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From: Steve Roberge <steven.roberge@unh.edu>
Subject: April 14th Talking Points For Extension Meeting
Cc: clarktreat <clarktreat@myfairpoint.net>
Bcc:
Attached:

Hi Jennifer,

Thanks again for volunteering to attend the State Advisory Council meeting in Concord on 4/14/11. At our last County Advisory Council meeting we discussed the questions outlined in our agenda for the meeting and came up with some answers for you to present at the State meeting.

Can you please let me know you have received this.

Thanks
Steve

Q: What is the status of the county budget - what happened?

The Cheshire County UNH Cooperative Extension county-portion of the budget was approved on March 21 along with the rest of the County budget. During the budget process, we were asked to reduce our budget by 5%. We came back to the budget committee with our reductions which included the elimination of one 4H position in our county. This position elimination was eased by the resignation of Holly Gowdy (4H Educator) - but this was a reduction in professional staff in Cheshire County nonetheless. The budget committee accepted our reduced budget request and passed it along to the full delegation for a vote on March 21. Our approved county-portion of our budget for 2011 is \$191,980.00

Every county department was asked to cut their budgets 5%. Some departments were reduced even further. The largest burden on the County budget is the State down-shifting of costs to the county level which caused a dramatic increase in taxes to be raised by the county.

Q: How did you use the information for the panel at the last State Advisory Council meeting?

Perhaps the most enlightening point to come out of panel discussion was the need for constant communication to elected officials and county personnel. More emphasis was put on the importance of a Public Awareness Team in Cheshire County plus Advisory Council members and professional staff spent a considerable amount of time speaking with State Representatives from Nov - Jan. Phones were useful, but face to face talks were more effective. During these talks the budget was not brought up, just the role UNH Cooperative Extension has in Cheshire County and the work they are doing. These talks were an opportunity for legislators to ask questions and become familiar with our programs.

Q: What is working particularly well? What hasn't worked?

Again, the meetings with State Reps. have been very effectived and phone calls from Advisory Council members have been enlightening and we have been able to glean good information how

State Reps. feel about Extension.

What hasn't worked is asking a large group of Representatives to come to us - either in forums, open houses or orientations. It's better if we go to them.

Q: What next steps are planned?

-Extension staff is continuing to meeting with town officials and libraries to bring them up to speed on our programs and educational opportunities.

-We will continue to keep legislators up to date on our programs and highlight our work.

-The Public Awareness Team is continuing to churn out great ideas and we are in the process of implementing them in the county.

-Extension staff is working to build a better relationship between them, the county and the county administrator by assisting in initiative such as leasing the county farm, selling timber on county lands and educating prisoners at the county prison. Another important task is to make clear to the county the partnerships and assistance we provide to other agencies and organizations. The partnerships and assistance Extension brings to these groups is because the County supports us. So the County can view this as their support to these groups as well.

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