Ellen Burton welcomed everyone to the conference call. Chairman Aaron Steffen called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken by Debbie Winder, Secretary. Members present were: David Schug, Bob Zellers, Jacqueline Lueking, Bill Harrington, Richard Kocher, Andy Hedrick, Carol Perkins, Richard Long, Larry Casey, Aaron Steffen, Charlotte Tarkington, Debbie Winder, Brian Basting, Bill Minnis, and Karen Hawthorne.

The minutes from the November 2, 2006 meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Larry Casey and seconded by Andy Hedrick. The minutes stand as read.

The speaker for the evening was Richard Atterberry, Communication Specialist, East Central Region. Mr. Atterberry’s topic for the evening was office safety preparedness. He explained about the Extension Disaster Education Network and how it began. How many states are involved and what each section of the United States deals with as far as disasters in their specific locations. To receive more information you can go to their website: www.eden.lsu.edu. The office safety preparedness program is designed to help small business to prepare for a disaster. Businesses cannot get back to normal until their employees have been taken care of; therefore, a checklist was made to help business prepare for a disaster. Some of the items on that list are:

- Make sure all offices have smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detector, weather radios, and fire extinguishers that are in proper working order.
- Have maps showing exits and tornado safety areas for people attending meetings.
- Make sure first aid kits are available and the location is known, as well as the location of the gas, water, and electricity shut off.
- Make sure doors shut and are secured. Pull blinds at night or frost the glass. It people can’t look in they might move on. Make sure exterior door opens out not in.
- Suggest fireman and police come in for volunteer check.
- Post a list with emergency numbers especially if different than 911. Keep utility phone numbers handy. Bolt heavy shelving and equipment to walls in case of earthquake.
- Have hand sanitizer available.
- All staff members should carry an emergency phone list.
- Have at least one hard wired phone. Some cell phones don’t track with 911 and eventually the battery runs down.
Mr. Atterberry also reported on the campus wide project that asks the students at the time of registration in the fall to give their telephones numbers in case of an emergency. They will be able to voice mail and e-mail students to let them know of any disaster that is happening. They cannot require students to do this, it is voluntary.

University of Illinois has a major task force that has been looking into bird flu. There are experts that think it is just a matter of time before it will be transferred from person to person. Monitoring of local bird flocks is taken very seriously. The Council inquired as to how University of Illinois Extension fits into this. Mr. Atterberry stated that Extension has its own emergency planning process under way, including ways to deal with shutdowns relating to bird flue. With all the international travel, the University of Illinois is one of the higher risk areas.

**Unit Reports**

**Livingston County**

Michelle Norris, Extension Educator, Community and Economic Development, Champaign Center, came to help us put together what the foreseeable future might be for the Extension office. We focused on what will happen in the next 4 to 5 years, strong and weak points, and where we need to go within the county. Safety Safari for kid’s camp will be held on Thursday, June 14 for kids entering grades 3-6. The camp covers first aid, gun, animal, water, ATV & lawn mower safety. It also covers farm/household chemicals, grain wagons and bins, and tractor roll over. The date was moved to summer because of low attendance last fall. Junior Chef School will be offered during the month of June for children ages 9 to 12. There is a new curriculum and instructor this year and kids have already been registered. A summer agricultural institute will be held June 19-22 for teachers. The theme is, “A Loaf of Bread, A Jug of Wine and Agriculture.” Fifteen teachers have registered to date. They will be able to receive the CPDU credits they need and learn ways to incorporate agriculture into their curriculum. The 4th Annual Route 66 Antique Tractor Roadshow will be held on August 11 and 12. A planned route will loop north to Dwight from the 4-H park and return to downtown for Heritage Days. On Sunday the route will loop south through Graymont, stop at two nursing homes in Pontiac and then end with lunch at the Elk’s Club.

