From the Director for Extension

Congratulations to those serving on local extension boards. You are partners with Kansas State University as we serve Kansans with effective educational programming designed to improve their lives.

For a number of years, Partnership Meetings were an opportunity for local board members to meet with K-State Research and Extension leadership to review the past and plan for the future. At the suggestion of a number of individuals, we transitioned to quarterly evening video conferences. The next conference is Wednesday, January 30 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Watch your email for the video link. We will focus on vital topics as you reorganize for the new year.

The last issue of this newsletter addressed salary equity among our extension agents. I discussed that salary determination is a complex issue with many factors to consider. I also outlined the findings of our salary equity study that indicates females are paid less than their male colleagues across the system. From the recent salary setting discussions, we know that progress is being made toward salary equity; however, much remains to be done. Work with your regional director as you look to future salary discussions. It is the right thing to do.

— Gregg Hadley, ghadley@ksu.edu

By the way, check out the recent K-Stater magazine article about K-State Research and Extension

Extension Professionals Recognized

Recognition of outstanding programming and contributions by faculty and staff is one of the objectives of the K-State Research and Extension Annual Conference. Agents and staff from local units who were recently recognized include:

- Jeanne Falk Jones, Sunflower District — Outstanding Local Unit Professional
- Adult Development and Aging Program Focus Team — Outstanding PFT
- Andrea Burns, Ford County — Mentor Award
- Kari Smith, Southwind District — Outstanding Office Professional
- Jodi Drake, Pratt County — 4-H Clover Award
- Cherokee County — PRIDE Partner Award

The Wildcat District office was recognized as the Outstanding Local Unit. The staff includes 22 individuals in five locations: Altamont, Fredonia, Girard, Independence, and Pittsburg. The district demonstrates excellence in educational programming with specialized agents working across disciplinary lines.

Faculty created effective marketing materials including videos, news releases, radio programs, and newsletters. All agents contribute to Wildcat Wednesdays, a segment airing weekly on a regional television station. Educational workshops include participants from Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas.

As part of a holistic financial management plan, the district implemented cost-cutting measures to increase efficiency. The district launched the Wildcat District Extension Education Fund to act as a fund-raising arm. Agents have used local community foundation grants to expand their programming.
PDC Orientation Resources Available
Program Development Committee members serve a vital role as they work with agents to assess local needs, develop a proactive plan to address those needs, and implement and evaluate programming.

Providing an orientation for newly appointed and elected PDC members is important to their effectiveness. There are resources available to provide orientation including: a video, PowerPoint presentation, and a position description.

There is also a website available with resources designed to strengthen local PDCs. Assessing community needs, holding effective meetings, and identifying best practices are a few topics included.

Building Effective Board Member Skills
For the sixth year, K-State Research and Extension will host the Community Board Leadership Series, four sessions designed to strengthen the effectiveness of community-based boards. Past participants include board members from extension, churches, townships, service organizations, rural water districts, and county commissions. The sessions will be from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on February 5, 12, 19, and 26. Topics include roles of board members, tools for effective meetings, fiscal responsibilities, conflict resolution, and strategic planning. Host sites include Colby, Elkhart, Great Bend, Hugoton, Kansas City, Meadowlark District, Olathe, Ottawa, Pittsburg, Salina, Topeka, and Washington. For more information, check out the webpage.

Board Leadership Assessment and Module Year-End Summary
If you have not turned in the Excellence in Board Leadership Assessment and Board Leadership Module Year-End Summary for your local unit, it is not too late! You can submit both documents until January 14, 2019. The Excellence in Board Leadership Assessment guides boards when developing their leadership skills. At the beginning of the year, boards set goals based on best practices to guide their work. Throughout the year, boards review their goals, complete the self-assessment, and submit the document. Boards achieving a standard for 2018 will be recognized for their accomplishments.

The Board Leadership Module Year-End Summary is a training tool to determine which modules to complete throughout the year. Modules may be used during regular meetings or as independent study reinforced with a brief discussion at a board meeting. At the end of the year, the checklist is completed and submitted.

Keys to Embracing Aging
Improving how we age increases our ability to stay in our home and community longer, reduces the need for institutionalized long-term care, and ultimately reduces health care expenditures. Last year, family and consumer sciences agents implemented “Keys to Embracing Aging,” a multi-state, USDA grant-funded project implemented in 42 federally designated rural counties in Kansas and Kentucky. The project included 775 individuals participating in monthly presentations addressing physical, social-emotional, financial, mental, and interpersonal wellness.

As a result of participating in the program, 100 percent of the participants reported an increase in their knowledge related to healthy aging and well-being. A three-month follow-up evaluation showed 90 percent were still using the resources and 77 percent had made lifestyle changes.

Use of Executive Sessions
Extension board members are publicly elected government officials. Board meetings are open to the public and must operate according to the Kansas Open Meetings Act. Executive sessions can be used for closed discussions; however, those executive sessions can only be held for reasons outlined in state statute. Generally, for extension boards those reasons are personnel matters of non-elected personnel and matters relating to employer-employee negotiations.

The motion to go into executive session must contain the following information: the justification for executive session, the time and place at which the open meeting will resume, and any non-board member that will be invited to participate in the executive session. Discussion must be limited to the subject stated in the motion and no binding action shall be taken during executive session. A sample motion for executive session: “I move that we go into executive session to discuss a matter involving non-elected personnel, in order to protect the privacy of the persons involved, and that we reconvene in open session in “X” minutes. Persons included shall be…”

Additional information can be found in Kansas Open Meeting Act – Guidelines for Extension Boards.