48,450,711	\$31,769,601
Georgia	\$108,577	\$34,500	\$46,000	N/A	\$61,117	16.81%	\$45,107,031	\$39,842,725	\$28,685,845
Kentucky	\$96,185	\$35,500	\$39,500	\$39,500	\$50,322	10.00%	\$32,962,931	\$33,991,121	\$24,734,200
Louisiana State	\$150,020	\$40,000	\$45,000		\$54,253	8.00%	\$25,255,233	\$20,845,174	\$4,025,706
Miss.State	\$135,592	\$40,000	\$42,000	N/A	\$52,366	15.75%	\$22,568,946		\$29,198,086
NC State	\$100,804	\$35,000	\$40,000	\$45,000	\$48,282	17.13%	\$63,725,778	\$40,458,516	\$30,642,795
Okla. State	\$107,360	\$34,000	\$37,000	\$37,000	\$49,522	11.00%	\$21,492,455	\$23,453,570	\$7,827,719
Tennessee	\$110,455	\$36,000	\$40,000	N/A	\$52,785	18.87%	\$29,161,888	\$35,701,417	\$7,767,079
Texas A&M	\$86,022	\$36,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$55,765	6.80%	\$69,050,029	\$66,106,590	\$47,990,753
Virginia Tech	\$91,662	\$33,000	\$36,000	Negotiated	\$53,366	13.49%	\$36,008,571	\$35,831,836	\$6,400,000

IT Tools for Extension: Wireless Printing from your iPhone or iPad

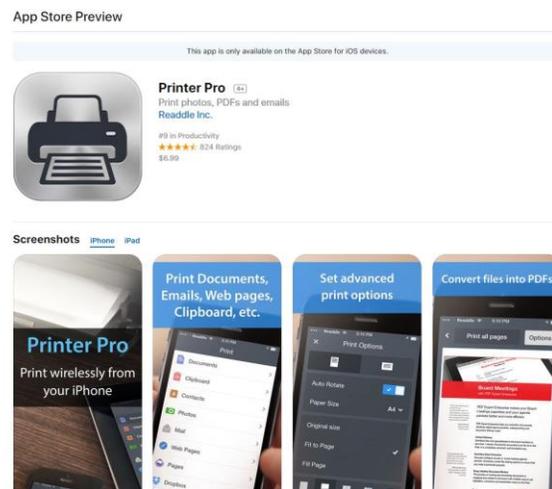


Jeff Young, Director of County Operations, University of Kentucky (jeffery.young@uky.edu)

A Middle Managers work load can be very demanding. If you are like me, you spend lots of time using your mobile devices to increase your productivity. There is just one problem – how can I easily print that email attachment or file on my cloud storage without powering up the PC. What do you do?

Well, as they say, there is an APP for that! The one that works for me is called “**Printer Pro**” by Readdle.com. <https://readdle.com/products/printerpro>. In order for this app to work, you will need a wireless capable printer and mobile device or Desktop, wired printer and mobile device connected to the same local network (Printer Pro only works with ISO devices).

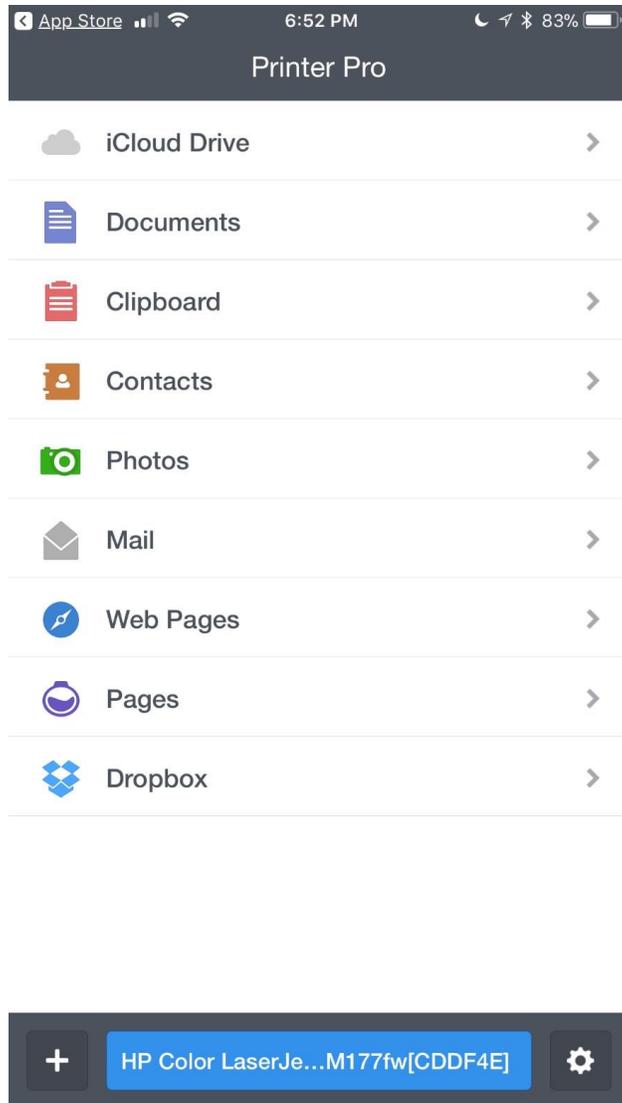
First, download the app from the iTunes App Store. There is a free and for-fee version. Try out the free version first to evaluate if it’s right for you.



