The West Central Regional Advisory Committee meeting was called to order on March 17, 2009 at the Morgan County Extension Office in Jacksonville, Illinois.

**In Attendance:**
Ryan Hobson, West Central Regional Director
Susan Adams (Chairman), Logan County
Barbara Rogers (Vice-Chairman), Sangamon-Menard Unit
Mary Galer Hershelman (Secretary), Montgomery County
John Sutton, ESAC Representative, Logan County
John Johnson, Adams-Brown Unit
Joe Sullivan, Cass-Schuyler Unit
Marvin Hughes, Christian County
Sharon Spangler, Fulton County
David Humphreys, Macoupin County
Lynnette Cale, McDonough County
Craig Lashmett, Morgan-Scott Unit
Jack Pfaffmann, Woodford County

**Not In Attendance:**
Calhoun-Jersey Unit
Greene County
Hancock County
Mason County
Pekin County
Pike County
Tazewell County

Following dinner, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Susan Adams. Introductions were made.

Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. Motion to approve by Marvin Hughes, seconded by Jack Pfaffmann.

**ESAC UPDATE – John Sutton**
Budget is the major focus at this time. Illinois is 48th in getting money back from the federal government. Members will be traveling to Washington, D.C. at the end of April to visit representatives and advocate for Extension.

- Smith-Lever Act – deals with operating expenses. Pretty steady in the last several years. Lost half the money in the last 8 years due to inflation. Hoping funds will
continue to stay flat and not drop. 2009 and 2010 budgets are pretty well set. Looking into 2011 budget.

- Ten million dollars for children, youth and families is at risk.
- FNF continues to grow. Extension not its own like in the budget and that continues to grow as well.

Questions have been coming in on training leaders for new high-tech programs. An attempt is being made to keep trainers ahead of students.

Aaron Schock replaced Representative Ray LaHood. Mr. Schock is a former 4-Her, and Extension will be able to count on his support and vote, although he’s not in the same position as LaHood.

Debbie Halverson is another new representative. ESAC will be working on trying to obtain her vote on committees.

UNIT UPDATES

Adams-Brown Unit – John Johnson

- New full-time position for economic development in Brown County, partially funded by DOT Foods.
- Leadership Academy – currently 25 enrolled
- Locally Grown programs doing well promoting sustaining local goods and more community gardens.
- Agriculture – several programs and workshops held throughout the year.
- Master Gardener training is underway with 29 participants.
- 4-H held revitalization in Brown County to recruit volunteers. 11 signed up.

Cass-Schuyler Unit – Joe Sullivan

- A portion of the ground where the office is located has been sold to Spoon River College. A one building campus will be built on the site, which will be mutually beneficial.
- Master Gardener Joan Sullivan and Joe Sullivan of NRCS are working on a program to educate the public on farmstead and field wind breaks for economic purposes and aesthetics.
- Master gardeners are holding a seminar on native grasses.

Christian County – Marvin Hughes:

- Serve It Safe workshop was held in March for food safety workers.
- Walk Day/Health Fair – city-wide year-round program with all schools plus the local hospital participating. This is part of the Family Nutrition and 4-H programs. Very well received, with 61 people in the last program.
- Bread Baking workshop – being presented by Barb Fortner on April 1. Thirty-five are scheduled to attend. Focus will be basic bread baking, preparation of the dough, and the baking.
- Pie Baking workshop – being held on April 16.
• Master Gardeners – working on Lincoln’s garden in Springfield. Using Heritage plants to update the garden.
• Miscanthus Grass update – Taylorville continues to work on the project – still learning and improving the system. One problem has been pelletizing the grasses. There are approximately 70 ton of grasses to be pelletized. A firm in Shelburn, IN has invested $400,000 on the process and is still working on it. Mel Rumput put the furnace together and is working on the same process closer to home. There are 3 other locations Gary Letterly has worked with. Still cheaper per BTU that gas, but need an efficient pelletizing process close to home. Data collection devices have been added to the Taylorville system to gather more data for further enhancements.
• Digital Camera and Printer classes – classes are held twice annually and are well received, with 25 participants of all ages at the last session.
• REA – thinking about putting classes together to help reduce wasted energy. REA provides devices that you can plug in to your home’s energy supply to monitor usage. These devices can be borrowed for 10 days. Extension is planning on acquiring several and building a program around reducing energy usage by unplugging devices that are not used and so often forgotten as energy wasting devices.