**Jasper-Cumberland**

One of the events that was sponsored in January was a public safety demonstration for children in grades 6 to 12. There were over 700 students in attendance. Jasper County is involved with 4 other counties - Effingham, Clay, Fayette, and Marion for the program, Land Use Evaluation and Impact Assessment Models (LEAM). The program is also in conjunction with a class on campus. Jasper and Cumberland Counties were involved in “Welcome to the Real World,” a program for sophomore students. They are assigned a job and potential income and they have to manage how they spend money. Junior high teachers requested they do an ATV program for 5th to 6th graders. There was a 4th grade safety day where they talked about fire and personal safety. The staff in both counties held open houses in both counties to show their appreciation to county residents.
Coles County

A unique horticulture program was taught in April by Tony Bratsch, Horticulture Educator at the Effingham Extension Center. Twenty-five attended the two hour workshop. It covered the identity, habitat, and hunting tips for the morel mushroom. The workshop stressed safety and importance of correct identification. The Annual 4-H BBQ was held on April 14 with 2,269 meals served with help from celebrity servers, President of the Extension Council, Chairwomen of County Board and County Board members, Farm Bureau Manager, State Representative Chapin Rose and State Senator Dale Righter.

Piatt County

Piatt County received a challenge grant for three years to share a 50/50 educator position between Allerton Park and Piatt County Extension. The educator will focus on horticulture and environmental education. Ryan Shields was hired as the new Community Worker. He has been doing a good job and has a lot of new ideas. Ryan, along with 4-H Foundation members sponsored a booth during May Day on the square in Monticello. They received a very good response from the community. We are working on renewing efforts with the city of Monticello and Rails-to-Trails on a grant submission.

Clay-Fayette

The Clay-Fayette Unit has been involved with LEAM to look at what problems and potential there is for each county. Professors and students from the U of I defined the problems. They have held quite a few hands-on workshops. They are working with the health department to sponsor a safety days. The 4-H Equine Kids had a group go to state. Four 4-H members gave speeches and came home with two top places. A walking program for adults is in the process of being started. Ginger Boas, County Director received a grant for $12,500 to make improvements on one of the riding trails.

Effingham County

The schools held a life skills presentation “Your Prom, Your Life, Your Choice.” It was a very complete program on teenagers and drinking. The program “Welcome to the Real World” was presented in business class. Volunteers came in from the community. Shumway Elementary did a character program that took place over 5 months. Master Gardeners planted over 110 trees purchased with a grant from Trees Forever. Junior Master Gardeners are getting ready to plant tomatoes and landscape the local nursing home area.

Clark County

The following programs for youth were held: 4-H Public Presentation Contest, St. Jude Benefit Trail Ride on Sunday, May 6, Horse Bowl & Hippology on March 17 in Champaign, Caring Classmates and Butterfly Program for 4th graders, Safe Kids sessions for 3rd graders, the annual Positive Actions Relation to Youth conference on March 22 for 7th graders, and Welcome to the
Real World for 8th graders. Community programs and events included: workshops for business owners concerned about WalMart locating in the area, Clark County Al-Trans helps to provide affordable and accessible transportation, a marketing brochure was developed, Clark County Trails Coalition is developing bike trails, Dining with Diabetes teaches individuals how to prepare food for diabetics, Extension/Martinsville FFA plots plants corn and bean plots, and they will sponsor tours and hold an outlook meeting. Money has been collected to remodel kitchen in the Extension building.