According to Readdle “Printer Pro allows you to print anything right from your iPhone or iPad. Simply connect the app to any printer and start printing tickets, e-mails, web pages, clipboard, documents from the cloud and much more. Using 'Open In' dialogue makes it fast and easy.”

I have found their description of functions to be accurate and easy to use.

This is the menu screen on iPhone 7 plus.



Even if you don't have a wireless printer, there is a way to print from your iPhone or iPad. Simply download Printer Pro for Desktop. This add-in will allow you to connect and print to a wired printer.

Readdle Products ▾ Blog More ▾ Careers Flux for Business  [Get Printer Pro](#) →

© 2014 Readdle Inc. All rights reserved. Privacy Policy

Use Any Printer

Printer Pro is Compatible with any Wi-Fi and USB Printer.

The app automatically finds a printer that is on your Wi-Fi network. You can connect with a single tap and a fast set up guide to pair the app and a printer.

Moreover, you can even connect to a USB printer if you install a free helper app on your Mac or PC.

[Download Printer Pro Desktop](#)



Over 2 million people rely on Printer Pro

That's your Tech Tip for this month. I hope it work out well for you. Let me know!

MM Tools: The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)





Angie Lindsey, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Family, Youth & Community Sciences, University of Florida (ablindsey@ufl.edu)

The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) is a network of over 300 volunteers dedicated to reducing the impact of disasters through research-based education. The network includes delegates from 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Sea Grants with liaisons from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Grant, and Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). Volunteers represent over 75 disciplines at 77 state Extension programs in 50 states and three U.S. territories. EDEN meets its mission through presenting interdisciplinary and multi-state programs, linking with federal, state and local agencies and organizations, anticipating future disaster education needs, and providing credible, reliable information. Program area working groups within EDEN include family and consumer sciences/4-H, community development, and agriculture and natural resources.

EDEN strives to strengthen Extension's capacity and commitment to address disaster issues and to provide research-based disaster education for disaster planning and recovery. Through its work with Extension, EDEN enhances the abilities of individuals, families, organizations, agencies and businesses to prepare for, prevent, mitigate and recover from disasters. It continually strives to serve as a national source for research-based education. To learn more about EDEN, visit their website at <https://eden.lsu.edu/>.

Mark Your Calendars and Get Engaged: MM2019 Conference Updates





Eric Simonne, Tim Momol, Anita Neal, Tom Obreza, Vonda Richardson, Brenda Rogers, Val Shah, and Pete Vergot - MM2019-Florida Hosting Team from the University of Florida and Florida A&M University

The plans for the conference are progressing nicely. Here is the latest:

When? Monday April 22 to Thursday 25, 2019

Where? Embassy Suite – Sarasota, FL

What is the closest airport? Sarasota Bradenton International (SRQ) located 5 miles north of the hotel

What's the Agenda Structure?

- **Monday - Day 1** : Travel to Florida and evening welcome event
- **Tuesday - Day 2** : Tour
- **Wednesday - Day 3**: In-door educational sessions (all day)
- **Thursday - Day 4**: In-door session (program ends at 11:30) and travel back home (pm)

What do we need from you?

