

Summary of Professional Contributions and Scholarship

Background

While traveling the state working for U.S. Senator Herb Kohl as his Regional Representative in Madison and La Crosse (1997-2001), I was impressed with the people I met from UW Extension. I admired the work they did with their communities, and their professional, positive attitudes.

After nearly fifteen years of teaching and relationship-building in the public sector – from educating community members, consultants and government officials about environmental cleanups and Brownfield redevelopment to problem-solving issues regarding the federal government – I felt I had developed the skills necessary to become a successful “Extension Agent.”

I started with UW Extension as a Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development (CNRED) Educator on January 1, 2006 in Lafayette County. On my second day, I was notified the major employer in Shullsburg, Shullsburg Creamery, had filed for receivership.¹ The situation in Shullsburg provided many challenges and opportunities. Although it was a stressful situation, I look back on it as a positive boost to my Lafayette County Extension career. I was able to quickly build trust and relationships with elected and organizational leaders.

In my two and a half years working with the people of Lafayette County I provided locally-driven programs as varied as leadership development and comprehensive planning. Through these experiences, I built lasting relationships, honed my skills and learned a great deal about myself and UW Extension. When an opportunity for career enhancement in neighboring Green County came up, I took the leap. I applied for the position and continued my journey in the Green County UW Extension office in July 2008.

Although adjacent Green County has a topography similar to Lafayette County and a similar median age, the population is nearly double that of Lafayette County. Per capita personal income is much higher in Green County. Green County has a higher post high school educational attainment and many more private sector jobs.

The need for leadership development has been a driving force in my work in Green County. Maintaining and improving the Green County Leaders program is consistently a top priority for Green County UW Extension. Teaching leaders has afforded other opportunities for programming in Green County, including doing more organizational development (working with organizations to help people identify critical local needs, set goals and promote locally driven solutions).

Enhancing Local Economic Health through Organizational Development

Shullsburg

On December 28, 2005 Shullsburg Creamery entered into receivership. At stake were the living wage jobs of 75-80 people in a city of 1,200. To a community of Shullsburg’s size, it was a potential economic disaster. I think back to my second day at UW Extension when I found out about the situation and called upon Mayor Lance McNaughton of Shullsburg. I now recognize how he felt that day. “I just don't know what to do,” he said after laying out the situation in Shullsburg. He's a young, progressive, extremely capable attorney. He thought he should be able to find a solution.

I applied experience from my work with Senator Kohl to suggest he set up a public meeting to dispel rumors, provide resources, and to give hope. He could provide some of the information for the meeting, but he really needed to rely on others to do the heavy lifting. The relationships I built while working with Senator Kohl allowed me to help Mayor McNaughton call upon local, regional, state and federal officials. They came to support Shullsburg. (Exhibit 1)

Due to discussions at this meeting, and the goodwill generated there, a Shullsburg Vision meeting was scheduled a few weeks later. I had never facilitated this type of meeting, and called on the expertise of Steve Grabow (Jefferson County CNRED Educator and Strategic Planning expert) to help me with the process. He suggested finding

¹ Receivership is a state of insolvency prior to liquidation and bankruptcy. It means the company's creditors petitioned for court-appointed oversight of the company's operations to minimize anticipated losses. During receivership, receivers may attempt to change management or decide that the company must go into liquidation.

someone to co-facilitate. Luckily, Amy Knox, Economic Development Manager at Southwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) was willing to help. We initially planned for 15-20 people and were shocked when more than 55 people cared enough to attend. The crowd included a wide variety of Shullsburg area residents - young, old, business owners, neighbors, farmers and local organizational leaders. With such a large percentage of the population of the community involved, they were able to identify a realistic action plan. Respected community members stepped forward to chair committees to implement change. (Exhibits 2 and 3)

In the end, Midwest Dairymen's Cooperative from nearby Rockford, Illinois kept the jobs and the *Shullsburg Cheese* name in Shullsburg. The city saw a net gain of 25 jobs created, rather than huge losses initially expected. Shullsburg's "positive reaction to crisis" was stated by Midwest Dairymen's Cooperative as one of the reasons the company located there. Community members were working together to tackle issues identified during the first visioning session, when in the past they were at odds.