McLean County

Long range planning information will be combined and retreat held this summer to finalize the plan. The McLean County Extension Office hosted U of I President Joseph White and U of I Dean Easter. Eleven poverty simulations were conducted from March 2006 to April 2007. Garden walk planned around Route 66 events in June. Extension is collaborating with Illinois Area Agency on Aging and Path to sponsor a workshop for grandparents raising grandchildren. The office is working with the McLean Co. Museum of History for a special exhibit “A Satisfying Taste” Exploring our Food Experience – which explains food trends from 1830 to the 21st century. The exhibit will open in 2009. A total of 2,670 students participated in the Chick-it-Out program. Extension is working with the McLean County Farm Bureau and FS to sponsor a day to explore development of ag in McLean County for teachers. It will assist them in combining history, geography and geology with modern ag practices. Summer camp for students ages 5 to 18 will also be offered. Basketball shots “Swishes for Wishes” raised $5,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The Welcome to Real World program was offered to 250 students at Normal Community High School. The Master Gardener’s Lawn and Garden day hosted about 220 guests. Twenty-four individuals completed the Master Gardener training. Master Gardeners are offering a class the first Thursday of every month on different gardening topics. The McLean Extension Office will be hiring an Ag and Horticulture Program Coordinator. The Unit is in the process of searching for an Extension Unit Educator, Youth Development.

Champaign County

Cyber Soccer Camp was offered and the participants worked on computers in the morning and played soccer in the afternoon. Identified plants and flowers through games, then took out to the garden and put into practice the things they learned.

Ford-Iroquois

A series of beginning and advanced Saturday workshops on budding horticulture in the fall including plant parts and needs, soil samples, etc. was offered. Participants learned about soils, water and composting, made terrariums to demonstrate the water cycle, made bird feeders, learned about insects and diseases, and prepared bug-inspired snacks. In May they will have a program on fruit and vegetables and there will be fruits and vegetables available for them to try. In August, a wrap-up day will be offered to cover all the previous topics. Hungry for Horticulture did plant classification, propagation of plants and floral design. A local floral
designer comes in to teach landscape design, bio-technology, and a wrap-up day similar to the beginning series. They will have a chance to make and take home things.

Crawford

Crawford County has been going through staff changes and promoting a county referendum of 2¢. Kathy Reiser helped promote this referendum and it was passed. The grant writer resigned in November but due to the success of the program it was recommended that the program continue. Barbara Webster was hired to fill the position. Ann Emken retired in December and was guest of honor at a retirement/volunteer banquet on March 24. The staff continues to try to cover all the regular program needs for the county and Ron Waldrop, County Director in the Richland-Lawrence Unit will be the Interim County Director in Crawford County until the position is filled.

Vermilion County

The Vermillion Extension Unit reported on the recent series of computer classes taught by Internet Masters. Internet Masters are individuals who earned their Internet Masters certification through University of Illinois Extension. Internet Masters Certification is achieved by individuals who graduate from a 12-week program that prepares them to teach others. The group focuses on developing computer classes for individuals with access to a computer but without the training to fully operate one. Two separate programs—one at the beginner level and the other for intermediate students—have been developed and taught.

Macon County

Macon County Master Gardeners won a significant award at the International Master Gardeners Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas for their WAND Demonstration Garden. The Macon Office produced a DVD project called “Abriendo Caminos” that targets Latino families searching for quality/safe childcare. The 4-H/Youth Development and Family Nutrition Program will sponsor a summer program SNAP – Summer Nutrition Activity Program. They hope to reach kids not normally exposed to the 4-H curriculum. The unit is also expanding the ag marketing Program and they are currently working with Montgomery County.

Review of ESAC:

Karen Hawthorne, Brian Basting and Kathy Reiser just returned from a trip to Washington D.C. Kathy along with 13 volunteers attended public funding workshops and made legislative visits to capital hill where they visited both U.S. Senators. Brian attended a leadership conference which offered very high quality training session on Sunday which prepared him for the week and the congressional visits. After the leadership conference, they arrived on capital hill to meet aides and senators where they shared items they wanted emphasized in the budget. They were given a very strong positive report and they were given the impression that they were committed to supporting Extension. The volunteers felt they communicated well what Extension does so they can help support us.
Karen Hawthorne enjoyed attending the national conference sponsored by the Joint Council of Extension Professionals in Washington D.C. She attended the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference. The two days of sessions of particular interest to Karen included 1.) Marketing and Communications where Robert Topor’s quote, “Doing the deed is not enough; people need to know about it” and 2.) Social Capital and Our Community. On day three, volunteers took Extension’s message to federal legislators. Illinois’ group of 13 volunteers was a very diverse, extraordinary group drawn together by our passion for Extension and a willingness to advocate for it. Our message helped lawmakers see the positive impact Extension has for their constituents. Working together from county to region to state to nation; Extension continues to help put knowledge to work to enhance the well being of citizens and communities.

