

Community Development Newsletter



April 28, 2009

EDITOR: THOMAS W. BLAINE

Greetings CD Colleagues, and welcome to the April issue of the OSU Extension Community Development e-Newsletter. The focus of this month's newsletter is economic development. As you are aware, we are facing the greatest economic challenge since the Great Depression. It should not be surprising that a lot of Extension professionals are fully engaged in helping clientele deal with the issues that confront them at this time.

You may recall that in the February newsletter, we introduced a project called "5countysolutions." This project was initiated in Clinton, Fayette, Green, Highland and Montgomery Counties. You can check out the web site at <http://5countysolutions.osu.edu/> As promised in the February newsletter, we are continuing to highlight some of the activities of this project over the course of coming newsletters. We begin the current issue with a report from Highland County.

We also have an article from Nancy Stehulak called "Smart Board Moves in a Poor Economy," and an update on the June BR&E Workshop.

NOTES FROM INTERIM AD, JOHN CONGLOSE

Progress is being made in the implementation of the OSU Extension restructuring process. This week during the Leadership for Tomorrow Conference, EERA Leaders will meet with the Administrative Cabinet. During the following week, meetings will be held in each EERA to continue the implementation process. Each program area will also be having meetings with assigned FTE's during the month of May. The fourteen (14) FTE's assigned to the Community Development Program will be invited to a meeting in Columbus on May 19th. This meeting will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The meeting will include the 14 FTE's and the Interim AD. Specialists will be invited to attend future meetings. Those educators assigned to the Community Development Program Area will be notified via email during the first week of May of more details regarding this meeting. I have already had conversations with most of the 14 FTE's regarding their assignment. Everyone I have talked with are embracing the changes that are coming and are looking forward to the new challenges! These conversations will be wrapped up by the end of April.

As we continue to transition into this new structure, the Community Development Program Area will continue to add value to the organization in the form of teaching, service and scholarly work. We will also continue to explore new opportunities with clientele and funding sources, seek out new clientele, and continue to work cross programmatically in line with the mission and values of our organization

PROGRAMS TO ASSIST DURING ECONOMIC TOUGH TIMES

Highland County has been affected greatly by the economic downturn. Many companies, including DHL, have laid-off thousands of county residents - from DHL alone over 2,500 have been laid-off. Below are two types of programs completed in the Community Development area to assist Highland County in stabilizing their economic base.

Highland County Business Retention & Expansion

Since 1986 the Ohio Business Retention & Expansion Initiative, sponsored by OSU Extension and managed by the Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, has helped more than 140 communities in Ohio better understand their local economy. In response to DHL closing announcement and many other companies laying-off employees, Highland County officials have relied on the BR&E program to gain a sense of the impact that this major regional employer (employing more than 10% of the Highland County workforce) would have on its economy. The program has enabled local officials to engage community officials, residents, and other interests in ongoing dialogue to better understand their economy. Studies of the county's industrial, retail/service and health sectors are currently underway.

Financial Planning Meeting

Many Highland County citizens are trying to handle their shrinking 401k's while making house payments and paying other bills. To meet the needs of the Highland County Citizens who have lost or will be losing their jobs, OSU Extension Highland County sponsored a financial planning program with practical money management advice that was conducted by an unbiased financial planner. The program was held in January. The key topics that were addressed included basic money management strategies, retirement and pension plans, life insurance, health insurance options, and finding unbiased investment advice. The meeting was free and open to anyone facing financial planning issues. Local bankers and financial consultants were available for individual consultation after the presentation.

If you would like more information about this program, please contact Rose Fisher Merkwowitz.

RAISING KIDS, EATING RIGHT, SPENDING SMART, LIVING WELL COLUMN: NANCY STEHULAK

Smart Board Moves in a Poor Economy

If you've tried to forget the dismal picture of our national economy when you climb in bed at night, most assuredly there will be a new assault of information about our economy as soon as you turn the radio or TV on in the morning.

