

Hello Alpha Rho ESP members. This month's president's message is different than most so make sure you read to the very end! I hope you feel as inspired as I did!

Each year we send an ESP delegate to the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Conference as well as the Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference. JCEP rotates around the country while PILD is always held in the Washington D.C. area. I have been fortunate in my variety of association leadership roles to have attended JCEP once and PILD twice in recent history as has your past-president, Nadine Sigle. Therefore, your leadership team chose to send Linda Beech, Secretary to JCEP and Erin Yelland, President-Elect to PILD. Both came home inspired and with many great ideas and so this month I have asked them to share a bit of their experience with you. Thanks to Linda and Erin for representing us so very well and for bringing home all of these ideas that we are already starting to work on.

I encourage you to keep up to date on the National Meeting planning, start preparations for grant and scholarship applications, and look forward to applying for 2018 awards. All of this information can be found on our Alpha Rho website found through the KSRE employee resources tab. I also encourage you to navigate our ESP national website for all the good information found there. URL's for both are below.

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/esp-alpharho/>

<http://espnational.org/en/>

Finally, Erin Yelland has graciously agreed to serve on the Annual Conference Planning Committee. That is a task your president would normally fill but given we are hosting National Meeting this fall I have passed that duty to Erin. If you have any ideas for improvements in schedule, breakout sessions, or general session speakers, please pass those on to Erin.

Kansas, keep up the good work as we are one of the strongest and most active chapters in the nation!

John Forshee

ESP Alpha Rho President

## **Joint Council of Extension Professionals Conference Update – Linda Beech**

Thanks so much for the opportunity to represent our Kansas Alpha Rho ESP chapter at the Joint Council of Extension Professionals conference in Orlando, FL on February 14-15. In addition to the warm weather and swaying palm trees, I really enjoyed the terrific conference. I learned a lot from the keynote speaker and breakout sessions. But the ESP sessions were really helpful and insightful.

I picked up some great ideas from other states at the ESP sharing time on the first day of the conference. There was something mentioned for nearly every committee in Kansas!

A couple of things stood out in the discussion that might be worth considering for possible implementation in Kansas--

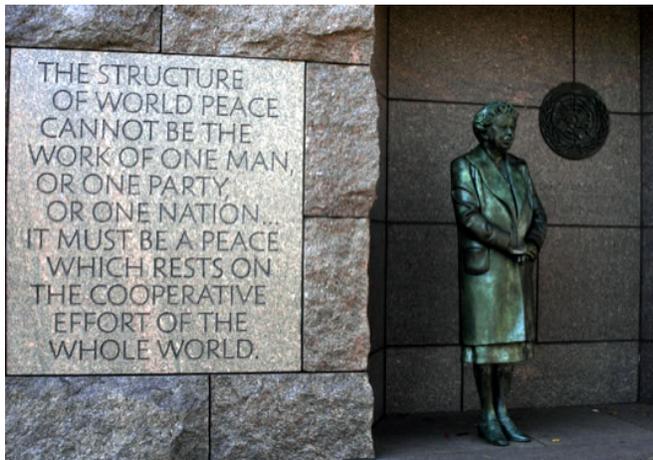
- One state gives a STATE Ruby Award annually to recognize outstanding ESP leadership and service. Then that person becomes their national nominee, and therefore they have someone to nominate every year for the national Ruby Award.
- In another state, the recognition committee is charged with identifying worthy nominees for awards categories where no one has applied, then they contact those members and ask them to apply. This ensures the state has nominees in every award category every year.
- I was especially interested in how many states actively engage their life members on programs, committees, trips and serving as officers at the state, regional and even national levels. A few states actively solicit life members to support the state ESP professional development fund and an endowed college scholarship fund for children of Extension staff.

Thanks again for the opportunity to represent our Alpha Rho chapter at the 2018 JCEP Conference. It is a conference I had not had the chance to attend before, but I found it to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, both personally and professionally. I hope that my attendance will continue to benefit our chapter as we explore some of the new ideas I was able to bring back.

Sincerely,

Linda Beech  
ESP Alpha Rho Chapter Secretary

## **Reflections from Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) – Erin Yelland**



Franklin Delano Roosevelt was arguably one of the most profound and transformational leaders in our nation's history. If you have visited the FDR memorial in DC, you have had the privilege to walk among some of his most inspiring and memorable words – not the least of which is pictured above. Although this quote is situated next to his 'better seven-eights', as Gregg Hadley would say, these words were actually spoken during his address to Congress following the Yalta Conference in 1945.

Seventy-three years later, these words spoke volumes to me, not because we are tasked with combating Nazism and the peace and civilization of the world, but because we are working together, *cooperatively*, to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities across our great state. When talking about the work of Extension, I often say that we cannot do it alone, and indeed, we cannot. But, what we can do is work together to develop partnerships and purposeful initiatives that will move us, even if ever-so-slightly, towards our mission and goals. I firmly believe that without wonderful organizations like ESP, we may not be as successful in these endeavors.

In early April, I was given the opportunity to attend to PILD – or the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference – hosted by the JCEP in Crystal City, VA. This year's theme was "Civil Dialogue in the Public Arena". Timely and relevant, don't you think? Dr. Carolyn Lukensmeyer, Executive Director of the National Institute for Civil Discourse, was the keynote speaker and the title of her presentation was "Incivility and Political Dysfunction: How Did We Get Here and What Can We Do?". She beautifully laid out just that, and challenged us all to change the script from incivility to civility, and in doing so, contribute to saving our democracy. A simple, but incredibly impactful, step we can take to improve civility, she said, is to learn more about the Civility Pledge, sign it, and adopt those practices into our own lives. To learn about the Civility Pledge, visit [revivecivility.org](http://revivecivility.org).

Additionally, I had the opportunity to learn from other leaders in Extension across the country, participate in [A Peace of My Mind](#), meet with National Program Leaders from USDA NIFA, and attend sessions preparing for our visits on the Hill. One of the most valuable part of this conference, though, brings me back to FDR and his idea of "cooperative effort" – and that was networking. Are there Extension professionals in our state who you have never met? I would venture to say that most of us would say, "yes!" By attending PILD, my list got a little bit shorter. Not only did I have the pleasure of

meeting people from Kansas whom I had never met, but of course I met numerous others from across the country that are passionate about Extension and working together for a common cause. Some of the best networking occurred during ESP's night out, where nearly 30 of us gathered to dine, network, and brainstorm how to make ESP even better.

Our trip culminated by visiting some VIPs on the Hill – our own Senators, Congressmen, and Congresswomen. It was an honor to represent K-State Research and Extension and help to paint the picture of the relevant and timely work we are doing in the state. I was especially impressed by our 4-H delegates, who beautifully and confidently represented KSRE's 4-H program and the profound impact it has had on their lives.

This was one of the best conferences I have had the privilege of attending (shhh...don't tell my other professional organizations!), and I was honored to represent the Alpha Rho Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi. Thank you for entrusting me to be a leader in our organization, and thereby giving me the opportunity to represent us at PILD. In closing, I would like for you to consider how ESP has benefitted your professional career. Who have you met that you otherwise might not have? What cooperative efforts have developed with an ESP colleague? Then, share that good word with others and invite them to become members of our organization. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Erin Yelland  
ESP Alpha Rho Chapter President-Elect