

EXTENOVATIONS

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Agents promote wellness programs through networking

How much time and effort is spent by people and organizations on re-inventing the wheel? A lot, most would agree. One solution to this problem is to share information and resources through networking.

You won't find networking listed on any organizational chart, but this informal contact among professionals and community agencies happens daily.

"Networking isn't new," explains Barb Klixbull, director and program leader of home economics for the Northwest District. "But extension is paying more attention to it. Networking can benefit extension because of our outreach role and help us avoid duplicating the efforts of other local social service agencies."

Agents can either take a lead role and coordinate a project or represent extension in community organizations. Several current networking efforts by extension agents include those of Chris Venema, Stearns County; Pauline Nickel, Watonwan County; and Angela Berge, west Otter Tail County.

For the past three months, Chris Venema has worked at establishing a nutrition education network in Stearns County. She saw that several social service agencies were trying to teach nutrition education and a good deal of duplication was resulting. In addition, people were unaware of the resources relating to nutrition available to them through extension.

"People talked about bringing organizations together before," says Venema, "but nothing happened. We're trying to identify and organize what nutrition education is available in the area. People say it's a good idea and wonder why it wasn't done before."

Presently, Venema is working with Community Health Services, a public health agency; dietitians at the St. Cloud Hospital; the Tri-County Community Action Program (TRICAP); Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and the Nutrition Center Program.

Venema took the lead in contacting the many agencies and coordinating efforts on nutrition education. "For example, a dietitian from the St. Cloud Hospital and myself are working with public health nurses. The dietitian speaks on nutrition assessment or how to analyze a nutrition problem someone is having and I do the second part on nutrition education."

The whole emphasis of the coordinated effort is on wellness says Venema, who has a degree in home economics education and nutrition.

This Stearns County agent says networking is really a sharing of educational resources. "As an agent, I can help identify resources to teach nutrition education, offer expertise, and make research-based information available to the public."

Another networking effort is going strong in Watonwan County with extension agent Pauline Nickel. Its focus is drug abuse education.

Last fall Nickel and others in the community saw that a drug and chemical prevention program was to air on national television in November. With this as an impetus, Nickel contacted community organizations to form a task force on the topic.

"Initially, the ag extension service, the St. James community education program, and the Ministerial Association were involved," said Nickel. The group later expanded to include representatives from court services, local schools, human services, and a number of parents. In addition, the towns of Madelia and Butterfield-Odin were brought in.

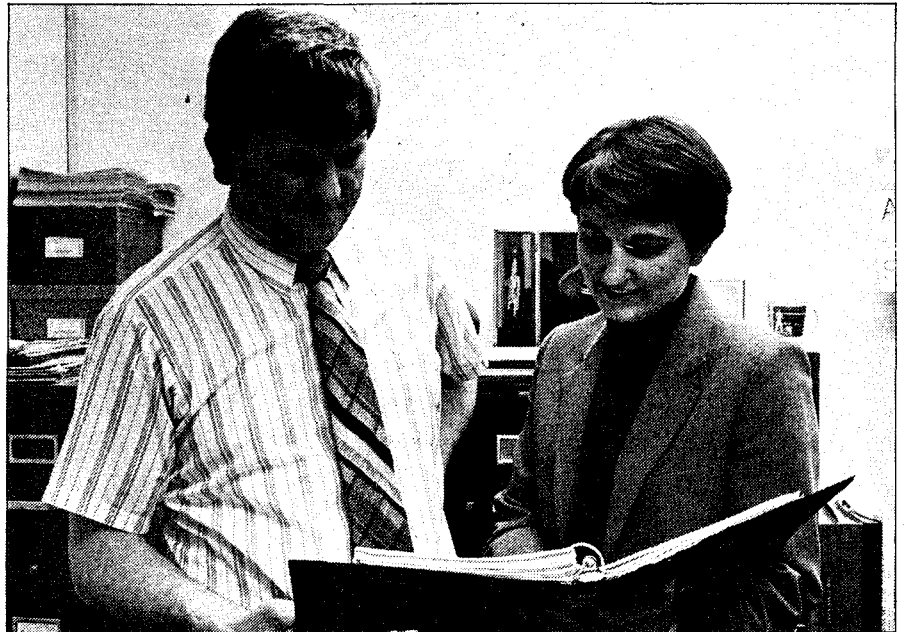
"What I did was to get the network started," explained Nickel. "I got the task force members motivated and helped to get all these groups to work together. Now they are taking over the leadership."

