

## Western District Digest September-October 2008

This communication can be found on the web at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/dist/western/communications.html>

Colleagues: Thank you for your participation in our all-colleague district meeting on September 16...a grand event to have 70 district colleagues all gathered together at one time! We can be especially proud of our district WNEP coordinators and educators for their work which led to the well-deserved Regent's Academic Staff Program Excellence Award. The success of this program is a story worth telling in our communities and to our county officials!

On September 18 I was honored to join Nancy Coffey and her family, along with Julie Keown-Bomar, as Nancy received her Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Civic Engagement. Julie successfully nominated Nancy for this prestigious recognition. It was a first-class affair held at the Lowell Center in Madison. As we were enjoying dinner, Julie shared with Nancy that Mahlon Peterson had called from the Galaxy conference to say that "he will be here with us in spirit." That's the kind of office collegiality that makes us shine in the eyes of our communities and county partners!

There are many in the district deserving of these kinds of distinctive recognitions. While we often shy away from them, the truth is that accepting recognition is really only taking great pride in the work we do to serve our communities, and educating the community as to the great mission of our organization. Communicating the value of our work and showcasing our successes helps bring our Extension mission "alive". The Pierce County staff has rallied around Sarah Johnson's WNEP award and is using it as an opportunity to promote Extension as an integral part of the community.

So...let's follow Julie's example and take the opportunity to promote and recognize our colleagues...in the big ways such as the Chancellor's awards, and in the small everyday gestures that demonstrate our support for each other. The resulting energy will make us as an even more dynamic district team!

Here are the updates for this month...

### Welcome New Colleagues!

- Richard Halopka began as the new Clark Co Agriculture Agent specializing in crops and soils on September 2. He has a strong background in agronomy and most recently served as location manager for the Heartland Cooperative agronomy plant in Dorchester. You can give him a welcome call at 715-743-5121.
- Welcome to Aimee Dunn, the new WNEP Coordinator in Barron, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties. She began her position on September 24. Aimee is very familiar with UW-Extension as an Eau Claire County 4-H graduate and former Y.E.S. ambassador at the state 4-H office. Her office is located with our Dunn County colleagues. Call and welcome Aimee at 715-232-1636.

Deb's Vacation Schedule. Please note that I will be out of the office on vacation visiting my parents in Arkansas from October 17 - 24. I will be checking e-mail and cell phone messages. Liz should be available in the district office most of the time and there will be another District Director covering for me in case of any emergencies that need immediate attention.

Important February All-Colleague Date Change! Please be aware that the locations of the February 17 and 18 Crucial Conversations in-services **have been switched!** The February 17 session will now be conducted in Rice Lake; the February 18 session will be held closer to the southern part of the district. We are still determining an alternate location for February 18 due to the closing of Three Bears Resort. I am VERY sorry for the change and

hope that this will not cause too many problems with scheduling your attendance. The district website has been updated to reflect this change.

**Discussion Item For Your Next Office Staff Meeting.** The current economic downturn presents Cooperative Extension with the opportunity to make a difference for individuals, families and communities. As we apply Extension education to the challenges of these difficult times, we can demonstrate our value to our partners. One excellent example is the current programming in Pierce and St. Croix Counties related to home foreclosures. A database has been established to record the local impacts you are feeling from the economic downturn. This database will enable Cooperative Extension to determine what resources are needed, how you are already responding to the impacts of the downturn, and ways we can communicate our value to Wisconsin counties. At your next staff meeting, please discuss the following three questions:

- What impacts are we experiencing and observing in our county as we work with our colleagues and clientele?
- How are we responding to the impacts of this downturn?
- What resources do we need to respond?

Following your discussion, please either have one volunteer from your office input the information into the database at: <https://www.uwex.edu/ces/apps/economy/index.cfm>, or e-mail your discussion notes to Liz at the District Office and we will input the data for you. This will also be a discussion topic at an upcoming district meeting. Thank you!

**Celebrating and Sharing About Diversity...A Day of Learning!** Mark your calendar and plan to attend this FREE professional development on Friday, October 24 at UW-Barron from 11:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. This program is the final "hurrah" of a program innovation grant received by the Northern and Western Districts and UW-Barron. Complete information, including an agenda and registration, is on the Western District website home page at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/dist/western/>. Julie Keown-Bomar and Nancy Coffey will be presenting a session. *We are looking for one more presentation from the northern part of our district!* If you are interested, please contact Deb in the district office ASAP or visit the website for information. These will be short, 10 minute, presentations highlighting work with diverse audiences. Please consider presenting or attending this event!

**Upcoming Multicultural Awareness Programs.** All UW Colleges and UW-Extension faculty, academic staff and classified staff employees are invited to enroll in one of the upcoming Multicultural Awareness Programs.. If you have not participated in this 2-day workshop, please give it priority in your professional development plan, since our work in multiculturalism is central to fulfilling our Extension mission.

At this two-day workshop you will:

- Explore your personal beliefs about diversity in a safe and confidential environment
- Expand your understanding of diversity issues
- Learn a common language and concepts so you can clearly communicate about diversity issues
- Learn how diversity and inclusion can help build a vital, valued organization

The workshop uses interactive lectures, small group discussions, facilitated activities, and video with discussion. Please go to <http://www.uwex.uwc.edu/multicultural-awareness/> to learn more about upcoming sessions. There are eight sessions scheduled through May...I hope you can attend one of them!

**Ride Share Website.** This is a reminder about a recent e-mail send out from Greg Johl regarding a new rideshare website. You can...

- Offer a ride if you are driving
- Request a ride if you need one
- Find a ride if it has been offered

- Find people who are seeking a ride

You will need your NetID and password to access the site. Consider using the site as a way to conserve during this economic downturn.

**Policy on Political Activities.** The political season is in fiery swing and this is a reminder about [the UW system policy on political activities](#). This document provides general guidelines for employees and students of the UW System who wish to engage in political campaign involvement...an important but strictly regulated activity. If you have any questions, please contact the district office.

**Reminder!! Share Your Work!** Please help to build our district resource network by forwarding to the district office electronic copies of annual reports, program announcements, educational materials, county marketing publications, county office newsletters...anything you're willing to share publicly...for posting on our website. Thank you!

#### **Update on District Positions:**

- Clark Co Family Living: This position has been reposted and applications are due on October 28.

#### **Important dates to remember!**

- October 6, 9:00 a.m.: Dean's WisLine
- October 6, 10:00 a.m.: District Resource Management Team meeting; Durand
- October 9-10: District Department Head in-service; Arkdale
- October 15-17: ANRE State Conference; Wisconsin Dells
- October 21: District Meeting for 4-H Youth Development and Agriculture; Menomonie
- October 24: Diversity Day of Learning; Rice Lake
- November 3, 9:00 a.m.: Dean's WisLine
- January 9, 2009: Filing deadline for 2008 program impacts, statistics, and success stories

#### **In Closing:**

***“Those who are lifting the world upward and onward are those who encourage more than criticize.” Elizabeth Harrison***

My deepest gratitude goes out to each of you, my district colleagues...

Deb