Although it might be tempting to stay in bed and ignore the entire mess, that really isn't possible - and, if you are managing or working directly for one of our many non-profits, this news might put you to panic if the source of funding for your organization is solely private donations.

The good news for our not-for-profits, from a forty-year study of charitable giving patterns as they relate to recessions and economic slowdowns, found that while there was an impact on giving, it wasn't as dire as we might assume. This research uncovered a growth in giving at an average of 0.8 percent in years with an economic slowdown.

In years with eight or more months of recession, total giving fell an average of only 2.7 percent. Individual giving, which accounted for 80 percent of total giving, declined an average of only 3.9 percent. Foundation giving dropped an average of only 0.1 percent. Corporate giving fell an average of only 1.6 percent.

Human service organizations showed growth overall in giving patterns during recessions of 0.7 percent and even higher rates of growth (5 percent) in longer recessions, probably indicating an understanding of a growing

level of need during difficult times.

So what does this mean for your organization? Now is the time for your organization to think strategically and become more competitive. Organizations that position themselves as useful in times of crisis may actually find themselves the recipients of more gifts, not fewer. The message even in poor economic times is still...work completely and directly for your mission, not just to acquire funding.

Thinking strategically will help develop board and staff discussions about income and expenses. If the simple question of "Where do we cut expenses to make sure we can balance our budget" is asked, the discussion will center around expense reduction. If however, your board is willing to ask, "How best do we serve our mission despite changes in our economy?" the board is more likely to have a broader discussion about what should be offered and create new ways for that mission to be served.

BR&E TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOP - JUNE 3, 2009 (PREVIOUSLY ADVERTISED AS MAY 19)

Unemployment is rising and leaders are scrambling to maintain services amidst declining resources. What can you do to help your community weather this storm? Attend the Ohio Business Retention & Expansion, Initiative Train the Trainer Workshop, planned for June 3 at 114 Kottman Hall (OSU Campus). The overall objective: develop capacity of Extension professionals to lead local/regional BR&E programming. A degree in business and/or economics is not required, nor is an economic development background. The desire to teach others is all that is needed.

The workshop aims to teach you how to teach community leaders how to engage in an ongoing dialogue with their businesses in order to stabilize and grow the employment base. The program is scheduled to begin at 9:15 am and conclude by 3:30 pm.

The day's agenda includes understanding

- * the current philosophies of the program
- * the parts of the program that are web-based and how to access them
- * how to manipulate the data collection and analysis software, Survey Gold v 8.0 (learn more or download a free 30-day trial version at <http://surveygold.com/>)
- * the objectives and formats of the local training 'Workshops'
- * different BR&E membership 'levels', pricing structure, and potential costs that YOU can recover.

There is no cost to attend, but the program is limited to the first 12 registrants. To reserve a seat now, contact Greg Davis, 614-292-6356 or davis.1081@osu.edu Feel free to direct questions to any of the following planning committee members: Nancy Bowen, David Civittolo, Greg Davis, or Joe Lucente.

To learn more about the BR&E program, go to <http://localecon.osu.edu/brne>

KUDOS:

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Annual Conference 2009 was held in San Diego, CA on April 20 - 22, 2009. Click on the Link for a list of all presenters and presentations from OSU Extension Community Development.

2009 NACDEP Award Recipient:

* Nancy Bowen-Ellzey received the North Central Region Excellence in Community Development Programming - Individual Award

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

- * CD Meeting with CD Educators - May 19, 2009 - Room 105, Agr Admin Bldg, Columbus
- * BR&E Train the Trainer Workshop - June 3, 2009 - 114 Kottman Hall, Columbus
- * Community Development Society (CDS) Conference - July 26-29, 2009 - Memphis, TN
- * Jennifer McSweeney Land Use Conference 2009 - September 16, 2009 - Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center, Columbus
- * National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Conference- April 12-14, 2010 - Bloomington, MN