Cara started with Extension barely a week after the Shullsburg Creamery's receivership, and was working with less than two days into her new job. But she had the insight and resources you'd expect from a seasoned pro. She recommended our rapid response meeting, gathered every important agency rep in Southwest Wisconsin for assistance, and helped me find a voice that calmed the City and the Creamery's employees. I look back on how the City handled the whole situation with a lot of pride, and believe Cara deserves a lot of the credit for pointing us in the right direction.

Shullsburg Mayor Lance McNaughton

Looking back three years later, McNaughton referred to the positive vision as short-lived. "By our third meeting [identifying shared goals/vision facilitated by Carper and McNaughton], I remember good will falling by the way side, and when we found buyers for the Creamery and saved the jobs, all the pressure was gone and people reverted to their bickering ways." I disagree somewhat with his assessment. The committee assigned to explore the Main Street program researched the idea, but determined that it was not a good fit for Shullsburg at the time. The City did do more to embrace marketing. This change in policy is best evidenced by changes to the City website that direct visitors to the Shullsburg Area Farmers and Merchants Group <http://www.shullsburgwisconsin.org/>. The group investigated restoring the historic Opera House, but their enthusiasm faded after determining the extent of needed repairs. McNaughton conducted a feasibility analysis of the establishment of a household items store. While these results may be, at first blush, disappointing, in the end the citizens of Shullsburg were armed with good information and processes to make their decisions.

A lasting benefit of my involvement in the Shullsburg crisis is the network of regional, state and federal officials who are alert to the needs of Shullsburg (and Lafayette County). They continue to inquire and assist as issues arise.

In speaking with my Extension colleagues after the crisis in Shullsburg, they wondered how I decided upon a strategy. I had been working for UW Extension for two days. I knew basically no one in the organization. However, I had developed a vast network of contacts and relationships while working for Senator Kohl. I knew the agencies involved and was able to introduce or re-introduce myself quickly to those from whom I needed assistance.

When I shared this innovative strategy to deal with layoffs with Extension colleagues, it became clear most county educators were not providing this type of experience. They encouraged me to present the information and write a paper so others could learn from it. I was chosen to present "Massive Layoff Announced? Don't Panic, Think Shullsburg" at the CNRED Symposium in March 2007 and at the Annual Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) conference in April 2007. (Exhibit 4)

In November 2006, colleagues encouraged Mary Kohrell (Calumet County CNRED Educator) to contact me about the Shullsburg Strategy when Tecumseh Engines, one of Calumet County's largest employers, announced it was closing the New Holstein plant. She was able to use the materials I provided to help the community respond to the situation. (Exhibit 5)

Early in 2008, I received a call from a new CNRED colleague, Paul Putnam, in the Marinette Extension office. The Niagara Mill in Marinette had announced it was closing. I was able to send Paul my draft paper, as well as presentations. He used the information as a framework for the community's response. (Exhibit 6)

Through ongoing discussions with Kohrell and Putnam, we have decided to write a joint research paper regarding our experiences with, and approaches to, layoff situations. We intend to submit the paper to the CRD Research and Studies committee in August 2010.

Local Foods

I was only a month into my position in Green County when Gary Green, State Specialist at the Center for Community Economic Development, contacted me. He wondered if I was interested in doing a research study regarding interest in and use of local foods in Green County. At that time, I didn't know if there was much local food production (other than cheese and animal crops). With the help of many interested individuals and local organizations, this initiative has snowballed into opportunities I never imagined!

I convened a group of local experts, including producers and representatives from Blackhawk Technical College, Green County Development Corporation, local chambers of commerce, Green County Tourism and the UW Ag Innovation Center. They were excited by the research opportunity and encouraged me to gather contact information and conduct a survey for producers and another for restaurants, grocery stores and other retail establishments. I worked closely with this committee and Gary Green to develop, deliver and assess the results of these surveys.

