The West Central Regional Advisory Council meeting was called to order on September 21, 2010 at the West Central Region Office in Springfield, Illinois.

**In Attendance:**
Ryan Hobson, West Central Regional Director  
Robert Bisser, Adams-Brown Unit  
John Johnson, Adams-Brown Unit  
Susan Adams, (Chairman), Logan County  
Jean Barron, Cass-Schuyler Unit  
Charlie Peterson, Montgomery County  
Bernie Lawless, Morgan-Scott Unit  
Amy McCallister, McDonough County  
Wayne Bingham, Pike County  
Lee Trotter, ESAC

**Not In Attendance:**
Calhoun-Jersey Unit  
Christian County  
Fulton County  
Greene County  
Hancock County  
Macoupin County  
Mason County  
Peoria County  
Sangamon-Menard Unit  
Tazewell County  
Woodford County

Following dinner, the meeting was called to order. Introductions were made.

Election of new officers was conducted. New officers are: Susan Adams, Chairman, Wayne Bingham, Vice Chairman, and Amy McCallister, Secretary.

Minutes from the March 16, 2010 meeting were reviewed and approved. Motion to approve from John Johnson and seconded by Charlie Peterson.

**UNIT UPDATES:**

**McDonough County- Amy McCallister**
- At the State Fair this year Linda Prox of Macomb was recognized and inducted into the 4-H Hall of Fame.
- The Roy M. Emory Family of McDonough County was awarded the 4-H Family Spirit Award at the State Fair too.
Extension has held a variety of programs since August. Some of the program highlights for this year include: Save Money by Diversifying your Landscape with Trees, Small Fruits in the Home Garden, Spring and Summer Bulb Forcing, Straight Talk, Babysitting clinics and many more.

The new unit of Henderson/McDonough/Knox/Warren has held their first meeting to discuss the reorganization and to decide where the new hub office will be located. The new hub office will be located in Warren County.

The executive council will be holding a meeting next week to discuss the changes and what is happening in the next year.

Adams/Brown Unit - John Johnson

- **Agriculture**
  - Mike Roegge, our Crops Educator, has been busy working with area farmers and gardeners through a very wet growing season. Summer Programs have included several field days and pasture walks.
  - Ag in the Classroom-Received grants for both Adams and Brown Counties again. Reached over 12,800 youth in every elementary classroom in the two counties this past school year.

- **Community & Economic Development**
  - YP Quincy- An effort to retain and attract young professionals to the area. Partnered with Quincy Herald-Whig on the 20 Under 40 series for the 4th year recognizing 20 young professionals who are making a difference in their community. Offering educational programs on various topics targeted towards this audience. Laura Hyde, one of the Extension employees was recognized.
  - Safe Routes to School-Extension CED staff assisting in the planning and grant application process for sidewalk and school crossing improvements and safe walking programs in Quincy and Mt. Sterling.
  - Adams County Green Coalition-Extension staff facilitates this group of citizens who are interested in improving and protecting the environment.
  - Live Local Quincy-Working with local business leaders to organize a buy local initiative.
  - Western Illinois Leadership Academy-Preparing for 15th year of this leadership program that will start in January.

- **Horticulture**
  - Community and Youth Gardens have done well this summer. Other Master Gardener community projects include downtown Quincy medians and planters, IVH Memorial garden, Quincy Public Library garden, Amtrak station and more.

- **4-H Program**
  - Summer Activities and County Fair went very well. Christine, our 4-H program coordinator is expecting and will be on maternity leave during November and December. Other Unit staff will be filling in during this time.
Community Wellness
  o Family Nutrition Program (FNP) continues in both counties, providing information on nutrition, food safety and food budgeting to food stamp eligible individuals and families.
  o Brenda Derrick, Nutrition & Wellness educator, is assisting with the State FNP program and they have agreed to cover 50% of her salary from Sept 2010-June 2011.

Montgomery County - Charlie Peterson
  • Three new groups (shooting, electricity, and robotics) have been formed for 4-H.
  • Conservation Day for the 5th graders in the county was a success.
  • Safety Day was held for the 4th graders in the county which was also a success.
  • On September 14 Extension held a “Maximizing Kitchen Appliances-Slow Cookers” class to help the community save time and money by cooking with a Crockpot.
  • Extension also held the first of a three-part free webinar series on Specialty Food Businesses in September. The webinar focused on what it takes to start and grow a specialty food business.
  • A 4-hour parenting education class, “Parents Forever” was implemented in the county to help families with children transition through the divorce process. The class teaches parents positive ways to deal with custody, visitation and other difficult divorce issues while at the same time understanding the impact that divorce has upon their child(ren).
  • Four Seasons Gardening club will be hosting a three-part teleconference series in September and October on Diversify your Landscape with Trees, Small Fruits in the Home Garden, and Spring and Summer Bulb Forcing
  • Charlie also commented that the county has been making recommendations but doesn’t know if the recommendations are being heard. Instead of hubs keep a satellite office open in each county.