Fulton County – Sharon Spangler
• 4-H Achievement program was held in November and was well-attended.
• 400 members in 23 4-H clubs and 1 Cloverbud club in the county.
• Super Saturday on April 4 will offer 4-H members 8 different workshops to choose from.
• Two steer weigh-ins have been held.
• 4-H Federation members made 22 Christmas stockings and 50 cards to send to the Central IL Proud Families of Marines.
• PSEP training had 87 participants in Fulton County and 50 in Mason County.
• Multi-county Soil Fertility training at ICC attended by 19 Certified Crop Advisors.
• Annie’s Project was offered for the first time and had 9 attendees.
• Partnered with McDonough County Extension for a soil and water workshop.
• Working with NRCS to develop strip mine land management workshop. 10% of soil in Fulton County is strip mine land.
• FSA farm bill program had 31 participants.
• FNP – shifted to school-based programs.
• Master Gardeners had Gardeners Big Day at Spoon River College.
• Two from Fulton County are taking Master Gardener class.
• Fulton County has a Jr. Master Gardeners 4-H Club.
• CED educator helped develop a tourism newsletter.
• Helped local officials put on an election judges training workshop.
• CED educator position will be terminated June 30 due to budget cuts.
Logan County – Susan Adams:

- Day Care Providers Workshop – 20 people attended this program, a very good turnout. John Fulton contacted the Illinois Network Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies and their office sent out an email for us letting people know about the workshop. Attendance in this workshop also qualified for Continuing Education credit. This is another way of working with local, regional and state agencies.
- The website continues to be a good source of information for what is happening in the county, from workshop to attend or information on what to be doing for outbreaks of bugs, to garden, lawn and fruit tree care.
- The Master Gardeners will have their plant sale on May 2nd this year. Last year they moved about 5000 plants.

Macoupin County – David Humphreys

- Small Engines Workshop – local mechanic and volunteer, Veryl Reiher, donated 8 Monday evenings to teach 4-H youth about parts, safety, troubleshooting and maintenance of an engine.
- National Children’s Study – National Institutes of Health has selected Macoupin County as a site for this national study – the largest study of child and human health ever conducted in the United States. Saint Louis University, the sponsoring organization, expects to enroll 250 participants from Macoupin County for each of four years starting in 2009.
- Parliamentary Procedure Workshop – held in late 2008 – attendees learned about different parts of a 4-H meeting as well as basic parliamentary procedures.
- Royal Lakes Youth Programming – over 20 youth take part in the Royal Lakes 4-H club. They meet monthly to learn the basics of meeting protocol, do educational activities and socialize. The Royal Lakes club is currently funded through a grant provided by the Illinois 4-H Foundation.
- FNP – The Family Nutrition Program staff is providing a twice monthly class to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families clients from the Family Community Resource Center. The group learns about nutrition, food safety, meal planning and food buying. They also prepare food to take home and share with their family.
- Elk Food Grant – The Carlinville Elks received $10,000 for the local food pantry. Through a systematic and informal education offering, clients will be provided an opportunity to better utilize their food resources. Monthly classes will be taught by U of I Extension staff members.
- Macoupin/Montgomery Agronomy Day – annual agronomy day held at Lincoln Land Community College Southern Region Center in Litchfield. More than 90 producers and landowners learned about: Illinois Soybean Rust Sentinel Plot Monitoring System, Soybean Leaf Diseases, Variable Leases, Ag Marketing, Insects and Weed Control.
- Annie’s Project – Macoupin and Montgomery county women are related to the mission of this project, which is to empower farm women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information.
Montgomery County – Mary Galer Herschelman

- New Natural Resources educator, Stephanie Porter.
- Held a successful Annie’s Project and Agronomy day with Macoupin County.
- Upcoming workshops include Healthy Pet Program, Equine Health & Management, Traveling with Your Horse, and Horse Handling & Train Riding Basics.
- Extension Week – staff members are planning to start regular publicity on local radio station and monthly column in local newspaper.