The local foods surveys and subsequent report (Exhibit 7) identified a significant number of farms, processors and retailers in Green County interested in marketing or buying local food products. More importantly, media coverage of the survey and individual contact with producers established me as the "Extension Local Food Lady." I received nearly weekly inquiries from people who wanted to start a local food business or had a business to expand.

A small group of local food enthusiasts began meeting to discuss the possibility of starting a fully certified, commercially equipped kitchen for use by local producers. I have continued to work with the group in an organizational and business development capacity. I also serve as their link to University research and local food specialists. Before they got too far into the planning process, I researched, developed and conducted a Green County Commercial Kitchen Survey to assess if there was serious interest in such a facility. I publicized the survey widely (Exhibit 8) and was astounded when 88 people responded. More than two dozen people came to our joint presentation of results of the survey (Exhibit 9). I am continually amazed at the large number of people in this county with a "food related" background. That night I met a gentleman with 45 years of experience in the baking industry and a woman who competes in the National Pie Contest with contacts with the Food Network.

After the results of the Commercial Kitchen Survey were released, I hosted eight small group discussions with people who responded to the survey. Questions were based on appreciative inquiry, encouraging participants to tell their story, discuss talents they bring to the plate, and how they see their business contributing to the Green County community. Again, these "food people" amaze me, such as the woman with a Masters Degree in Food Science whose husband has a PhD in Food Science and is a specialist in dairy emulsions (whipped cream in a can).

Through this process, it became clear that, although a Commercial Kitchen is needed, training and education is also necessary to get these potential businesses into production. The survey results indicated most respondents needed the services of a "business incubator." Fifty seven percent needed education regarding food production regulations. Nearly 40 percent identified the need for classes in marketing assistance, packaging and labeling, green/sustainable business, and business plans.

Due to the great amount of education and excitement generated by the surveys, and meetings and discussions about the commercial kitchen idea, a local entrepreneur decided to open a community kitchen. I first heard from her when the initial local food surveys went out to producers. She called to tell me that she produces 10,000 pounds of potato salad a year and would like to produce more, if only there was a community kitchen facility to do it. In August 2009, she opened Barb's Kitchen in Monroe. I meet with her regularly to ensure she and her clients have access to the resources of the University and receive the assistance they need to be successful.

I applied for and received a \$13,000 Economic Development Administration grant through Thrive (an eight county economic development entity) for the local food enthusiast group (now called FRIDGE – **F**ood **R**esource **I**ncubator **D**eveloping **G**reen *C*ounty **E**ntrepreneurs). The goal of the grant is to meet needs identified in the Commercial Kitchen Survey by providing technical assistance to build long-term capacity for local food businesses. I am

currently facilitating initial strategic planning with FRIDGE to define their mission, vision and bylaws to apply for non-profit 501(c)3 status.

To bring the local food discussion to a wider audience, I developed *Stirring the Pot: Dialogue, Discussion and Dinner in the Dairyland* after writing and receiving a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council. *Stirring the Pot* was a series of three free community picnics (June, July and August 2009) that brought together a diverse group of community members around the subject of local food. The goal was to identify changes individuals and families could make to improve the community's health through food choices. Each picnic featured guest chef demonstrations, group discussions led by nationally-known food experts, kids' activities and live music.

As I worked with my community partners to plan *Stirring the Pot*, I contacted UW Extension Evaluation Specialist Ellen Taylor-Powell and the UW Extension Building Capacity in Evaluation Outcomes listserv for guidance on how best to evaluate the series. Innovative evaluation techniques (such as storytelling and a recipe card call to action²) helped me document the success of the series in facilitating understanding, discussion and change. (Exhibit 10)

At that time, Marma McIntee, Washington County Family Living Educator, approached me to do a *Stirring the Pot* presentation for the Healthy Wisconsin Communities Conference. She felt it was "a unique idea that could be used for a variety of other topics." My presentation outlined how other organizations could use innovative evaluation techniques to sustain participants' commitment to change. (Exhibit 11)

My 90-minute *Stirring the Pot* workshop proposal was accepted by the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals for the April 2010 Annual Conference, "Building Bridges for Sustainable Communities." (The review process was highly competitive and only six workshops proposals were accepted.)

