



# *Extension Directions*

**June 2006**

“To individuals, families, businesses and communities of Pennsylvania, Penn State Cooperative Extension is the engaged educational system that helps maximize potential with research-proven knowledge.”

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## **Message from the Director**

*What's the Big Deal with Good to Great?*

In the last few years, we have been engaged in a lot of conversation about a book titled “Good to Great” (G2G). The book was originally published in 2001 and was a follow up to Jim Collins’ book “Built to Last.” G2G is supplemented by a monograph released in late 2005 called “Good to Great and the Social Sectors.”

Here, I’ll attempt to explain why I think “Good to Great” provides us with a valuable tool for organizational improvement. This book describes the “matched pair” research and the conclusions of a research team who spent more than five years examining the performance of for-profit businesses over a long period of time. The team wanted to understand how good companies made the transition from good to great and sustained great results for a period of at least 15 years.

The book defines a great organization as one that makes a distinctive impact and delivers superior performance over a long period of time. The real key here is to understand the concepts presented in the book that can help us identify this distinctive impact and superior performance for cooperative extension.

The researchers developed a conceptual framework to help us understand how good organizations become great organizations. The book describes four stages in the process of going from good to great: Disciplined People, Disciplined Thought, Disciplined Action, and Building Greatness. Stage one is Disciplined People. In this section, Collins discusses “Level 5 Leadership” and “getting the right people on the bus.” Stage 2—Disciplined Thought—describes ideas such as “Confronting the Brutal Facts” and “the Hedgehog Concept.” Stage 3—Disciplined Action—discusses the “Culture of Discipline” and the “Flywheel” concept. Stage 4—Building Greatness to Last—describes “Clock Building, Not Time Telling” and “Preserve the Core to Stimulate Progress.”

You may have heard some of the terms that Collins’ uses, like the “Hedgehog Concept,” and I hope these terms have peaked your curiosity. These concepts really do provide good descriptions of the kinds of organizational behaviors that lead to improvement. I believe the real value of the book is in providing a framework and creating a common language and terminology that helps an organization discuss common concepts and ideas. This organizational conversation can lead to real and sustained growth if everyone participates.

I encourage you to get the book. It’s readily available in most libraries and bookstores. Read and study the concepts and participate in the organizational discussion that will help extension grow and progress toward greatness.

Best wishes,  
Daney Jackson  
Director of Cooperative Extension

## News to Know

### Diabetes Awareness, Education and Screening Project

With a grant from USDA, the Joslin Diabetes Center, Harvard Medical Center in Boston, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown, Pa., have partnered to establish a Diabetes Awareness, Education and Screening project in Cambria County. Type 2 diabetes is a common, serious, and expensive disease in Pennsylvania. When blood glucose levels are not well controlled, the resulting complications include retinopathy, kidney failure, and amputations. If individuals who are at risk for developing diabetes take the necessary steps to control their weight and exercise regularly, they can delay the onset of the disease or possibly prevent it completely.

By combining education, coaching, and screening, the program is providing diabetic individuals with relevant educational programs addressing healthy lifestyle choices focusing on diet and physical activity that will help support their medical treatment regimes. Referrals to the new Joslin Vision Network Eye Care and Management Program are now being taken for patients to have their vision tested. By shining a light in the eye to pinpoint change in the rate of light absorption, which signals the presence of high blood sugars, eye specialists can diagnose diabetes eye disease through the video-based retinal imaging system.

Pennsylvania is one of five states to receive the USDA funding to deliver extension diabetes educational programs. Marilyn Corbin, associate director and state program leader, is the principal investigator on the project; Amanda Mikolich, extension educator in Cambria County, is leading the nutrition education and vision screening program; and Sharon McDonald, extension educator in Blair County, serves as mentor and advisor.

### Internationalizing Extension

Professional development workshops designed to meet the needs of extension professionals working with multicultural communities were offered in four locations across the state during April and May. Two hundred twenty-five extension educators took advantage of the workshop—Extension Reaching Out to Multicultural Communities: At Home and Abroad. Participants gained

