

Extension Management Team Meeting  
June 14, 2001  
Merrimack County

Present: Sue Buteau, Rollie Barnaby, Nancy Berry, Sumner Dole, Deb Maes, Don Black, Peter Pohl, Tim Fleury, Lauren Bressett, Dan Reidy, Catherine Violette, John Pike, Charlene Baxter, Jim Grady, Holly Young, Charlie French, Bruce Marriott, Ed McAllister

Introductions

John Pike welcomed back Sue Buteau as Coos COA effective May 1. He also introduced Charlie French, new Extension Specialist, Communities. Charlie is located in the Dept. of Resource Economics and Development in James Hall. Previously Charlie was an Extension Economic Development Educator in Illinois and served in the Peace Corps. He wants to schedule visits with staff in each county in the near future.

Future Meetings

Meetings for the coming year were confirmed as follows. It was generally agreed that the Merrimack office is more accessible and the preferred location for the majority of counties. Belknap County is the alternate meeting site. Dates confirmed are:

Thurs. Sept. 13, 2001  
Thurs. Dec. 13, 2001  
Thurs. March 21, 2002  
Thurs. June 13, 2002

Legislative and Funding Updates

John Pike reported Extension is "batting 1000" regarding progress with recent Tap and forestry issues. The legislative bill proposing the elimination of TAP was not supported by the House Education Committee and subsequently defeated by the legislature. A last minute attempt to amend the bill requiring active versus passive parental permission was also defeated. The bill for an additional \$1.3 M in Division of Forests and Lands funding included \$230,000 earmarked for the Extension forestry program. The House Finance Committee folded the bill into the DRED biennial appropriation in which the Extension portion was included at \$188,000 which still enables us to meet our forestry staffing budget. A Conference Committee is negotiating passage of the final budget but it's not expected that Extension's portion will be singled out as an issue of debate.

The pending biennial budget includes a 5% increase for UNH which is an \$11 M increase. Extension's portion is \$13M - last biennium was \$10M. The \$185M capital improvement request is in the budget funded at \$100M. Trustee Chair Bruce Keough was instrumental in bringing this about. He also supports Cooperative Extension.

At the federal level it appears we can anticipate level formula funding with some new funding available as competitive grants. At UNH, funding from institution wide funds is managed through a 9 member Central Budget Committee on which John Pike serves. The central budget committee has agreed to provide for the costs of salary increases which is consistent with an understanding with the legislature back in 1988 that future salary increases would be funded with state funds.

Chancellor Steve Reno met with the State Advisory Council last October. He continues to include comments about Cooperative Extension wherever he speaks, on radio and press statements. President Leitzel's recent New Faculty Tour included Extension program visits as detailed in last week's Biweekly Update.

### CIT Update

David Foote unable to attend but provided the following written report:

**Two-Way Interactive Video Grant** - ATM circuits have been installed in Belknap, Rockingham, Sullivan and Merrimack Counties. Grafton to be installed soon. Video equipment vendors have been narrowed down to two: Pictoretel and Zydacron. ATM switch vendors have been narrowed to two: Cellpath and Marconi. Once final equipment tests have been completed, equipment will be ordered and installed.

**Coos County Digital Satellite Grant** - It appears Extension will receive a grant to install a new digital satellite uplink/downlink internet service in Coos County. The grant is part of a \$5 million pilot NSP project to bring high speed internet connectivity to rural areas.

**Streaming Video Server** - The CIT Office has purchased and installed a new streaming video server. It will be able to stream video over the Internet using Real/Audio video technology. The server is currently in the testing phase but will soon be on-line.

**CDROM Duplication** - Several staff have developed Powerpoint presentations and requested they be "burned onto" CDs for distribution to selected audiences. Arrangements for multiple CDROM replication need to be made through the CIT Office well in advance of distribution.

**Soils Testing and Coldfusion** - Michael Toepfer and Tom Buob are on a committee investigating the feasibility of using Coldfusion and the WWW to process information related to soil testing.

**Strategic Plan** - The Comm/Tech Team is finishing work on the final draft of the Comm/Tech Strategic Plan. Once finalized, the team will focus on WWW evaluation and development.

