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.

We hope you’ll join us for the next quarterly Partnership Meeting on January 30 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Planned discussion topics include a legislative update, perspective from a State Extension Advisory Council member on local board basics, and a review of the Kansas Open Meetings and Kansas Open Records Acts. We also hope to introduce our new associate director of extension programs. The Zoom link for this meeting will be sent out a few days before the meeting.

I also wanted to update you on the K-State Research and Extension Annual Conference. The year’s theme was ‘Innovate!’ Agents and specialists gathered to hear Paul Hill, Utah State University extension agent and coauthor of The Innovation Imperative, talk about the importance of innovation in research and extension and how we can enable and encourage innovation. A recording of the presentation “Innovation in Extension” is available.

What does innovation look like? Simply put, if people are trying something new in extension or research, we want to recognize it. Perhaps someone is reaching out and working with a new stakeholder or new audience. Maybe someone found a way to work more effectively with program development committees. Or maybe someone is trying to promote their work or delivering programming or information via digital media.

To celebrate innovative ideas, we are starting a new initiative called “Celebrate Innovate!” which features extension agents and specialists doing innovative work. We would like to work with you in recognizing these agents. Please send your candidate’s name and why they are deserving of recognition to me, ghadley@ksu.edu.

Submit Your Board Leadership Assessment and Module Year-End Summary Forms

If you haven’t submitted the Excellence in Board Leadership Assessment and Board Leadership Module Year End Summary yet, don’t fret! You have until January 17 to submit them to be included in the recognition at the next quarterly partnership meeting.

The Excellence in Board Leadership Assessment guides boards when developing leadership skills. At the beginning of the year, boards set goals based on best practices. Throughout the year, boards review goals, complete the self-assessment, and submit the document. Boards achieving a standard for 2019 will be recognized for their accomplishments during the January 30 K-State Research and Extension Partnership meeting.

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.

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. For extension boards, those reasons are generally 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 this room at 7:30 p.m. Persons included shall be: Will E. Cat, agent, and Doris Smith, unit director.”

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

Professionals Recognized for Excellence
Each year at our annual conference, faculty and staff are recognized for outstanding programming and contributions to extension excellence. Agents and staff from local units who were recognized include:

- Susan Farley, Douglas County—Outstanding Local Unit Professional
- Joanne Domme, Shawnee County—Outstanding Office Professional/Program Assistant
- Tara Markley, Johnson County—Mentor Award
- Elizabeth Brunscheen-Cartagena, Sedgwick County—Diversity Award
- Greg McClure, Riley County—4-H Clover Award
- Daniel Skucius, Pottawatomie County—4-H Clover Award
- Marty Gleason, Edwards County—PRIDE Partner Award
- Susan Schlichting, Cottonwood District—4-H PRIDE Partner Award

The Southwind District team was recognized as the Outstanding Local Unit. The district’s 15 faculty and staff are located in Allen, Bourbon, Neosho and Woodson counties. The district agents provide programming in 4-H youth development, agriculture, health and wellness, family resource management, horticulture, and community development. In 2019, the Southwind District re-structured office professional job descriptions to more closely match individual skills with job responsibilities. This has increased job satisfaction and motivation as well as enhanced customer experience.

New State Extension Advisory Council Members Elected
Welcome to the new members of the State Extension Advisory Council elected by local boards in January for a four year term.

They are: Brenna Wulfkuhle — Douglas County, Betsy Patrick - McPherson County, Kimberly Hull – Morton County, Kurtis Gregory – Cherokee County, and Michaelle Bliss – Golden Prairie District.

You can learn more about these newly elected representatives by viewing their bios on the State Extension Advisory Council page of the Board Leadership website.

Prospective council members must have served at least two years and currently be, or within the past two years have been, on their local extension board. They fulfill four-year terms as an advisory group to the director for extension.

The 20-member advisory council meets in February and August. The February meeting in Topeka includes legislative visits. The August meeting location rotates around the state and features different K-State Research and Extension programming. The 2019 fall meeting will be in northwest Kansas.

In April, four members will travel to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference and to visit U.S. Representative’s and Senator’s offices. The purpose is to educate and advocate on behalf of K-State Research and Extension, communicating how important the federal investment is in allowing us to continue to positively impact the lives of Kansans, and thank them for their continued support.

Changing the Future of Communities One Grant at a Time
Local communities struggle to find resources to fund projects while foundation dollars increase every year. When citizens attend grant writing workshops, they discover shared goals and untapped resources to improve their communities. Since 2016, agents hosted 48 grant-writing workshops across the state for 1,379 people. Participants gain new support networks, lose their fear about asking for money, and get feedback to sharpen their skills. Fifty percent of grant workshop participants had never written a grant; 29% had only written local grants.

Of the participants who responded to a survey 6-12 months after the workshop, $11.9 million of grants were written with $6.7 million of successful grants (56%).

Dorothy Bryan, Auburn City Council president said, “Auburn has been stagnant for so long, my sister and I decided to change that.” She said, “Coming to the grant workshop spurred me on, I thought, ‘I can do this!’” She wrote her first grant for fitness park equipment at the park and received $55,000. Bryan said, “That equipment is busy morning, noon, and night.” Bryan has her eye on two more grant possibilities and says, “I’m just getting started!”