Monroe City Council

A good example of my growth in organizational development programming at UW Extension was my response to a sticky situation in Monroe. The Monroe City Council was having a difficult time coming to a decision regarding which of five applicants should receive two available Class B liquor licenses. They voted 9 to 1 to bring in a facilitator to help them. They turned to me to facilitate based on relationships I had built and their confidence in my past work. After the decision was made, the *Monroe Times* added controversy with an editorial. (Exhibit 12)

I pulled out all of my facilitation resources, consulted with Extension colleagues and crafted what I hoped was a good plan to explain my role and teach a decision-making tool. (Exhibit 13) After all the planning, discussions and sleepless nights, the facilitation went very well, and even the *Monroe Times* ran a complimentary article. (Exhibit 14) The Council Members were able to feel good about the process and how they made their decisions. The City Clerk was also very appreciative of my efforts. (Exhibit 15)

Enhancing Economic Health through Leadership Development

Community Leadership Alliance

Leadership development had consistently been recognized as an important need in Lafayette County, according to UW Extension Needs Assessments conducted since the early 1990s.³ As I began building relationships with local decision makers, I realized Lafayette County leadership was aging, with few to step up and take responsibility for the future of Lafayette County.

I was very fortunate to step into a well-established tri-county leadership development program, Community Leadership Alliance (CLA). CLA was developed in 1999 in collaboration with CNRED colleagues from Grant, Lafayette and Iowa Counties, the UW-Platteville Office of Continuing Education and the Platteville Area Chamber of Commerce. More than 266 local officials and citizens from 32 Southwest Wisconsin communities graduated from the program from 2000-2008. The program has been a powerful learning experience for many graduates who are demonstrating more effective leadership in their respective counties and communities where they live.

² Please see "Build Your Own Recipe for Change" card in the plastic sleeve behind Exhibit 10.

³ Green and Lafayette Counties conduct a Needs Assessment with stakeholders every four years to determine programming priorities for the future.

I had the opportunity to be a contributing member of the Executive and Curriculum committees, as well as to develop and teach sessions each year on “Communicating with Elected Officials” (Exhibit 16) and “Building Your Community Project.”

I’ve learned much about leadership development programs through my membership on the CNRED Leadership and Organizational Development Team. While attending the Wisconsin Leadership Coordinators’ Conference coordinated by the Leadership Team in June 2007, I learned how other leadership development programs included a team-driven community project as a requirement for graduation. Those who had a “project” component of their program felt there was great benefit in having participants practice what they are learning. They also outlined obvious benefits to communities; and to leadership programs through increased media attention. I successfully lobbied to add community projects to the CLA curriculum and worked closely with the curriculum committee and design and implement that part of the program for the 2007-2008 class.

As you will see in our CLA 10-Year Anniversary Report, CLA has had measurable impacts on our graduates. (Exhibit 17) Eighty alumni from years 2000-2007 responded to the survey (35.5 percent). Thirty six percent of the respondents graduated while I was part of the program. Not only did graduates report increased understanding of leadership styles and skills, before and after participating in CLA, they also documented leadership roles they have assumed as a result of their participation in CLA.

Although I was with the program only three years, I learned a great deal about teaching leadership skills and feel I made a positive contribution to the CLA team. This experience prepared me for my next challenge: developing curriculum and teaching my own program in Green County.

Green County Leaders

Green County residents also identified Leadership Development as a priority issue since the late 1990s. CNRED Educator Sarah Burgert developed the Green County Leaders program in 2002. From that point on, she did the lion's share of curriculum development and teaching. When Sarah announced she was leaving in 2008, teams of alumni agreed to coordinate the sessions with the help of the Green County Development Corporation office. This model was implemented in case the new CNRED Educator was unable or unwilling to assume responsibility for Green County Leaders teaching and curriculum development.