### FY2001 Reporting

Ed reported we are introducing a new annual reporting format for FY01 (ends Sept. 30). The format should be easier and matches new federal reporting introduced earlier this year. It involves reporting our 5-year POW accomplishments against USDA Key Themes. A listing of Key Themes for NH selected by program leaders was distributed. For each Key Theme we will report (1) brief description of activity and (2) short impact/accomplishment statement. POW Lead Staff have been requested to inform

staff working in their Key Theme area exactly information should be reported so they collected data that can be aggregated for production of accurate state reports.

### County Newsletter Survey

Nancy Berry provided a summary of the staff survey of newsletter effectiveness conducted recently by Sullivan County staff (Coos and Rock do not distribute county newsletters).

Key points discussed were:

- Adhering to grammar rules is critical
- Maine has a 7-part Doing Super Newsletters series available if we're interested
- Newsletter cost is a significant factor for most counties
- UNH printing produces high quality newsletters in journal format but at higher cost.
- Some counties do separate program newsletters which adds to their total newsletter costs.
- A single, state produced monthly newsletters with articles provided by specialists was proposed. It should include empty space for insertion of county news.
- Converting to electronic newsletters suggested.
- An outside reviewer in Sullivan County suggested simple writing, short sentences, proper grammar, and use of a style book (AP has one)
- Readership survey suggested.
- County staff need to review their goal for their newsletters (Strafford uses to promote one organization, provide education, and recognize people who have contributed to Extension programs).
- Need to determine why we are producing a newsletter
- Another county reader survey indicated items of most interest were gardening articles, pictures, and names of people.
- Merrimack now using color pictures (cost is \$366 for 4000 copies)
- Using local free newspapers to distribute Extension news can sometimes achieve same goals.
- Small percentage of county population is reached through newsletters and cost is significant. Use of commercial newspapers or free weeklies to market Extension might be more useful. Or invest the money in paid newsletter ads.
- Radio advertising is also an alternative to producing newsletters.
- Newspaper readership is diminishing (younger people tend not to read them as older population does).

Topic referred to Marketing Team for further discussion and recommendations. County staff are asked to discuss as a team and forward any suggestions to Holly or Nancy. Holly will provide a few specific questions for each county to respond to. Holly will also investigate a format and system for introducing a state newsletter for discussion with EMT in the fall.

### County Web Pages

Recent feedback, particularly from job applicants, indicate county web pages are sometimes disappointing and fail to provide the information one is seeking. The following comments were made in a discussion about the use, value and future of

county web pages:

- Do not use and do not refer anyone to it, but know people use Extension's state page.
  - Suggested to poll public web visitors to learn how they feel about our web pages.
- Pose the same questions to staff.
- The calendar function has great potential and could reduce need for mailings.
  - Have difficulty getting information on their county page.
  - Web is a good way to keep 4-H members informed.
  - Calendar function is cumbersome to use.
  - One county reported they're beginning to use their page more and more.
  - Linking with county government's web page would be good and promotes public relations
  - Recent data revealed 55% of NH household have internet access (NH one of highest in US)
  - Web pages offer great potential but high cost due to the time it takes to be managed - unsure if counties can properly maintain pages with current staff.
  - Extension's web page now getting approximately 15,000 hits per day.

#### Need for Policy/Protocol for Dealing with Angry/Disorderly Individuals

Question raised if any counties have procedures in place or feel need to introduce them. Comments made:

- Coos has alarm on outside door and an entryway with 2 door system so inside door can be locked if necessary.
- Carroll recently had irate 4-H volunteer who was very loud, angry and used profanity.
- Strafford county government has installed a security system for their county building.
- We need to consult with professionals who can advise us on this topic because we don't have the expertise.
- Youth staff need an inservice for dealing with angry parents and related issues.
- Training should be offered for all staff to better understand how to respond to these individuals.
- Call 911 if you feel threatened or if in a situation out of control.
- Support staff often are the first to encounter or deal with angry people. This group needs training. Jim will check with Human Resources to learn when such training will be offered.
- Suggest training be done in the county offices to deal with specific situations
- Jim reported Nutrition Connections and Family Lifeskills Program staff sometimes feel unsafe in clientele homes. We now provide cell phones for these individuals. Also good for night travel or meetings. Rates are continuing to come down.