Before the programs were broadcast, Nickel did in-service training for the faculty in three area school districts. The goal was to get local youth involved in the drug education program. Nickel estimates that nearly 2,200 students were reached.

After the initial airing of the television program, the county-wide task force continued. Seven mini-task forces were formed to deal with different areas of drug education and abuse. Funding was approved by the county commissioners for the hiring of a county chemical dependency counselor.

"I have to be honest in saying that when we first started, I didn't realize that the program would grow to this magnitude," said Nickel. "It was sort of a risk thing that took off and apparently met a need in the community."

A third example of networking is shown by Angela Berge's work in Fergus Falls. Berge, an extension agent for west Otter Tail County, has been on the local community educa-



Don Kostelecky, community education director, Fergus Falls Public Schools and Angela Berge, county agent, west Otter Tail County, planning county educational activities (photo by Fergus Falls Daily Journal).

tion advisory board for the past five years as extension's representative. She is currently serving as chairman.

"The board is composed of 15 people who represent the schools and various local organizations," said Berge. "We have the traditional

community education courses, but we also suggest additional programs and classes to the school board."

During the past year, the community education advisory board has promoted classes on the environ-

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Sandager accepts special projects assignment

Arnold Sandager, Southeast District program leader for agriculture, will assume responsibility for special projects on a two-year assignment in the agriculture program area on July 1, prior to his retirement in 1986.

Sandager joined the extension staff 29 years ago as an agricultural agent in Scott County. Five years later he joined the Washington County staff, then spent two years in Chile as an extension dairy specialist.

Beginning in 1970, he served as district program coordinator for the Central District for two years; district director for the Southwest District for nine years; and district program leader for the Southeast District for the past three years. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Minnesota.

Of Sandager's new assignment, assistant director for agriculture, Jerry Miller says, "Arnie is a valuable member of the ag team and we look forward to his continuing contributions over the next two years as he gives leadership to some important statewide programs."



Sandager

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GOOD NEWS

A ten-week German language class for children and adults is now being offered by the Dakota County Extension Service. Taught by **Sigrid Ruhmann**, a 4-H adult volunteer leader, the course came about as a challenge to extension faculty by university vice president Ken Keller at the 1983 annual conference, where he stated, "An understanding of other cultures is necessary in this increasingly interdependent world." Families taking this class have the added advantage of being able to practice together at home, an important ingredient in becoming fluent in the language.

* * *

The IBM personal computer recently purchased for **Martin County** has already been paid for many times over by the benefits derived by county dairy farmers. As a result of information and decision aids, material circulated from the county extension office about the 1984-85 dairy compromise program, over 42 percent of the dairy farmers signed up for the milk diversion program. This action resulted in reduced milk surpluses and helped relieve short-term cash flow problems in the county. Computer use in the extension office by dairy farmers also increased as a result of the program.

* * *

Sue Davis, volunteer budget consultant in the Northeast District (Itasca County), was filmed by Channel 8, WDSE Duluth, in a documentary on unemployment and how three agencies are cooperating to help people groom for re-employment. Working with the county-sponsored Room for Employment and Lutheran Brotherhood-sponsored Marriage and Family Development Center, Davis has counseled more than 20 families over the past year. A video clip showing Davis working with a couple appeared in late March on public TV's Nightly Business Report, and the entire documentary was aired on WDSE Channel 8 in late April.

* * *

The **Minnesota Agricultural Enterprise for New Americans (MAENA)** recently received a \$100,000 grant from the McKnight Foundation and a \$40,000 grant from the Northwest Area Foundation for year two continuance of the four-year project.

* * *

The Northeast District spring conference went mobile this year; 50 county and area extension faculty toured the North Shore by bus while **Sea Grant agents** briefed them on the recreation, tourism, timber, and fishery industries so important to that area's economy. Discussion focused on strategies for providing useful programs, especially in CNRD, and participants toured part of the region for which the programs are designed.

* * *



A 4-H volunteer helps with the 4-H Bike Program in Wilkin County.

Conservation tillage gains ground with farmers and agencies

Conservation tillage makes good sense to a lot of people—for a lot of different reasons. To some, it's a way to save time and money by reducing production inputs. To others, it's a way to reduce topsoil loss, conserve energy, or provide food and habitat for wildlife. By joining forces with the diverse groups supporting conservation tillage, extension is helping to lead the program to broad acceptance throughout Minnesota.

It was during the energy crunch of the early 1970s that conservation tillage first gained popularity. Since then, tillage reduction has been promoted by state and federal agencies, including the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

"Everybody's in it for a different reason," says soils specialist John Moncrief, who heads extension's conservation tillage efforts. But, he adds, the goal is the same: to encourage Minnesota farmers to minimize tillage wherever possible.