When I began in Green County, alumni teams had already met and roughed out agendas for the year. Green County Leaders is quite different than CLA. It is a 9 month program (CLA is 6 months). It is an “issues based” program, rather than CLA’s “skills based” curriculum. The main focus of Green County Leaders is to deepen participants understanding of community issues such as education, economic development, community health and safety, agriculture and natural resources. Each class includes only a short segment on leadership skills development such as meeting facilitation or team building.

We had mixed results with the alumni model. I asked each alumni session leader to evaluate their experience. (Exhibit 18) Although every session leader felt the experience was good for them personally and professionally, some were concerned at the amount of time they spent to prepare. One person responded, *“I do think that you run the risk of burnout, or of potentially inconsistent results, depending on who is leading. I do think this is a lot to ask of people. I probably personally put in around 20+ hours toward this, and I think this is a lot if there is not a plan to run this internally again at some point.”*

It was my role to help these alumni teams create continuity across the program and coordinate the overall curriculum development. In many cases, I needed to teach alumni adult learning techniques – teach them to teach. Although I appreciate the relationships built during the process, this was a huge commitment.

Based on these results, the results of monthly and year-end (Exhibit 19) Green County Leader evaluations, and my desire and ability to do more teaching, the Curriculum Committee decided to use a mixed-approach for 2009-2010. I have taken the responsibility for more teaching – except in cases where alumni are best-suited to teach. I hope this will provide the best of both worlds: our current class of Green County Leaders has the opportunity to see alumni leaders in action, as well as having consistency across programs and appropriate teaching methods.

I have also used results from individual session evaluations from CLA and the CLA 10-Year Anniversary Report to improve my teaching and the overall Green County Leaders curriculum. For example, I have added the UW Extension Poverty Simulation to the curriculum. This has proven to be a very important addition. One participant noted, *“I am still in a sense, ‘beside myself’ over the experience with the poverty simulation. I was completely caught off guard with the presentation of numbers representing those using our county and state services. The poverty simulation made it very clear to me that I have never been ‘Broke’ in the true sense of the word.”*

The CLA 10-Year Anniversary Report was so successful in documenting impacts of the program, I used it as a template for a Green County Leaders Annual Report. (Exhibit 20) I then coordinated an annual meeting to present the report and to provide leadership education by a nationally known keynote speaker, Richard Todd, Vice President of the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis.

I am also using what I learned with CLA to be particularly careful with the “community project” portion of the curriculum. Past evaluations in both CLA and Green County Leaders have found that participants have had difficulty with team projects. Some find that by the time their team had started to function properly, the class graduates. Others were concerned about the amount of out-of-class time required for projects. I have worked to improve this curriculum by providing clear expectations and by having the class choose their projects earlier in the year. Time is provided during each class for teams to work on their projects.

Improving Natural Resource and Land Use Management Comprehensive Planning

The County Zoning Committee Chair stopped in my office during my first month with Lafayette County UW Extension to explain he had been “hearing from many of the townships” that “they” would like to stop Smart Growth (Comprehensive Planning). He had prepared a resolution for the County Board to stop the planning process and refuse a \$258,000 Comprehensive Planning grant to the county from the state.⁴

Bolstered by relationships with local officials and discussions with colleagues and state officials, I suggested to the Committee Chair it may be prudent to provide an informational meeting for towns and village officials so they could make an informed decision about whether to continue with Comprehensive Planning. The Chair agreed to take my suggestion to the Zoning Committee meeting. The Committee requested I organize and facilitate the meeting.

The potential for a contentious meeting was great, so I called on my Extension colleagues for advice regarding how to best run the meeting. I implemented strict ground rules and timelines for presentations, questions and comments. One of the “ground rules” I suggested was “No Shouting, Swearing or Spitting.” This got a good laugh from the crowd, but it gave me a way to address the potential for bad behavior. One of the most interesting sentiments from the meeting was, “If your family hasn’t lived in Lafayette County for three generations, your opinion doesn’t count.” Rick Stadelman, long-time Executive Director of the Wisconsin Towns Association and veteran of literally thousands of public meetings, graciously agreed to be one of the speakers. He referred to the meeting as the “second worst of his life.”