Dotty Burrows is taking a course on Dealing with Difficult People and writing a paper on this topic. She is surveying other states to learn what Extension policies or procedures have been developed on this topic. We will review her report at the September meeting and determine if we want to adopt similar guidelines.

#### Marketing, External Relations and Publications

**Marketing** - Holly reported Channel 9 is eliminating some of their off-hours newscasts and are moving Growing Green to their noon broadcast. We're pleased it was not

eliminated along with the news show it was on. In September Channel 9 is introducing Chronicle at 7:30 (affiliated with Boston's Ch. 5 show with same name). We continue to work with NH Outlook on NHPT and provide periodic features. Please continue to inform Holly of any program ideas she can pitch to them. Lisa Townson is working with NHPT in coordinating Zoom, a new program promoting youth volunteering. Holly updating county media lists and will soon be asking counties to review and revise this information.

**External Relations** (written report provided) - The draft strategic plan was reviewed during the January meeting of the State Advisory Council. There was approval given for the recommendation to: "Expand the role of new county advisory council representatives to include building relationships with elected officials to keep them informed of Cooperative Extension opportunities and impacts". Ed will be revising the council operating guidelines to reflect this and other adjustments in advisory council operations. Holly will continue in her role as External Relations state coordinator and maintain our working relationship with the University Relations office. She will continue to provide advisory council members with impact statements and other key information needed to fulfil their role with elected officials.

**Publications** - A draft of updated Publication Distribution and Pricing Guidelines developed in conjunction with program leaders was distributed and reviewed. Changes are the result of higher printing costs, our inability to provide large quantities of some popular titles free of charge as we have in the past, and an overall increase in the number of fact sheets and publications we're distributing. We have a new FTP server that can store documents larger than 30 pages. Jim explained \$35,000 in Smith-Lever funds is distributed for publications to the program leaders each year.

Sale of publications brings in about \$16,000 in revenue. Program Leaders agree that the revenue fund can be used to produce publications when their allocation is depleted. Revenue also pays Don Russell's salary (20 hours per week as an hourly). The draft guidelines are intended to make publications increasingly available on the web, more cost effective, but still meet the needs of clientele. Intent is not to push costs on to counties but to move beyond the era of unlimited printed publications available at all times.

Request for Educational Material form (copy provided) must be used to ensure approvals and reviews for all new publications to reduce errors that sometime occur (no Extension identification, no civil rights statements, no distribution plan, etc.). Adobe Acrobat will be installed on one computer in each office to enable counties to produce fact sheets in PDF format.

### West Nile Virus Update

Bruce reported on efforts of the interdisciplinary group addressing West Nile Virus. A West Nile Virus poster was distributed to each county. It refers caller to the State Dept. of Public Health. One copy of a folder of information for decision-makers was sent last week to all towns and cities with Extension offices also receiving a copy. There was no

intent to provide copies for others and towns should duplicate the information we provided them. The information will also be accessible via our web page.

#### Community Outreach Partnership Grant

Charlene reported on completion of a COPC grant proposal developed in conjunction with UNH Manchester. It has 3 components: Green space (millyard landscape design and plantings design), Cyberspace (wiring a new housing complex for internet service with student tutors for the users) and Education (preparing students as tutors). Grant request is \$400,000 over 3 years. Application submitted June 1 with decision expected in Sept.

#### EMT Campus Representation

The meeting completes J-J Newman's 2-year term on the EMT. Ed will work with campus Natural Resources staff to select/elect a replacement over the summer. Catherine is completing her first year representing campus Family & Youth Development staff.

#### Family, Home & Garden Education Center

Margaret Hagen provided each COA with a list of Center calls from their counties from Dec. to May. She also distributed a chart of total calls received by month and listing of calls sorted by Keywords. During this six month period 2,588 calls were received with Dec. and Jan. being the slowest months. The Center is expecting about 1000 calls per month through the summer. The top five information request categories are: Trees and Shrubs, Insects, Wildlife, Fruits, and Lawn (tied with General).