Before the various agencies and extension began to work together, many efforts to promote conservation tillage ended in failure. The need to adapt other aspects of production—fertilizer and pesticide requirements, for example—was not always recognized, and many farmers who tried conservation tillage were discouraged by a drop in yields. Although the participating groups had good intentions, many were unable to provide advice on exactly what needed to be done. That's where extension came in.

"They have the 'whys,'" Moncrief explains. "What we have in extension are the 'hows.' And that's why they came to us."

For example, soil scientists with the SCS recommended that farmers reduce tillage to conserve topsoil, but in some instances they didn't have the needed expertise in areas like plant pathology and entomology. And DNR staff realized that they had

to have a better understanding of conservation tillage to enforce the agency's policy of requiring the practice on public lands leased for cultivation. Extension responded to these needs by holding conservation tillage workshops for local and county staff.

All agencies contacted have supported extension's efforts to promote conservation tillage. In addition, SCS and DNR have provided technical assistance in developing and evaluating field trials, and the DNR also has made land and machinery available for extension demonstration projects.

This year extension, with the help of SCS, has set up a conservation tillage demonstration in Wabasha County that Moncrief hopes will serve "as a vehicle to educate agency field staff and farmers so as to hasten the adoption of conservation tillage." The project includes trials by several university departments for production aspects, including weed and disease control, effects on crop phenology, fertilizer use, and fuel consumption. According to Moncrief, extension plans to eventually hold similar trials on soil types throughout the state.

Largely because of the successful networking at the county level, extension staff are now working with the groups at the state level to provide a better foundation for the adoption of conservation tillage in Minnesota. One such group, the Minnesota Conservation Tillage Council, was formed in 1982 by farmers, agency staff, and industry representatives to identify research needs and promote conservation tillage. And in September 1983, a statewide meeting was held to bring together the forces interested in seeing Minnesota reap the benefits of conservation tillage on a broader scale.

"Some form of conservation tillage could be applied just about anywhere in the state," Moncrief says. By working together with groups interested in promoting the practice, extension is helping to make that possibility a reality.

—Mary Hoff
Communication Resources

Extenovations

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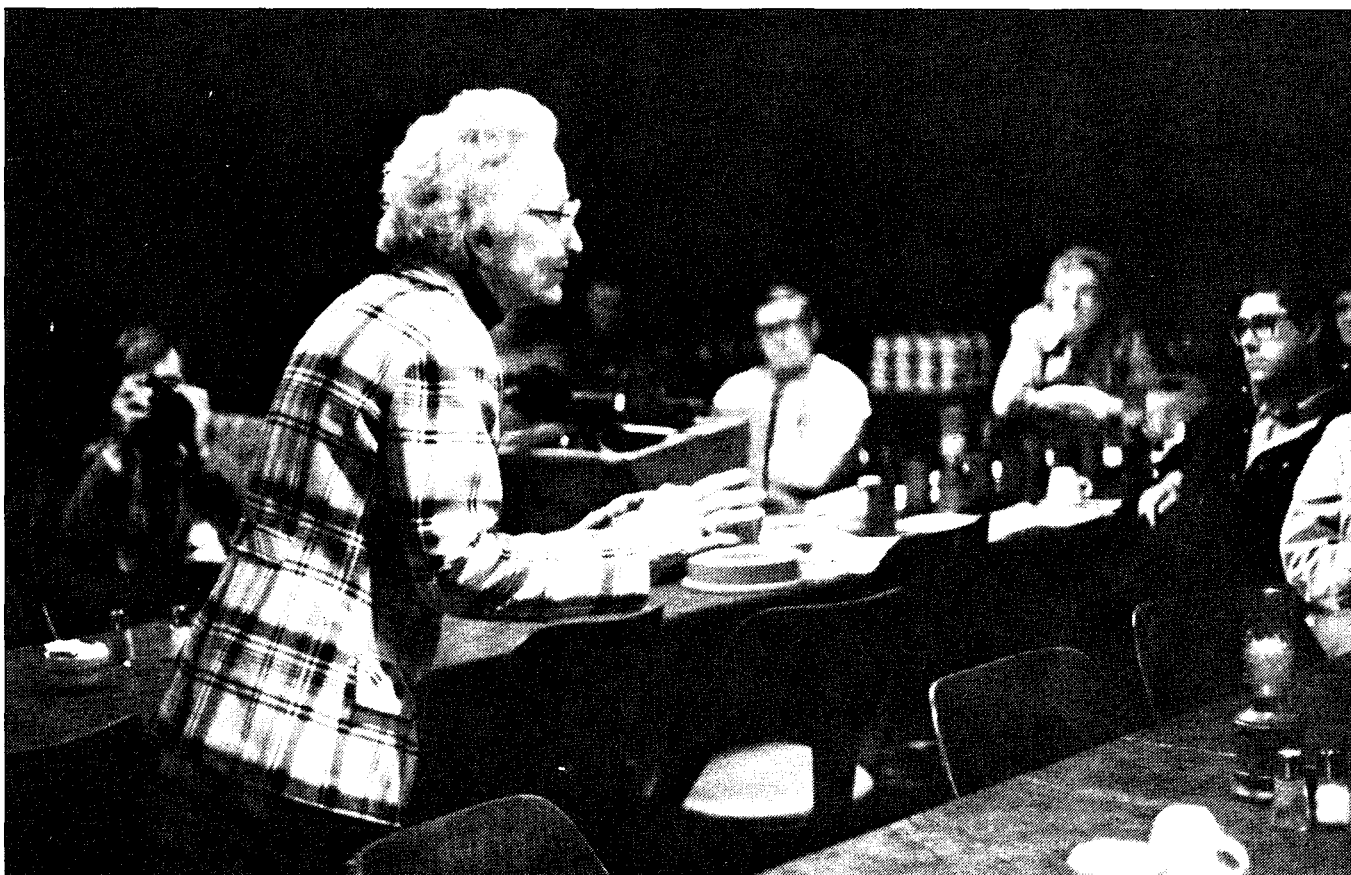
Jerry Schmidt, manager of the Earle Brown Center on the St. Paul campus, was elected in March to the board of directors of the International Association of Conference Centers. He also chairs the membership committee of the association, which is a three-year-old organization comprised of directors, managers, and developers of conference centers from around the world.

