

Community and Economic Development

CAMERON

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- ▶ Community visioning and strategic planning programs help communities define their future. These programs have become increasingly important as local governments in rural areas search for ways to revitalize their local economies or manage growth. Charting—a community strategic visioning program—was introduced to leaders in four Jefferson County communities. A program was completed in the Harmony School District; another nears completion in the Moshannon Valley. The outcomes will lead to multiple programming opportunities: land-use planning, community economic development, and charting programs for communities in the Moshannon Valley. Penns Valley citizens also conducted a visioning process and are working to achieve their goals in the areas of land use, regional planning, transportation, community and economic development, agriculture, and conservation of natural resources.
- ▶ Families and children are best served when organizations and agencies throughout a county collaborate to provide access to needed programs and services. The role of the *Jefferson County Communities in Collaboration for Families and Children (COFAC)* is to ensure that collaboration and partnership. As COFAC evolves and works toward nonprofit status, extension continues to provide leadership training. Feedback indicates monthly meetings are more productive. A one-day charting program is planned to review accomplishments, update the county's strategic vision for children and families, and develop new goals and objectives.
- ▶ Penn State Cooperative Extension led a one-day retreat to help the Emporium/Cameron County Chamber of Commerce review and refocus its efforts. Chamber committees developed goals and measurable objectives for the next three years and action plans for the year 2000.
- ▶ Residents of Potter County are on their way to becoming some of the most connected citizens of Pennsylvania as a result of the *Community Information Network (CIN)*. Still in the pilot stage, the CIN is increasing the rate at which county residents learn about digital technology and use the tools of the information age. Citizens have developed and are implementing a plan that will lead to sustainable community-based Tech Centers throughout the county. Potter County extension played an instrumental role in the launch of the CIN—shepherding the process, providing resources, and identifying possible partnerships.
- ▶ An *Information Technology Camp* in Potter County provided 13 high school students with an opportunity to learn about Internet and Web technologies and to explore related career opportunities. Camp included field trips to Penn State's University Park campus and tours of the Center for Academic Computing, the nanofabrication facility, and Adelphia in Coudersport. They created a Web site for the Potter County Historical Society. Extension played a key role in planning the camp and provided leadership and team-building experiences during the ten-day program.
- ▶ Without significant leadership and assistance from an outside organization, few rural communities have the human or organizational capacity to create a Community Information Network (CIN). Cooperative Extension developed a SWOT team approach to implement CIN assistance statewide, as well as a budget to support the approach. The CIN process and SWOT team approach was presented to leaders in four counties. Leaders in three other counties requested and were sent information.

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- ▶ *Leadership Clinton County* was launched in September 2000 with 13 participants whose mission is to strengthen their leadership abilities in order to strengthen Clinton County. The program is being coordinated and conducted by a steering committee of people representing various organizations in Clinton County. Cooperative Extension was the lead organization for the first year. Some of the diverse group expressed their passion for making the area a better place to live and work:

“This may be the best thing to happen to Clinton County.”

“I think I’m doing something more important than I’ve done before.”

“I’m walking out feeling like a new person.”

- ▶ The Canaan Valley Institute’s *Statewide Natural Stream Bank Conference* attracted 130 watershed stakeholders to learn about natural stream bank restoration and to build a collaborative network to implement the restoration process statewide. Extension staff developed the conference format and facilitated the meeting, which received high marks for its contribution to participants’ knowledge of natural stream bank restoration.

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