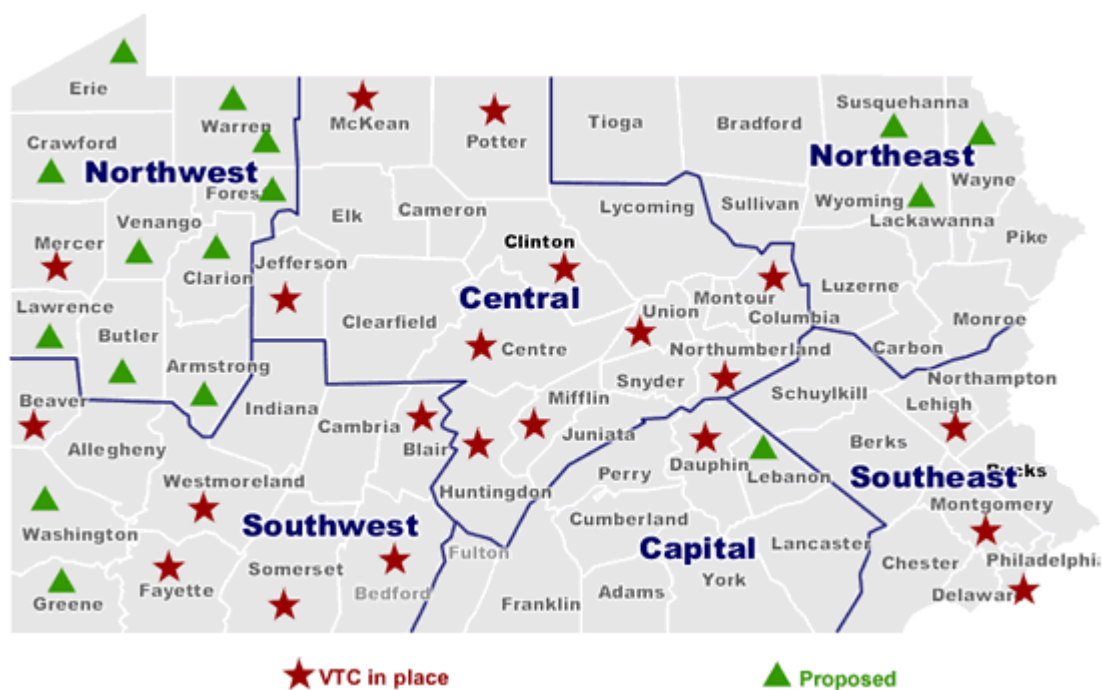
an understanding of global trends, the shifting needs of local communities, and the issues they may face in working in communities with immigrant populations. The workshop provided the background needed for internationalizing programs and delivering meaningful programs and services to new audiences. The workshops were based on a curriculum developed as part of USDA's national initiative to internationalize extension, and Penn State was the first university to use the material in a comprehensive training series. Penn State received a mini-grant from Epsilon Sigma Phi, and the workshops will be featured at ESP's 2007 annual meeting.

#### Fall-Inservice Planning

We are currently undergoing some very positive and beneficial changes to our Outreach Professional Development structure and programs. Due to some of these changes, a decision has been made to cancel this year's Fall In-Service. If you were planning to conduct a fall in-service, please contact Amy Gregor in Outreach Professional Development about how to conduct in-service training independently. Lori Johnson-Vegas and Amy will be happy to work with you.

You are encouraged to use the video teleconference (VTC) system, since we have made investments in this system across the state. If you would like to use the VTC system, contact Ron Matason at [ram5@psu.edu](mailto:ram5@psu.edu). A state map indicating locations for the VTC systems is shown below.

We are planning In-Service for Spring 2007 and an incredible 2007 Fall program. Please visit the Outreach Professional Development website <http://esd.cas.psu.edu/> for announcements of future in-service trainings.



#### From the Poconos to Penn State

The Poconos to Penn State Walking Program, led by Dawn Olson, county extension director in Monroe County, had 15 active teams of four people each theoretically walking the distance from Stroudsburg to Penn State and back, which is 330 miles. The program is designed to provide education and incentives to encourage people to increase their physical activity and improve eating habits. Teams were encouraged to have friendly competition as the team members combined their miles to walk from the Poconos to Penn State and back. At least four teams with a number of extension staff—including Michael McDavid, regional director for the Northeast Region; Melanie Witherite, Nancy Ellen Kiernan, Kim McClelland, Barbara Bartley, Cathy Levis, Marilyn Corbin, Margaret Koble, and Sandy Gentzel from University Park; and Monroe County extension staff—logged more than 500 miles during the eight-week program.

Last year, 144 participants walked 13,073 miles; an average of 91 miles per person or 11 miles per week. According to Sandy Gentzel, "It was great to participate in this program again. I hope it continues next year as it motivates me after a long winter." If you would like to establish a team of walkers from your county, contact Dawn for specific suggestions to make your program successful. It is an excellent way to incorporate nutrition education and physical activity and to support healthy lifestyle choices.