Morgan-Scott Unit – Craig Lashmett:

- Safe Trick or Treating – Federation provides a safe place to trick or treat for youngsters. Over 200 attended.
- Make It and Take It Workshop – held annually, 4-H Federation members provide the workshop to area youth, giving them the opportunity to make gifts and decorate cookies for the holidays.
- WJIL/WJVO Treats for Troops – Federation members donate time annually to pack boxes for the Treats for Troops effort. Items donated by local organizations, community members and 4-H clubs were packed into 70 boxes to be sent to the troops.
- Where Does Your Food Come From? – held in September, 2008 at the Scott County Fairgrounds. 16 classrooms of more than 300 kindergarten students and teachers participated. Each class visited 9 stations where they learned about different kinds of animals, how to build a pizza, corn and soybeans, dairy products, and had fun with matching games and hay mazes.
- DDDI – Distance Diagnostics through Digital Imaging allows for a quick and efficient response by an expert to diagnose problems such as plant diseases, insect identification, plant identity and insect damage. Digital images are captured at the local Extension office and sent to the appropriate diagnostician.
- Tomorrow’s Jacksonville – This 8-week program focused on COLORS Training, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Engaging Generations in the Workplace, A focus on Government and Community Assets, Community and Economic Development, as well as the impact of Non-Profits within the community.
- Teens Take the Lead at Kids Day – Scott County Federation members took leadership of Kids Day activities this year at the Scott County Fair, providing fun and a positive 4-H experience to approximately 100 area youth.
- Let’s Make Bread – Two bread making workshops were held, with participants making 2 loaves of bread to bake at home.

Sangamon-Menard Unit – Barb Rogers:

- Gardener’s Day – March 21 – over 100 registered to attend. Participants will attend 3 sessions out of 9 being offered.
- Two new staff members in the 4-H Youth Development area.
- New volunteer to lead the County Livestock Judging team.
- Held one steer weigh-in this year instead of two.
• 4-H workshops: two airplane workshops held for 4-H’ers, and one rocket workshop scheduled. Super Saturday 4-H workshop being held in April – includes Wilderness Survival Skills, Geology, Magnificent Muffins, Rip Roaring Robotics, Sewing with Style, Simply Speaking, Photo Fanatics and Awards. 4-H Soils Workshop and Satellite mapping being held in March. Dog Obedience classes begin April 6.
• 2 new 4-H clubs, one at Hope School with disabled youth.
• Funding has been donated to purchase robotic kits. Will start a robotics club next year.
• New staff member in FNP program. FNP staff provides programming to schools and groups.
• Pastry workshops have been successful, especially with cost recovery efforts.
• 111 Master Gardener volunteers reported 5365 hours in 2008. 133 Master Gardener volunteers, interns and trainees have signed contracts for 2009.
• Horticulture workshops: 5 Garden Basics classes with 42 participants, Proven Perennial program by Richard Hawke- Plant Evaluation Manager – Chicago Botanic Garden, Beginning Beekeeping.
• Hort Educator and Master Gardeners have been actively planning an Heirloom vegetable garden at the Dean Home at Lincoln Home Historic Site.
• Hort Educator working with city of Springfield for America in Bloom.
• Hort Educator and Master Gardeners working with McLean County Master Gardeners and Hundman Lumber to start a plastic container recycling program in Springfield.
• Plant a Row for the Hungry collected approximately 60,000 pounds of produce to Central Illinois Foodbank.
• Pesticide Safety Education programs held, Livestock Manure Management Workshop, Saving and Investing Telenet held.