(1) Share your ideas or thoughts for selecting a theme for the conference

(2) Look at the conference committees below (Table 1) and volunteers to serve on one of them.

Remember: this is your conference! Send your responses (your name, e-mail address and committee name you wish to serve on) to Eric at esimonne@ufl.edu or Val at valkyrieshah@ufl.edu by March 31, 2018. Thank you for stepping up!

Table 1. Committee, composition and roles for MM2019 (updated January, 2018).

Committee Name	Main Roles	Current volunteers
Program Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name the conference; develop a theme - Seek topics for workshops/discussions/presentations from other MMs; identify guest speakers - Develop agenda; print program - Identify moderator(s) and MC 	Anita Neal (UF), Tim Momol (UF)
Educational Tours and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reserve buses - Get water + cooler - Develop tour itinerary - Make arrangements for lunch and dinner during the tours 	Brenda Rogers (UF), Ron Rice (UF), Pete Vergot (UF)
Conference Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advertise the meeting; write short articles for MM Newsletter; send reminders -Take pictures during the conference 	Brenda Rogers (UF)
Conference Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop, administer, compile and communicate conference program evaluation 	Pete Vergot (UF)

Passionate, interested or involved in Urban Extension? Mark the 2018 NUEL Conference on your Calendars!



SAVE THE DATE:

NUEL'S SOUTHERN AND 1890'S URBAN EXTENSION PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT MEETING

Where: THE Redmont Hotel, Birmingham, ALABAMA

When: MONDAY, August 13th - WEDNESDAY, August 15th

The NUEL Southern and 1890's regional Meeting is moving from Chattanooga, TN to Birmingham, AL for the 2018 convening. The conference hotel is the Redmont and the Tutwiler hotels both boutique establishments near the heart of downtown Birmingham.



2 DAYS Focused ON INNOVATIVE URBAN EXTENSION PROGRAMS

POSTERS, LIGHTNING TALKS & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS Focused ON ENRICHING YOUTH, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES, FEEDING OUR FUTURE, PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT, AND IMPROVING OUR HEALTH.

Network with other URBAN-FOCUSED PROFESSIONALS

LEARN ABOUT THE NATIONAL URBAN EXTENSION LEADERS

(NUEL)

CONFERENCE EMAIL AND CONTACT INFO:
2018 Conferences Coordinators

Brenda G. Rogers, Southwest District Extension Director, University of Florida IFAS Extension (bgrogers@ufl.edu) and Sheldon Hammond, Northwest District Director, UGA Extension (shammond@uga.edu)

MM Committee Work on HR Best Practices - Update





Thomas Obreza, Senior Assoc. Dean, University of Florida (obreza@ufl.edu)

Many of us in Extension are familiar with “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) for agriculture that are designed to protect water resources while allowing for profitable production. What a concept! But sometimes BMPs are easier taught than implemented...

Whether we admit it or not, we have all become “Personnel Managers” to some degree. I finally admitted this to myself not long ago... my administration job has changed me from an Extension Specialist to a Human Resource professional. The farther along I go in my job, the more blatant the change becomes. So why not combine some of the old with the new?

Since last year I have been working with UF’s Human Resources Dept. to develop best recruiting, interviewing, and hiring practices (BRIHPs). Here is my needs assessment:

- In some states, the Extension Agent/Educator job turnover rate is higher than we would like. It is expensive and time-consuming to recruit, hire, and train new educators. Our goal is to increase educator retention rate by striving to hire the best people for the jobs through improved recruiting and interviewing practices.
- Exiting Extension Agents/Educators cite feeling burned out as one of the reasons why they leave. The irregular hours, working nights and weekends are key contributors to burn-out.
- An Agent/Educator position might be a candidate’s first professional job so the candidate may not understand what he/she is getting into.
- Key attributes we are looking for in new agents/educators include self-starter, proactive, savvy in developing human relationships, independent, but also team-oriented.
- Do we screen applicants enough for soft skills such as leadership, organizational, and managerial skills?
- Hypothesis: Due to the independent nature of Agent/Educator positions, the incoming millennial workforce has trouble adjusting to set workplace expectations such as time spent in and out of the office, working away from the office including from home, and how to use professional scheduling.