### **Program Updates and New Directions**

#### Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

Last year, the Leadership Subcommittee of the State Conservation Commission entered into a memorandum of agreement with Penn State Cooperative Extension to pilot four Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow (LTLT) trainings in the Northeast and Southwest regions of the state.

Twenty-five conservation district managers and board members (16 in the Northeast and 9 in the Southwest) have completed the leadership trainings. Each session was tailored to meet the needs of the Conservation District participants at the local level. The trainings—one day per month for four months—were held last fall and winter.

The Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow leadership curriculum is designed to help individuals develop and strengthen their personal leadership skills so they can play active and constructive leadership roles in their community. The program focuses on developing and strengthening personal and interpersonal leadership skills, group and organizational leadership skills, and community leadership skills. Designed for use as a comprehensive, multiple-session leadership training program, the curriculum is taught by Penn State Cooperative Extension educators.

The extension instructors for the LTLT trainings in the Northeast included Earle Robbins, Tioga County; Chris Orrson, Luzerne County; Sherri Abbruzzi, Monroe County; Rick Smith, Sullivan County; Joann Kowalski, Susquehanna County; Peter Wulfhorst, Pike County; and Mike McDavid, Northeast regional director. Gary Hennip, Bradford County, served as meeting manager for the four sessions. The participants from the Northeast trainings are shown in the photo below.



The following extension instructors provided trainings for the Conservation District participants in the Southwest region: Dottie Bromley, Somerset County; Dwyane Hay, Bedford County; Anita Lengvarsky, Westmoreland County; Brian Kelly, Blair County; Jon Laughner, Indiana County; and Brenda Bernatowicz, Southwest regional director. The photo on the following page shows the participants from the Southwest trainings engaged in a team building exercise.



The LTLT pilot project for the Conservation District was very successful. The Leadership Subcommittee of the State Conservation Commission reviewed the feedback from program participants and determined that the trainings met a critical need for the organization. The commission has agreed to move forward with a new memorandum of agreement to conduct a new set of trainings during the coming year. To keep the momentum, trainings will be continued in the Northeast and Southwest Regions, and one other region, to be identified by the State Conservation Commission, will receive training.

#### **Did you know that...**

- A pest-management team developed an educational program for agronomic producers on the potential for and management of Asian soybean rust on their crops. To date, six large producers have made modifications to their sprayers in anticipation of a soybean rust outbreak.
- Farm work injury prevention programs are offered during the year. Nearly all of the more than 90 participants in a farm fatality simulation program returned postcard evaluations and reported that they corrected specific farm hazards.

#### **Well Done**

Congratulations to the members of the **4-H Afterschool Task Force** who helped plan, implement, and evaluate two very successful 4-H afterschool conferences held in February 2005 and 2006. The conferences were designed to share information about after-school curricula and resources, funding and evaluation strategies, and best practices in after-school programming. The first conference was targeted to extension educators, providing them with the materials needed to set up after-school programs. The second conference was expanded to include both extension educators and after-school community collaborators. More than 80 participants attended both conferences. Many participants were a part of 21st Century grant programs.

As a result of the 2006 conference, participants significantly increased their ability to identify strategies to meet the challenges related to expanding after-school programming efforts, to identify a variety of curricular options for programming, and to identify new after-school collaborators or partners. Participants also significantly increased their understanding of how 4-H curricula can be introduced into after-school settings, the impact of after-school programming on youth, the role of The PA Afterschool/Youth Development Network, and their knowledge of resources available from state and national youth development and after-school organizations. The second conference was recognized by the national 21st Century program, making it possible for individuals to obtain training credits.

Congratulations to the members of the 4-H Task Force in 2005–2006 for their efforts: **Patty Anderson**, Clarion County; **Christy Bartley**, Agricultural and Extension Education; **Shawn Graves**, Erie County; **Nancy Grotevant**, Pike County; **Jennifer Grooms**, Warren County; **Dwayne Hay**, Bedford County; **Annette Kratzer**, Union County; **Claudia Mincemoyer**, Agricultural and Extension Education (chair); **Roxanne Price**, York County; **Evelyn Simmons**,

Lycoming County; **Toni Stuetz**, Chester County; **Catherine Straub**, Cameron County; **Susan Taylor**, Allegheny County; **Paul Webster**, Potter County; and **Nicole Webster**, Agricultural and Extension Education.