Woodford County – Jack Pfaffmann
• An increase in county tax levy funding has been secured to help alleviate fiscal pressure.
• Program fees and suggested donations for a number of programs such as Four Seasons Gardening telenets, Local Government telenets and agriculture, family like and nutrition workshops have been added.
• Crop Science educator is hosting 7 meetings in the area on the new ACRE (Average Crop Revenue Election) program. Farmer attendance has been high, with over 100 participants so far. ACRE is a new commodity program included in the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008.
• Crop Science educator is also working on education on ethanol, and is co-chairman of task force to add shooting programs to 4-H.
• School Enrichment Program offerings for spring include Plant Science & Entomology programs engaging over 800 school children in 15 county schools each year. Master Gardeners and the Nutrition and Wellness Program Coordinator assist with these classroom visits.
**Regional Director Update – Ryan Hobson**

The following items are compiled from the administrative team notes and minutes.

**Budget**
President White will likely be implementing differential rescissions or budget reductions. The most protected will be undergraduate education and instructional units. Instructional units are protected because they bring in tuition dollars. Also, research positions will be protected since they bring in grant dollars.

Minimal salary increases are expected.

**Hiring**
Campus administration is short of saying we are under a hiring freeze but the hoops we have to jump through are dramatic. The Southern Regional Director and Director of State 4-H Office positions have been approved by the Provost’s office. The search process has continued in both cases and interviews have been conducted. We still have not been able to move forward with a crops position in Sangamon-Menard. Hired a CED academic hourly in Brown County instead of an educator.

**County Board Match**
The first quarter payment for County Board Match (CBM) has been received. We have also received 2/3’s of the second quarter payment.

**Equipment Purchases**
Extension Administration is requesting a hold at this time on equipment orders of new computers, large printers/copiers and furniture. Only critical need purchases are allowed at this time. If equipment is still functioning and meeting the day-to-day needs, offices need to continue using it. Computer servers are already in and will be installed as planned.

With the uncertainty with state revenues, it is prudent to be very conservative with expenditures. We hope this temporary moratorium on buying will just be a few months and we will be able to resume our annual computer rotation plan and other purchases as needed when possible. This request is applicable to all purchases regardless of fund source.

**Telenet System**
Some costs will be charged in the future, mostly to outside groups. There were 1.3 million minutes used last year. Some changes are

- It is self scheduled now.
- You have to enter the content instead of just putting your name.
- There will be a no show fee of $25.
- Avoid overbooking. There will be a $25 charge if over 50% of the lines are unused.
Legislative Connection
Dr. Richard Clark, Assistant Dean and Director of State 4-H Office, sought input on whether to have the Legislative Connection from staff and Extension administration. He cited the costs, kids being able to attend, and difficulties in kids arranging meetings with their legislators in the past. He said past evaluations show that it is very educational for the youth. Discussion ensued about youth meeting with legislators in their districts while they are not in session. Dr. Clark said that they will brainstorm on how to make that happen in place of Legislative Connection.

Core Programming Priorities
Dr. Dennis Campion has discussed possible scenarios with the University budget as it may potentially impact Extension. He felt administration needed to consider what is needed for future core programming. What should Extension’s programming portfolio look like and what are the strategies for getting there. To just operate by however the vacancies occur within the organization is not an acceptable strategy.

A discussion was held with the group consensus on the top five criteria Extension programming should address: high societal issues; a strategic advantage for delivery by Extension; ties to research/expertise; ability to engage cross campus connections with all UI campuses; and potential to garner external funding. Other considerations would include value to old/new stakeholders; creating more dialogue with constituents and other experts; and consideration of local opportunities and demand.

Program Planning
“Together We Can…Tell Us How” Program Planning Process Initiation

Purpose:
The State Program Planning Committee is launching a process to gather input from Illinois residents on important issues that can be addressed through education. This input will be used to develop state and county/unit plans of work that reflect priority educational needs and effective delivery methods to achieve targeted impact on individuals and communities.