Morgan/Scott Unit - Bernie Lawless
  • The 3rd annual “Where Your Food Comes From” was held on September 15 and 16 with stations on topics such as machinery, dairy, livestock, build a pizza, grain jeopardy, video, and food groups race. Twelve schools participated with a total of 301 Kindergarten students in attendance.
  • The 4-H Livestock Auction was a big success. Local businesses and individuals came out to support the sale.
  • “Tomorrows’ Jacksonville “is an 8-week Community Development Program as a partnership with the Chamber to help the community. Various topics include Community History, Civic Engagement, Local Government, Effective Leadership, and many more.
  • Wind Energy 101, from a landowner’s perspective program is a program that is designed to help local groups and landowners make informed decisions on developing wind energy on their farms. The program is provides the landowners with information and seminars designed to inform the landowner from their perspective.
Pike County - Wayne Bingham

- **Skills for lifelong learning**
  - Nearly 2,100 students participated in a minimum of 4 Ag in the Classroom lessons learning about agriculture and all types of agricultural commodities.
  - 53 youth were introduced to radio production and advertising.
- **Improved Agricultural practices**
  - Distance diagnostics aided in identifying a range of crop conditions and weeds.
- **Community and business development**
  - Assisted the 40 member Pike County Transit Partnership Group in completing 832 surveys and finishing primer phases 1 and 2.
  - Over 50 participated in the Generations in the Workplace curriculum. This year was unique because it showed the different generations being tech savvy and non-tech savvy.
- **Environmental responsibility**
  - 4-H helps with the recycling center each year. Each 4-H group volunteers a weekend of their time to help the center out.

Cass/Schuyler Unit - Jean Barron

- 4-H is growing in Schuyler County. At nearly an all time low last year of 46 members, 10 new members have already enrolled for the coming 4-H year. In addition, one new traditional 4-H club and one new Cloverbud club have formed.
- Completed two successful fairs, the 4-H Fair in Schuyler and the 4-H & Junior show in Cass.
- A year-round Junior Master Gardeners’ club has been formed in response to the demand.
- Beardstown Bucks, a buy local campaign spearheaded through the Chamber and Extension, launches this month. The goal is to increase city and county tax revenue while creating a venue which allows spending habits to be tracked. This information can then be used to determine economic development strengths and weaknesses.
- FNP programs are ongoing, or scheduled to begin, in all four public school districts in the Unit. Several programs are between 6-11 weeks in length.
- Both Cass and Schuyler have had their initial Executive Committee meetings to determine the hub and satellite locations for the new units.
- Four Seasons webinars are scheduled for this fall.

Logan County - Susan Adams

- Part of the Sangamon/Menard/Logan Unit in the future. John Fulton is the unit leader for Logan County and the interim unit leader for the Sangamon/Menard Unit. John is promoting that each county is to determine their programs and what works for them.
- John Fulton was the citizen of the month in his county.
- Logan County has a variety of programs listed for the fall including Fall Foods Workshop, 4-H Find Out Party, Dig Into Fall 2010-A Fall Gardening Workshop, International Night Program, and a County Officer Training program which is done by Extension for the new county board members that were elected to the board. The training is greatly appreciated by the county board members and gives them the knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of county officials as well as how local government is run.
ESAC UPDATE - Lee Trotter
- ESAC is the statewide umbrella as to what we do locally.
- ESAC spoke with Congressman to discuss the future of Extension.
- 15 of the 19 from Illinois voted for the Farm Bill. However, 4 of the collar counties didn’t vote.
- The Congressmen were more receptive this year to meeting with ESAC.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR UPDATE - Ryan Hobson

Hub/Satellite locations
The hub offices in the WC Region are
- Unit 10 – Monmouth initially but still under discussion. County Director will need to seek larger facility in Monmouth if it is there. Galesburg is 24 miles away.
  - Unit 11 – Pekin
  - Unit 14 – Quincy
  - Unit 15 – Jacksonville
  - Unit 16 – Springfield. WC Regional Office will possibly need to move to space vacated by Center in order for unit office to afford to stay at state fairgrounds.
  - Unit 18 – Hillsboro

Budget
- FY10 State County Board Match - there has been no word on a second payment.
- New educator positions
  - $5000 of federal Smith-Lever funds will be provided per educator for operating expenses. These funds will go to the unit.
  - 30% of the salary will be paid from state general revenue funds. The remaining 70% will come from the unit trust account.
- County director salaries will be paid 100% from the unit trust account. It has also been decided that starting in FY12 each unit will be charged the actual county director salary rather than the average salary.