## We Are Penn State Extension Proud

Congratulations to **Bryan Swistock**, extension associate in the School of Forest Resources and recipient of the Trailblazer Award. A College of Agricultural Sciences Staff Laureate Award, the Trailblazer Award honors a staff member who demonstrates creativity and innovation in the improvement of programs, services, products, or approaches to the workplace. Bryan was recognized at the collegewide staff meeting in May for his efforts, which include developing and maintaining the Water Resources Extension Web site, providing training for extension educators, and helping create the Master Well Owners program.

## The Extension Spirit

### **Improving Your Team's Effectiveness**

by Mary R. Ehret, extension educator, Luzerne County

*Mary Ehret serves as an extension educator and as supervisor for Penn State Nutrition Links (PSNL). Currently, she leads six nutrition education advisors in the Northeast Region. Earlier this year, Mary attended "Leadership Pathways, a Public Health Nutrition Leadership Workshop" in North Carolina. She shares some of the lessons learned from this professional development experience.*

Much of cooperative extension's work happens in a team environment. Many times the team members are new to each other and may find it difficult to "gel" and be productive as a team. Effective team leaders are able to gain insight into why people react in particular ways, hence, increasing the effectiveness of their team's efforts. Understanding how leaders accomplish this may advance our own ability to increase extension's team effectiveness.

People are capable of reacting either positively or negatively to a situation, and in working with people, we often experience negative reactions among team players. Effective leaders of productive teams have a clear understanding of the concept of "conscious negative intent." The concept of conscious negative intent suggests that people will most likely attack an unanswered question, unfamiliar idea, or a "gap in information" with a negative reaction, statement, and/or thought. When it is not "our" way, or when we find gaps in information that do not align with our personality profile, we most often respond with negativity. Individuals in a leadership role need to minimize the "gaps" in information in order for a team to evolve and increase its effectiveness.

To fill the gaps in information, leaders should consider several things. First, they should reveal or share a bit of information about themselves. They need to identify the most important attributes expected for team members. Productivity, timeliness, and professionalism may be a few characteristics at the top of the list. Effective leaders also need to be exceptionally clear in their expectations. For example, if leaders ask for a reply within the next "few" days, are they really asking for a reply today, tomorrow, or in two days? The leader may have said a "few," however, he or she may have expected a reply within 24 hours.

Next, effective leaders should ask for feedback. Finding out what others are thinking helps identify a need for clarity. Do team members clearly understand the objectives? They may be way off base in terms of the objectives set by team leaders. As an example, if team members are expected to teach a particular number of persons, the leader needs to make sure that the number is realistic for them. If it is not realistic, the leader should ask questions in order to understand their reasoning.

Effective leaders also have the ability and skill to "look through the lenses" of the person with whom they are communicating. "Lenses" may be identified formally through personality assessments such as Myers Briggs, Change Indicator, and the FIRO-B, (Fundamentals Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior) or informally through a values inventory listing. Successful leaders understand the personalities of team members and have either learned to

balance interactions with new team members or have considered the members' personality characteristics by "looking through the lenses" to better understand their viewpoint. For example, when a team member is "bugging others or not responding positively," successful leaders are able to step back and recall personality attributes to gain better insight to their reactions. County educators may want to offer personality assessments for both office staff and program staff and share what they have learned.

People are only human, and they will continue to react as they have in the past. Effective team leaders have learned how to work with "Conscious Negative Intent," and how to expand their team's effectiveness and chances of being successful.

## **Leadership Thoughts**

### Benefits of Being an Effective Delegator

- Gives me more time!
- Helps me focus on what's most important!
- Allows my people to grow in capability and confidence!
- Creates opportunities to provide recognition!
- Allows for clear documentation of poor performance!
- Ensures successful results! (Genett, 2003, p.90)

Reference: Genett, D. (2003). If you want it done right, you don't have to do it yourself! Sanger, CA: Quill Driver Books.

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The **Well Done** section highlights a particular noteworthy extension education effort by an individual or team.

The **We Are Penn State Extension Proud** section recognizes an extension employee's outstanding accomplishments.

The **Extension Spirit** section enables Penn State Cooperative Extension employees to share meaningful work experiences, articulate the values and goals behind their efforts, and present inspirational ideas.

Send your suggestions for the **Well Done**, **We Are Penn State Extension Proud**, and **The Extension Spirit** sections to Margaret Koble, [mak10@psu.edu](mailto:mak10@psu.edu). Nominations will be reviewed and selected by the director. The deadline for receiving nominations for the next issue of the newsletter is **July 14**.

#### NOTE:

After being distributed, issues of **Extension Directions** will be archived at: <http://www.extension.psu.edu/Newsletters/archives.htm>.

Please send submissions to Margaret Koble, [mak10@psu.edu](mailto:mak10@psu.edu).

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