After the informational meeting, one participant stated: *“I came to this meeting very much against Smart Growth. I appreciate that you provided a balanced discussion and opportunity for people to express their opinions. I still think Smart Growth is not needed in our county, but I learned much of what I believed coming into the meeting was false. This was a tough situation and you did a good job.”* (Exhibit 21)

After the meeting, I was instructed to develop and conduct a survey of town, village and city boards regarding their opinion whether the Comprehensive Planning process should continue in Lafayette County. After the informational meeting and survey of all towns, villages and cities (final tally: 16 for planning; 7 against), the Planning and Zoning Committee voted to proceed with Comprehensive Planning activities in the county. (Exhibits 22 and 23)

Since then, Lafayette County completed its Comprehensive Planning process. Every town (15) and village (4) that received a grant completed its plan (even the towns that voted against continuing the process). Plan Commission members are using the information provided in their Comprehensive Plans to make informed decisions.

⁴ The Comprehensive Planning process had been stalled in Lafayette County for more than two years as the Legislature took the grant money out of the budget, the Governor put it back in and personnel changes were made at SWWRPC. (Lafayette County contracted with SWWRPC to put together the Comprehensive Plans for the County, 15 participating townships and 4 villages.)

Drinking Water Testing Program

All Lafayette County residents depend on groundwater as a drinking source. More than half of Lafayette County's residents get their drinking water from private wells that are not required to be tested for contamination. Annual water testing is recommended for private wells, but only 823 samples had been collected in Lafayette County in the 20 years prior to 2005 (most due to new well construction).

From a statewide perspective, Lafayette County is located in one of the more susceptible areas in the state for groundwater contamination. This is due to thin soils (1-5 feet deep) on top of areas of fractured dolomite bedrock. Eight atrazine prohibition areas have been designated in the county due to high atrazine levels in wells

Implementation of the atrazine prohibition area was well-publicized in Lafayette County so many rural residents were aware of the groundwater situation. Some residents relied on the Land and Conservation Department (LCD) to test their water for nitrates at the County Fair each year. Previous CNRED Educators had provided a Drinking Water Testing program⁵, so in my initial meeting with LCD staff they requested that the program be reestablished.

I worked closely with our UW Extension Basin Educator Peggy Compton on this program. Compton suggested that, based on evaluations of Drinking Water Testing Programs in other counties, it was best to work with town officials to promote the program. (If your local town board chair recommends you have your water tested, you are more likely to do it.)

During the long months of Comprehensive Planning meetings, I had time to talk about water testing with town officials. Those relationships made it possible to provide the Drinking Water Testing Program for nine towns (129 samples total). After my presentation to the County Board, they identified groundwater protection as a priority and provided funding of \$5 per household to offset the costs of sampling, an extraordinary step taken by an otherwise very conservative board.

More than 9 percent of the households in the nine towns chose to have their water sampled (129 of 1,418 households). Without the support and partnerships with town and county officials, I would not have been able to provide that high level of programming. (Exhibits 24 and 25)

Compton enlisted Evaluation Specialist Jake Blasczyk to help do a comprehensive evaluation of the program. Ninety three surveys were completed (a response rate of 72 percent). Almost half of all respondents took at least one action because of having their water tested. Frequent actions taken included seeking help from professionals, retesting the well, using an alternative source of drinking water, and repairing or modifying the well in some way. Over half were interested in further information about drinking water safety. Interestingly, 67 percent had not participated, in the prior two years, in other UW Extension sponsored activities. (Exhibit 26)

Enhancing UW Extension by Building Relationships with Elected Officials

What intrigued my colleagues early in my Extension career were my relationships with federal and state elected and governmental officials and my work in Senator Kohl's office. Due to my presentations regarding Shullsburg and relationships with elected officials that added to the response, I was asked by colleagues to teach them about building relationships with elected officials.