At last summer’s PLN meeting in Ft. Worth, I proposed the idea of developing a “BMP manual” of sorts for recruiting and hiring extension educators. The MM Plan of Work includes an effort to review and share our recruitment efforts, work with HR Professionals to identify and develop best techniques and

tools, and modify as necessary for Extension application. I developed a draft document I have shared with our volunteer committee that includes Jeff Ripley, John Thompson, Sheldon Hammond, Lonnie Johnson, Jerry Clemons, and Anna Smith. I am now awaiting feedback from this group, so stay tuned! By the next PLN meeting in Orlando, FL, we hope to have a draft “Best Management Practices” recruiting/interviewing/hiring tool to distribute across the Southern Region that would help improve the process.

Leadership Skills that Require Zero Talent



Jim Stewart, Central region director, University of Tennessee (jstewart@utk.edu)

It is interesting that so many organizations spend a significant amount of money training leaders. I agree that leadership development is very important. It is critical that our leaders have the basic competencies to lead our organization. Although many leadership skills and practices come from training, I would argue that the most critical skills actually require zero talent to master. The majority of learned leadership skills are built from these basic foundations. These skills are critical when selecting our new employees and potential leaders. During our interviews, we try to center many of our questions on these items. I believe in hiring the best potential...not necessarily the most knowledgeable.

Middle managers should consider including this as part of their training process for new Extension Agents. This is a good lesson for all of our new Extension Agents. It is easy to put your own spin on this subject as you conduct training. I usually start by putting new employees in groups and asking them to identify critical leadership skills. I then present the concept of leadership skills that require no talent. I usually follow up with asking the group to identify other things that might fit into this category. It's good to conclude with a sharing session on how agents plan to use these skills in their everyday activities on the job. I picked up this concept from some posts from LinkedIn. I've changed and adopted to help it fit our needs in Extension. For more information, please feel free to contact me.

10 Things That Require Zero Talent



concern and then suggesting solutions. Sometimes I remind (or tell) them to follow the reporting guidelines that are updated regularly. That's it: **they follow**.

We as middle managers are coaches; we teach, guide and provide the tools for success. Do agents know what success looks like? Are we providing the right tools? Are we asking the right questions? When is the right time to ask questions? What questions should we ask? When should we not ask questions?

Here are a few experts that have suggestions to these questions: The practice of asking questions by J.T. Dillion, Humble inquiry: the gentle art of asking instead of telling by Edgar H. Schein, Mindset: the new psychology of success by Carol S. Dweck, and GROW coaching model by Jeroen De Flander
<https://jeroen-de-flander.com/grow-coaching-model-questions/>

My plan for this year is to change my mindset, by asking the right questions to increase awareness and responsibility first in myself and then in others. I am interested, what works for you?

References:

Schein, E.H. 2013. Humble Inquiry: the gentle art of asking instead of telling. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. San Francisco, CA.

Success Stories: Fine Arts Extension Agents Make a Huge Impact in Kentucky



1 - Natasha Lucas, Director for District 1 (nlucas@uky.edu),



2 - Daniel Wilson, Director for District 2 (daniel.wilson@uky.edu),



3 - Willie Howard, Director for District 3 (whowardj@uky.edu)

Natasha Lucas, Director for District 1 (nlucas@uky.edu), Daniel Wilson, Director for District 2 (daniel.wilson@uky.edu), and Willie Howard, Director for District 3 (whowardj@uky.edu), Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

Kentucky is blessed to have a very unique Extension program, **the Extension Fine Arts Program**. As counties all across Kentucky have been affected by our stagnant economy for years, funding for the Arts in our school systems and counties has been lacking for a long time. Extension stepped to the plate and started placing Fine Arts Agents in communities where local County Extension Council's identified the need.

"The mission of the Kentucky Arts Extension Program is to create and support opportunities in the arts for citizens that will stimulate creativity, promote participation, and recognize artists, arts educators, and arts supporters at all levels and mediums."

The Statewide the Kentucky Fine Arts Extension Program has set forth four goals to guide the program and its successes: Arts Development, Arts Education, Arts Programming, Arts Venues and Facilities.

The major job responsibilities of Fine Arts Agents are to:

- develop, implement, and evaluate a plan of work based on locally identified needs which will lead to a cohesive and dynamic arts culture
- develop, lead and/or teach educational programs that focus on performing, visual, and literary arts in the community
- use proven, research-based teaching methods to instruct community members in these areas
- develop and implement arts leadership programs resulting in the development of personal and organizational leadership skills.