#### Campus Report

Catherine Violette reported for both she and J-J who was unable to attend. J-J and Catherine met with small campus group in May. Continue to discuss reporting systems and need for something more useful, simple and accumulative. Also talked about concern that specialists continue to feel left out when information is distributed. The Biweekly Update is one means to ensure that appropriate information is shared organization-wide. Bruce will raise this concern at the next meeting of the Program Leaders.

#### County Reports

##### **Belknap - Sumner Dole**

- County budget passed.
- Recently held Belknap County Government and Arbor Day at the county complex with all three commissioners participating. The mayor and Sununu representative also attended. Event was taped and being shown on cable access station.
- Amy Ouellette is the new Extension Educator, Agricultural Resources and Environmental Stewardship and begins June 18.
- Sanbornton Profile Completed. About 110 people attended. Priorities are a town audit, renovate the town hall and promote agriculture.

- County staff exploring producing a county newsletter, using format of Master Gardeners or Urban Forestry Center newsletter.
- Hosting an advisory council appreciation barbeque this month.
- Suggest it's time to have regional meetings with all staff present to address key topics.

### **Rockingham - Rollie Barnaby**

- County has approved an additional annual Extension appropriation (\$70,000) for a land and water conservation educator. Phil Auger's duties have been revised and he will assume this role on July 1. We are currently advertising for a new Extension Educator, Forestry Resources who will assume forestry program responsibilities. Hope to have position filled in Sept.
- Council is particularly active and want to have a July meeting. Membership includes their first active county commissioner.
- Annual council picnic held June 11 with 35 people attending, following an ag twilight meeting at a nearby farm.
- has concern with county travel budget because of additional educator position and Terri Schoppmeyer increased to 100% time.

### **Strafford - Don Black**

- When seeking new council members their council uses an assessment to identify specific areas of representation needed for a balanced council (copy circulated)
- Don also provides a portfolio of Extension information to potential new council members with various items and provides to school administrators when recruiting youth members.
- Don has re-designed the council member recognition certificate and included the county seal and signature of the chair of the county commission. He recommends others do the same to strengthens the partnership between UNH and county government. John Pike recently presented this revised certificate to Strafford's 2 youth representatives at their school baccalaureate.
- Other marketing efforts: Dover Middle School 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant (Chris/Thom); Geoffrey has a project at Mineral Park (low-income housing); Thom on Channel 9 parenting segment.
- Don showed a recent video segment that appeared on NH Outlook featuring his work with Moharriment School and the student project to build a sugar house. Great job, Don!

### **Grafton - Deb Maes**

- Waiting for budget approval. Hearing last month. Problems with nursing home staffing and a wing closed creating revenue losses. Extension was asking for 9% increase that includes new funding to support Water Quality Program Assistant position and a part-time 4-H Program Associate. Both approved by commissioners and by Executive Committee. Deb was then asked to reduce budget by \$5000. Made cuts and re-submitted. Yesterday legislature proposed cutting phone line by \$400. Request now at \$237,884 and no further cuts expected. Vote on Monday, June 25th.
- 300 5<sup>th</sup> graders attended annual conservation field day at County Farm.

- Tom Buob back from sabbatical leave
- Dairy Specialist Michal Lunak begins July 2. 4-H Educator Kathy Jablonski begins Aug. 1 Carol Ronci finishes June 30.
- A legislator from Plymouth spoke in support of TAP at the legislative hearing.
- Affordable housing group in Littleton wants to collaborate on financial literacy program. Working on MOU with this group. Barbara Hunter and Marilyn Sullivan also working with their local affordable housing groups to provide financial training for their clientel.

### **Sullivan - Nancy Berry**

- Budget request of \$176,000 still intact and going to delegation. There were no questions at recent budget hearing.
- Council will have 3 new members when it resumes this fall.
- Due to dwindling participation annual council picnic replaced with dessert meeting which went over well.
- Claremont awarded \$1.5M from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools for 3 year program for before and after school care in all Claremont schools.
- Commissioners held their annual pancake breakfast last Sunday with 500 attendees.