I was called on by Extension leaders to share insights with other Extension professionals regarding enhancing relationships with elected officials. I researched methods and developed a presentation and fact sheet to help Extension educators build those relationships. A team of Extension professionals was chosen to do a panel presentation for the JCEP conference entitled "How to Talk So Legislators Will Listen!" in March 2006. Although I had not intended to, I dominated the discussion with answers to audience questions about specific strategies.

Based on the success of that program, I was asked by Cooperative Extension Budget Director Dan Malacara to do three Wisline presentations for Extension District Directors entitled "The Importance of Personal Contact with Your Legislators." The informational sheet I developed is distributed at New Colleague Orientation and has been

⁵ The Drinking Water Testing Program allows people who are concerned about the quality of their drinking water to have their well water tested at a reduced cost and learn of the results during educational programs.

incorporated into the Community Partner Advisory Group (CPAG) training manual and website (Exhibit 27). It turns up in unexpected places – the Economic Support Caseworker from the Lafayette County Human Services Department excitedly brought me a copy after she received it at a statewide Human Services training.

As evidence of the importance of this program, I was asked to speak about “Communicating the Value of UW Extension to Elected Officials” at both the 2007 Southern District and Statewide Wisconsin Association of County Extension Committees Conferences. “Building Relationships with Elected Officials: Developing a Message that is Relevant and Conveys Value” was chosen for presentation at the JCEP Conference in April 2007 (Exhibit 28).

Due to state-wide presentations and distribution of my fact sheet, I was contacted by Jo Prust at Wisconsin Farm Mediation Center to write an article for their quarterly newsletter. “What are Legislators Good For Anyway?” has been accepted for publication. (Exhibit 29)

I have been a member of the Political Effectiveness Team since it was founded in May 2008. I was asked in 2009 to present the work of the team at the CNRED Colloquium conference and later as a statewide webinar presentation to all UW Extension colleagues.

Most recently, Rosemary Potter, Director of Government Relations for UW Colleges and UW Extension, asked me to develop and conduct a workshop for the statewide Youth as Partners in Civic Leadership Conference. I designed “I’m Not Just a Bill! Get Beyond the Civics Lesson and Get Taken Seriously,” to empower youth and adult participants as they build relationships with their elected officials.

I would conservatively estimate that I have presented information regarding building relationship with elected officials, state-wide to more than 600 people, from county board officials to new Extension colleagues.

Final Thoughts

A pivotal point in my Extension career occurred when, after two years of programming, the Lafayette County Extension Committee directed me to program in “economic development.” I did not have a background in economic development and had convinced myself I didn’t know how to program in economic development.

Luckily I was able to depend on the expertise and guidance of UW Extension specialists and county colleagues. They were able to help me come up with an excellent strategy to develop my economic development programming through economic preparedness.⁶

But, they had to figuratively grab me by the shoulders and give me a shake. They pointed out I could do it because I am an educator. **I am an educator.** I have built many positive relationships with UW Extension specialists and other colleagues who could help me. When I presented my plan to the Extension Committee in February (see 2008 Plan of Work), they were pleased. They were particularly happy with my bi-weekly column, *Community Snapshots* (concept developed by UW Extension Specialist Bill Pinkovitz), in the county newspaper. (Exhibit 30)

I do have a breadth of expertise and skills, but to be an effective Extension person, I needed to fully embrace the Wisconsin Idea and the fundamental concept of extending the knowledge and resources of the University of Wisconsin to the people where they live and work. It’s not about what Cara Carper knows, it’s about what our 245 campus-based professors, researchers and lecturers with Extension appointments can help me teach. It’s about meeting local needs by offering education to transform people’s lives. This can only be achieved by fostering relationships with people in the county to identify needs and with University colleagues outside the county to provide the best approach and research-based information to meet those needs. I am the “catalyst” who can bring our vast University resources to bear on community problems “to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living, and develop the community process toward the end of self-actualization.”⁷

⁶ Economic preparedness helps communities analyze strengths and weaknesses before developing a plan to improve economic development opportunities in their community.

⁷ As described in Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.