Center Closings
The Macomb Center closed June 30. Educators are working out of their homes or unit offices. This will continue until positions are decided and office space made available. The Springfield and East Peoria Centers are to close June 30, 2011.

Academic Staff Personnel Changes
- Denise Kistner, county director in Montgomery, is interim county director in Macoupin with Paula Robinson’s retirement.
- Gary Letterly, natural resources educator in Christian, is interim county director in Christian with Linda Smith’s retirement.
- Earl Bricker, community and economic development educator, is interim county director in Adams/Brown with Carrie Edgar’s departure for Wisconsin.
- Bob Frazee, natural resources educator at East Peoria Center, retired.
- Dave Seibert, animal systems educator at East Peoria Center, retired.
• Diane Ryals, family life educator in Morgan/Scott, retired.
• Marjorie Lafont, nutrition and wellness educator in Peoria, retired.
• Shirley Camp, nutrition and wellness educator at Macomb Center, retired.
• Pete Fandel, crop systems educator in Tazewell, resigned to work at a community college.
• Judy Taylor, 4-H youth development educator at Springfield Center, retired.
• Somjad Puangren, network administrator at regional office, resigned.
• Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing, crop systems specialist at Macomb Center, resigned to take a position in Wisconsin.
• Ryan Hobson, regional director in West Central Region, was named as interim program leader in community and economic development, with the retirement of Jeri Marxman.

Hiring Process for County Directors/Educators: The internal application period closed September 3rd. ACES HR emailed each Regional Director this week with instructions to print out/assemble all necessary documentation (online application materials, past two years of evaluations and self-evaluations) for each candidate. County Director positions will be decided first. The County Director review team will include the 5 regional directors, Marilyn Brengle, John Horton, Bob Hoeft, and Kathy Seybert. Each team member will review each candidate, write comments, and the candidates will be discussed at a meeting. Once decided, selected County Directors will be called by a Regional Director and a salary offer made. If they verbally accept, a letter from HR will be sent for formal signature/acceptance. All acceptances will be pending Board of Trustees approval.

For Educator positions, the four Program Leaders will join the review team and weigh in on the candidates. When selected Educators are contacted with job offers, they will be told who the selected County Director is.

Ryan was not able to specify the timeline for this process; it will largely depend on the how much time the selected applicants take to decide and if they turn it down, contacting applicants if possible. He felt that most positions should be decided by mid-October.

Our goal through this process is to retain as many highly qualified staff members as possible. However, we don’t have positions for everyone or the position may not be in the desired location.

It is possible that new Educators may be asked to take on some roles outside of the unit (as the state will be paying for 30% of each Educator’s salary). Associate regional directors and regional specialists, such as communications and marketing, were also issued termination notices. Regional computer technicians, however, were not issued termination contracts.

In November or December there will be a mandatory training for the new permanent Academic staff. This training will include a number of HR issues (supervising Educators, conflict mediation) and team building.
If a position is not filled through the internal search, it will likely be opened to the public. Non-selected Extension staff can likely apply again for those positions. He didn’t know the timeline for this process.

4-H Program
Ryan acknowledged the admin team’s commitment to each county keeping their separate 4-H program and associated fairs. This will only be called into question if there is an extreme funding issue.

Civil Service Staffing: Decisions regarding these positions will be made in late winter/spring once the county directors are identified.

Extra Help hires: Campus is open to unit offices hiring temporary non-permanent Extra Help positions to fill any vacancies during the transition.

Reducing Administrative Costs and Number of Regions
- Those receiving a terminal contract in the WC Regional Office are the communications and marketing educator and the associate regional director.
- Decisions regarding regional offices will be forthcoming. It has been mentioned to possibly going to three regions with West Central and Northwest combining, Southern and East Central combining, and Northeast possibly expanding by picking up a few of the bordering units with high populations.

Next meeting is on March 15, 2011 in Jacksonville and the fall meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2011 in Springfield.

The motion to adjourn was made by Charlie Peterson, seconded by John Johnson. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.