When asked "Why Have Fine Arts as an Extension program?" by skeptical or enthusiasts, here are the responses provided by Stephanie Richards, Pike County Extension Agent for Fine Arts, KY:

*"Because we are not creating artists. **We are creating better people to create a better world using the arts as the vehicle.** Theatre, specifically, is the number one strategy to teach "soft skills" colleges and employers are seeking. It increases teamwork, real life problem solving, confidence, command of language, empathy, self-initiative, determination, and so much more."*

*"We are also **developing communities through economic impacts of the arts.** Last year alone one Pike County, Kentucky community received over \$140,000 in direct financial impact from one community theatre."*

*"**Our program has 100% student graduation** rate and post-secondary education placement with 100% of college or technical training graduation. Average GPA is 3.80 in fields of Speech Pathology, Medical Laboratory Engineering, Premed, Prelaw, Engineering and most double major in their preferred art genre."*

*"**We also save parents \$32,500 in theatre tuition fees each year.** Our Fine Arts programming logs over 100,000 volunteer hours annually which equals to more than a million dollars of donated time to the community."*

District Directors are constantly being told by our extension leaders how "valuable" and "important" the Fine Arts Extension Programs have been to their clients and their communities. Do you have a Fine Arts Extension program in your state? Why not?



4 - Honky Tonk Angels



5 - KidZ Touring Company wearing blue for autism awareness.

Writing Position Descriptions that Attract Strong Applicant Pools



Daniel L. Goerlich, Central District Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension (dalego@vt.edu)



Over the years I have moved away from using standard boilerplate Extension agent position descriptions for job advertisements. Rather, I now prefer a more intentional process that, in my opinion, leads to higher percentages of qualified applicants in candidate pools. An applicant pool with this characteristic saves administrative time and increases the likelihood of finding a quality agent for the local situation.

Conducting a needs assessment when a vacancy is created is the first step in this process. Whether an incumbent was in a position for three years or 30, I consult with the locality, Extension agents, and clientele to review community issues, gaps in existing expertise, and accompanying position focus. These conversations help identify if modifications to the position description are necessary to reflect evolving issues and needs throughout the service region.

The next step is to **incorporate the language** into the position description. Following is an example of an Animal Science focused position summary that I completed on February 23, 2018:

“The Pittsylvania County ANR Extension agent position is focused on Animal Science, with specific emphasis on assisting livestock producers with farm profitability and sustainability considerations. Through educational programs such as producer meetings, workshops, demonstrations, on-farm consultations, and other methods the agent will focus on topics such as: techniques for improving beef quality and marketability through enhanced livestock nutrition, genetic, and health; livestock quality assurance and value added marketing; improving cost efficiencies and animal welfare; managing limited resources to optimize revenues, and; increasing implementation of best management practices, among other topics. Youth livestock programming is an emphasis as well, with related responsibilities including coordinating the Pittsylvania/Caswell Livestock Show and Sale, preparing youth for livestock judging, Block and Bridle, and State Stockman’s contests, and serving as educational advisor to the Pittsylvania 4-H Livestock Club. On occasion the agent will field questions from clientele regarding general interest topics related to niche agricultural interests, home horticulture, pond management, and numerous other topics of interest to diverse clientele. And, interdisciplinary programming with Extension agents working in youth, family, and community viability disciplines is also expected.”

I think you will agree that candidates responding to the above position announcement know what to expect. By contrast, a pre-existing Animal Science position summary contained only the following description of job duties: “This position emphasizes Animal Science subject matter, but the agent will also respond to crop, insect pest identification and control, weed identification, home lawn and garden, and related issues.” Re-using this latter description would have led to a less focused pool with a higher percentage of applicants that do not have the qualifications we are seeking.

Although an Animal Science focused position is provided as an example, I have used this same process to produce position descriptions for a variety of ANR positions, including general interest, as well as 4-H/Youth Development and Family and Consumer Science agent positions.

Of course, marketing, recruitment, and well-designed interview questions that identify strong service orientation are key components of hiring processes as well. In my opinion, however, finding the right person begins with a well-written position description.