Thank you to Kathy Reiser for the wonderful job of coordinating this event and everyone’s willingness to participate in this opportunity.

**Administrative Update:**

Congratulations to Crawford County on passing of their referendum. The passing of a referendum is confirmation of work that is done and the history of programming in the county. It is also made much easier by the management of the Extension office and the staff.

Staff Updates – Dr. Tony Bratsch has been hired as the Extension Educator, Horticulture, Effingham Center. Tony previously served as the Extension Educator, Horticulture in the Southern Region, but most recently had been on faculty at Virginia Tech prior to returning to University of Illinois Extension. Ken Larimore was hired as the Unit Educator, Community and Economic Development in Jasper County. Ann Emken has been hired as the Unit Educator, Community and Economic Development in Lawrence County. Previously Ann has served as the County Director in Crawford County. Dana Homann was hired as Extension Educator, Youth Development in the Effingham Center.

Interviews have been held for the Extension Educator, Family Life in the Effingham Center. The position will be offered within two of weeks. Paul Mariman was hired for the Extension Unit Educator, Farm Business Marketing and Management position in the Macon Unit. The Unit Educator, Youth Development position in McLean County is posted. The closing date for application is May 9. The Crawford County Director position is ready to be posted. Rachelle Hollinshead, Extension Educator, Community and Economic Development, Effingham Center will be leaving to become the County Director in Marion County.

Glenn Seeber retired on April 1. Glenn was the Assistant to the Associate Dean for Extension and Outreach. One of the hats that Glenn wore was fiscal and budget oversight. Jennifer Jones, a former auditor with the University of Illinois will be handling that responsibility. Diversity of Extension and Outreach was discussed.

Dr. Jim Oliver has received a 25% appointment as Vice Chancellor for Urban Outreach.

Dr. Richard Clark is now the Interim Assistant Dean for 4-H and Youth Development.
The Master Gardeners Training Task Force is working with Monica David to review the program to see if we are meeting the needs. Online training is available. The last time a review done was in 2000.

Dr. Clark and other speakers joined the East Central Region for a meeting entitled—“Bending the Trend in 4-H and Youth Development.” Dr. Clark did an excellent job of helping the staff of the East Central Region frame where we are with the 4-H and Youth Development program and have a vision for where we can go. Staff went away excited about the new direction and possibilities.

Ellen is presently conducting individual performance conferences with all academic staff within the East Central Region. Program Reviews are also being held in the region. For a Program Review staff members from other offices and regions in the State come into a specific unit office and learn about the programs and work being conducted by that specific unit. Staff members serving on the Program Review Team always comment that they learn so much from being a part of this process.

The All Staff Retreat for East Central Region Staff will be held on May 10 at the 4-H Memorial Camp. The focus of the 2007 All Staff Retreat will be on volunteerism. Numerous agencies and groups will be presenting session on how volunteers are utilized in their organizations.

Ellen shared with the Regional Council that the Open Meetings Act has added a section on holding meeting via electronic technology. County Extension Councils may not meet by electronic means because they are involved with spending tax dollars. Regional Councils can meet electronically because we are not dealing with spending of tax dollars or making policy decisions.

Definite information on the State and Federal budgets is not available, but all indications are that it will be a fiscally limited year.

A motion was made by Richard Long and seconded by David Schug to adjourn the meeting. Motion was approved. Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Winder
Piatt County