

Online Learning Opportunities Catalog

Last year we launched an online professional development planning system that includes a self assessment tool and a tool for formalizing professional development action plans. In support of that planning system, this year we developed and launched an online Learning Opportunities Catalog that allows employees to have a “one stop spot” to look for professional development opportunities related to the various competencies. The catalog is a living resource where updates and additions are being made each day. Recently a calendar tool was added where in the very near future employees will also be able to look and see what is available based on dates as well as the competencies. <http://yespds.tamu.edu/catalog/>

Welcome to the YES! Learning Opportunities Catalog
Please click on the competency for which you are interested in finding learning opportunities and resources.



New Faculty Development

Nearly 30 percent of the county agent faculty in Texas Extension have been hired since 1999 which means they have less than 5 years experience with Texas Extension. Onboarding of our new employees is a top priority!! To help support our newest members of the Extension family we have several initiatives in place including:

- A formal **Mentoring Program** where new hires are assigned a mentor for one year;
- An organized **Coaching Initiative** that is facilitated by the co-workers to the new employees;
- A **Statewide Orientation Conference** to meet and interact with leadership and other new hires across the state;
- A **Regional Orientation Program** to meet their regional leaders and to develop knowledge, skills and abilities in the areas of people, programs, and processes of Extension;
- Monthly **Online Web Seminars** that provide professional development in several areas including program development, marketing, evaluation, work life balance, etc.

Response from supervisors and new employees as well as co-workers to the new employees indicate a very positive impact from this multi-faceted approach to onboarding our employees. The most popular sessions are the online seminars that address topics related to program development and work life balance.

- [Acrobat PDF tips and recorded trainings: NEW!](#)
- [Using Centra Symposium](#)
- [Sharing Printers in Win XP](#)
- [Updating Symantec Antivirus](#)
- [Set Password Expire](#)
- [WordPerfect tips](#)
- [Win XP setup guidelines](#)
- [Saving files in Netscape](#)
- [Configuring email in 4HPlus](#)
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- [Current Issue](#)
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Integrating Technology

In 2004 technology is central to much of work. In Texas Extension we have implemented a formal professional development initiative which is focused on integrating technology into all dimensions of our work. Its purpose is to coordinate training and development resources that support using technology in both day to day items such as electronic calendaring, processing leave electronically; online submission for reimbursements, etc.; but also in using technology effectively with clientele through video and web conferencing, asynchronous learning, and online access to information through our TCE Bookstore. Learning opportunities for employees mirror what we offer to clientele – online resources, regional and district trainings, web and video conferences, and asynchronous courses. <http://eit.tamu.edu/resources.shtml>

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

[Http://texasextension.tamu.edu](http://texasextension.tamu.edu)

TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION Program Development Highlights

TEXAS COMMUNITY FUTURES FORUM (TCFF)

One of the most significant efforts the unit coordinates every four to five years is **Texas Community Futures Forum**. It is the long range needs assessment process that is conducted by our agency to develop long range issues for Texans. The results from this process are not only used by Texas Cooperative Extension, but are also used by other state agencies to develop their long term initiatives. In 2003, the plan and strategy was developed for the next TCFF. In November and December, all County Extension Agents in Texas Cooperative Extension were trained to conduct TCFF in their counties in 2004. During 2004 Texas counties identified 2,274 issues facing their communities. To review the issues Texans identified, click on the website:

<http://futuresforum.tamu.edu>



DATA SUMMITS - STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

The Data Summit process was developed to allow the state's regions to evaluate issues surfacing from TCFF, County Committees, national data trends, specialists' forecasts, and other agency / commodity groups and develop action plans to address the most pressing issues in the region in the four base program areas. This resulted in sixteen total data summits across the state during the summer of 2004 in which county Extension agents and Extension specialists spent time together to develop responses to the most pressing issues in the region. Action plans were developed on topics that were consistent throughout the region. Extension professionals worked collaboratively to develop objectives, resources, and evaluation strategies for programs that were unique to regions. These action plans are now being used by County Extension Agents during the program planning stages to develop their educational programs. Pictures from one data summit are to the right.



BUILDING PROGRAM EXCELLENCE THROUGH ENGAGED VOLUNTEERS (2005 PROJECT)

It is time to address the current Extension Program Council structure and determine its relevancy in communities today. Texas Cooperative Extension has identified three major objectives to develop in 2004 (with additional objectives over the next three years). The objectives for 2004 are outlined below:

1. *Define the programmatic function of Extension councils (volunteers).* Some targets under this objective include:

- Identify key people or stakeholders
- Talk and listen to key leaders
- Advise Extension which programs are valuable to clientele
- Help tailor programs to specific audiences
- Listen for feedback about programs
- Concentrate on communication skills

2. *Develop a volunteer system that is more conducive to the people of today.*



Develop a set of guidelines with clear roles, expectations, and responsibilities for all volunteers

Define rules for volunteers that agree to serve on programmatic committees

Define guidelines committees and sub-committees will play in Cooperative Extension

3. *Define the basic level of involvement of volunteers in the county program development process.*

Role in Planning

Role in Design and Implementation

Role in Evaluation and Accountability