Process:
An online survey using SurveyMonkey was opened to the public in March to collect input on their educational needs. We currently have over 2700 in English and 84 on the Spanish sites of March 13. Based on requests, the survey will be extended through April 17 which will allow promotion through many Extension newsletters that often go out just before the beginning of a new month.

The survey focuses on 10 broad issue areas. The survey is targeted to the public at large and is purposely organized around public issues--not our traditional four core program areas. Paper copies can be duplicated from an original that will be provided to offices at the local level and distributed to those who do not have web access or who call and ask for one.
Participation:
The target audience is a representative cross-section of the public including those not traditionally considered Extension users. The goal is to collect a minimum of 100 responses per county, with encouragement to collect a larger number of responses in more populated counties that may be needed to reflect the broader and more numerous demographics of that county.

4-H Program Fee
The current economic conditions threaten our ability to provide high quality, sustained programs for youth. Federal funding for Extension and 4-H has not increased for many years. With inflation costs, the purchasing power of these funds has continued to decline. State funding for Extension has also declined and current state economic conditions remain challenging at best. Local funding with state matching funds (County Board Match) has been strong and historically has resulted in a good flow of revenue. However, recent cuts in the level of County Board Match from the state are now threatening the financial stability of Extension and 4-H programs.

After careful consideration, 4-H program staff has determined that to preserve high quality programs, a 4-H Program Fee is necessary. With this policy, Illinois is joining similar efforts of other states who have found it necessary to generate additional revenues to continue providing high quality programs, thus breaking from a long tradition of not charging for 4-H programs.

4-H Program Fee Details:
Beginning with enrollment of 4-H members in September 2009, a $20/year 4-H Program Fee will be applied to members who are part of a sustained 4-H experience including delivery modes such as community clubs, special interest groups meeting on a regular basis, Cloverbud groups, and after-school programs that meet regularly. Local Extension Councils will specify details as to the final amount and collection of this fee. Most of the fee will stay locally and be used by the local program to help 4-H support costs. Six dollars will be forwarded to the State 4-H Program to provide educational, technical and logistical support to maintain a high quality program at the local, center, regional, and state levels for youth and volunteer leaders. No individual will be denied participation in 4-H due to the inability to pay. Extension offices may be contacted for scholarship information or other payment assistance. Clubs and groups may choose to do fundraising or collect donations to offset 4-H Program Fees for their members.

WC Region analysis from discussions with county directors regarding 4-H Program Fee and Scholarships available.

4-H Fee
- 5 units currently plan to charge the entire $20 to 4-H’ers
- 5 units plan to have a foundation pay the entire fee
- 4 units are leaving fee generation and payment up to the clubs
- 1 unit wants to cover the entire fee, but is unsure yet how
- 3 units have no plans to date
Scholarships – offering assistance for those unable to pay a program fee. Ideas being explored are
- 1 paid by donations
- Most are on ask only basis, no verification required
- 7 supported by Foundation or Federation
- 7 not sure
- 1 provides rebates on application basis
- 1 offered through clubs
- 2 use prorated scale
- 1 required proof using reduced lunch status or LINK card

Questions/Answers:

County Board Match as soft money – lies within the grant section in the budget. It affects the length of terminal contracts at the local level. Could impact local units if CBM is only 50%.

Rumor of Extension moving out of College of ACES – Ryan indicated College of ACES is a good fit for many Extension programs. He also added that our research base for some programs is outside of ACES. Extension could do a better job of reaching across all of the campus.

Funds going to Undergraduate Studies – President White stated funds will go first to undergraduate studies, and then research before Extension. The question was asked how the research would be disseminated to the public if there was no Extension. Ryan said that is an excellent question, but there is no rescission right now.

Should e-mail be used in place of meetings and mailing minutes? – Ryan suggested a telenet to do meetings for those who can’t attend. He would still want face-to-face meetings for those who can attend.

Next meeting is Tuesday, September 29, 2009 at the West Central Region Office in Springfield.

Motion to adjourn made by Jack Pfaffmann, seconded by Marvin Hughes. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.