### **Merrimack - Tim Fleury**

- County budget passed in March with level funding.
- County unable to purchase bond and expects funding uncertainties to continue.
- Stuart Trachy was elected to both the Board of Commissioners and County Treasurer and chose to accept the Treasurer appointment.
- Tim invited to county retreat to identify priorities for next 5 years and expects also to be involved in county long-range planning.
- Kristen Mock is their new support staff responsible for natural resources.
- Staff now doing 4 weekly radio spots on WKHL
- Will be updating the resource notebook distributed to libraries.
- Farm & Forest scheduled for Feb 1-2. Will continue to charge admission due to rising costs at Center of NH. Demand for booth space grows so those prices will be increased.

### **Cheshire - Lauren Bressett**

- Budget passed with only a few dollars requested over last year. Includes Americorps employee salary for the county farm project. This project is currently involving nature trails and invasive plants.
- Due to commissioners' concern about Foot and Mouth Disease the open farm day and conservation field day were cancelled this year.
- Conducted a community youth action plan session (similar to Youth Community Profile) in March with some legislators involved.
- Stonewall Farm was a visit site during Pres. Leitzel's new faculty tour. They recently lost most of their ag staff over some grievances.
- Council member and Trustee Bob Mallat commended John Pike for the exemplary presentation he made to USNH Trustees recently.

- Nancy Bradford-Sisson was asked and agreed to serve as a columnist for the Wit and Wisdom column on the Monadnock Living page in the Keene Sentinel.

### **Carroll- Peter Pohl**

- County budget passed with only a small reduction
- Now have a full staff. The shared positions with Strafford require more start-up time for them to learn 2 counties. The public is accustomed to having an educator in office who handles all of ag. They have had some cases where people have seem annoyed about this change so they quickly inform Geoffrey when calls for hort come in. Shared positions are working okay so far but travel budgets will need to be increased.
- Recently got Conway Daily Sun to commit biweekly space to Extension for a regular column. Have noted reduction in calls from northern Carroll since move to Ossipee so hope this helps.
- Having problems getting council members to attend meetings. Attempting to determine their willingness to commit to attending meetings. John suggested using UNH Speakers Bureau to bring in faculty to address issues of interest.

### **Hillsborough - Dan Reidy**

- Budget approval on schedule with only minor reductions made for phone and conference expenses. Questions from chair of Executive Committee about combining Milford staff into Goffstown office to cut costs. Was able to circumvent for now since the Bouchard renovations have yet to be made.
- Interdisciplinary: just completed the Manchester profiles. Circulated a Union Leader story titled "Happy Trails" featuring a project that resulted directly from the So Manchester Profile. It was a design charette (worth \$20,000) to study trail development. Lyndeborough Profile coming up in Sept. and Pelham in January.
- Have a strong gardening project underway involving 4-H, Family Dev. and Ag along with another project at Valley Street jail.
- Awilda Muniz is new Nutrition Connections staff member who started June 11. Currently undergoing training.
- Last 3 years have been able to keep budget at or little below previous year. This year able to reduce full-time retiring secretary with a half-time employee expecting to save money and reduce the budget.
- Dan becomes a full-time COA on July 1. Staff have been urging this for many years. Expanded duties include greater involvement working with program leaders in staff supervision, performance appraisal, and increasing program impact. This is a 2-year pilot effort. Dan will continue to be actively involved in Community Profiles as part of the external relations functions of his new COA role.

### **Coos - Sue Buteau**

- All is going well in Coos
- Are in middle of budget year. Received their budget request except for a small amount for computer upgrades. Because Sue received \$6500 from the HICAES grant she was able to subsidize needed computer upgrades and also able to purchased a needed office air conditioner.

- Coos County Democrat (weekly) recently sold (published Beacon which heavily uses Extension articles). Optimistic the good working relationship will continue with the new owner.
- Hoping the new internet downlink service to be installed will result in budget savings.
- Have invited county legislatures to an Advisory Council barbeque next week.
- Tracey Donald is new part-time support staff.