Expectations of New County Extension Agent in Arkansas



Sharon Reynolds, District Director, Arkansas (sreynolds@uaex.edu)

One fifth of county extension agents in Arkansas have worked less than five years in Extension. One of the challenges and joys of my job as a District Director is working with all these new agents. I can remember my first Extension job. I was six months out of college when I landed a job as a 4-H agent in Arkansas County, Arkansas. I needed help!

To say it was like being thrown into the ocean without a life vest is an understatement. When I moved to Arkansas County as a brand new 4-H agent, my new friends decided to teach me how to water ski ... on the Mississippi River! Trying to get up on skis on Old Man River with white caps, barges and tugboats was an analogy to how I felt as a new agent! I was in over my head. I fell down a lot. I took in copious amounts of water. **I got battered and bruised, but I also didn't quit.** To say the first few years in Extension were easy would be a lie. There is so much to learn and so many details to the job. As our Director, Dr. Cartwright says, "Extension is a people business and working with people can be complicated and messy, but never boring!"

When I meet with County Extension Agents for their orientation, I sense a bewilderment and sometimes panic on their part. While Extension has policies to guide our work, **the Extension Culture carries with it many "unwritten" rules.** And, new agents soon discover, that working with people is an art not a science.

Here are some survival tips I share with new agents. I no doubt stole these tips from you! They are good ones, and thank you!

- Find a mentor
- Be a team player
- Get to know your county leaders
- Get to know your county, the people, communities, their customs and culture
- Build relationships
- Be prepared!
- Choose your battles wisely
- Develop a plan to handle difficult situations
- Manage your time
- Dress for the job
- Be accountable
- Be loyal to the organization: they sign your paycheck!

State Updates: Oklahoma



Dee Cooper (dee.cooper@okstate.edu)

1. Doye appointed new Vice President and Associate Director of Extension

A native Oklahoman, Dr. Damona Doye is the new **Vice President/ Associate Director of Extension** for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. She grew up on a family farm in Southwest Oklahoma and she has participated in Extension Programs since she was a 4-H member. Dr. Doye received her bachelor's degree and master's degrees-both in Agriculture Economics-from OSU. She earned her doctoral degree from Iowa State University.

Dr. Doye joined the faculty at Oklahoma State University in the Agriculture Economics Department in 1986 and has served as the Farm Management Specialist since that time. She has received numerous national awards and has served in leadership roles on the Southern Extension Farm Management Committee.

Dr. Doye's first day in her new position was on February 1, 2018. Please join me in welcoming her!

2. Oklahoma Bi-annual Extension Conference held in January 2018

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service held its **Bi-annual Extension Conference** on campus during January. The conference brings all of the County Educators, Area and State Specialists to campus for three days of in-service trainings. Time is also devoted to association meetings, award presentations and most importantly, fellowship with peers. Spirits remain high among all staff despite the tremendous budget cuts we have taken over the last few years.

3. Budget cuts in Oklahoma yield to reduction in Extension District numbers from 4 to 3.

To further help absorb the budget cuts, Oklahoma has reduced Districts. We are in the transition phase of moving from four Extension Districts to three. This transition will be complete as of July 1, 2018. The most difficult challenge we have had to work through is how to continue to provide leadership opportunities for 4-H members and how to combine our District 4-H events into three districts. This is still a work in progress and we are open to any words of encouragement from any other states that have done this before.

2018 Quarterly phone call: Number and dates

Note new call number for 2018: (605) 468-8029 (Access code remains 911522#)

April 12th, 2018

June 14th, 2018

July 12th, 2018

Mark your calendars:

The 2018 SR PLN Meeting will be held August 20-24 in at the Florida Hotel & Conference Center in Orlando, FL.

2018 Southern Region Middle Manager Officers

Chair: Dee Cooper (Oklahoma State University)

Vice-Chair: Sharon Reynolds (University of Arkansas)

Secretary: Blake Lanford (Clemson University)

Past Chair: Sheri Schwab (North Carolina State University)

Newsletter Editors: Eric Simonne (University of Florida) and Blake Lanford (Clemson University)

Administrative Advisors:

Dr. Rick Cartwright, Associate Vice-President for Agricultural Extension, University of Arkansas

Dr. Carolyn Williams, Associate Administrator for Extension, Prairie View A&M University