Mike Patton, program director of extension's Caribbean project, was named Emerging Scholar of the Year for 1983-84 by the University of Minnesota chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor society. The award honors younger faculty members of the university who have made outstanding contributions in their fields. Patton received a \$300 honorarium and a certificate of membership at the spring initiation ceremony in May.



1984 "graduates" of the Minnesota Extension Citizen's Advisory Committee include from left (bottom): Anne Copeland, Ramsey County; Laurie Borden, Crow Wing County; (top): Tom Hook, Redwood County; Dorothy Grotte, Martin County; and Gary Allen, Olmsted County. (Allen graduates from the 1983-84 chairmanship, but continues as a member.) Not pictured: Jack Cashman, Steele County; Idell Murray, Kittson County; Loren Noeldner, Lac qui Parle County. Certificates were awarded by Dean and Director Norm Brown at the March meeting of the committee.

Local residents key to tourism success



Jane Preston, hospitality consultant and former educator with the Minnesota Department of Education, spoke on the "Art of Hospitality," at the Community Tourism Development Workshop in Glenwood, April 17, 1984. The workshop was one of several jointly sponsored by the Agricultural Extension Service, the Small Business Development Center, the Minnesota Office of Tourism, and the local chamber of commerces (photo by Larry Simonson).

Jane Preston believes towns have personalities just like people. The first person the visitor meets is likely to determine—ever after—whether hearing the town's name elicits a smile or a frown.

That first person is likely to be the service station attendant, the waitress, or the store clerk—not the manager of the chamber of commerce. And these three have most to do with first impressions.

These are some of the points Preston puts across during Explore Minnesota Community Tourism Development workshops sponsored by the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Minnesota Office of Tourism, and the local town's Chamber of Commerce.

She laughingly calls her talk, *The Art of Hospitality*, "vaudeville revived," but her colleagues Larry Simonson, extension specialist, tourist services, and Gary Ballman, extension specialist, tourism, consider it a highlight of the day.

Preston stresses the need for substituting "you" for "I" thinking as she gears her talk to "the front line troops," the employees. One point she mentions to the waitresses is remember to ask "would you like cream in your coffee?"

She tells about the family of five, plus the dog, riding through town in a van, asking at the gas station "where's a good place to eat?" The response they got was "are you kidding?" and they were sent on to Sioux Falls. Using no notes, she walks Carson-style through the group, admonishing in her warm, friendly way "not to put down their town." She unravels the statistics telling them 30 cents of a visitor's dollar goes to the gas station and 22 cents to the retail store.

She loves seeing results from the six workshops she has done this year: the waitress who says after she gets off work and stops for a beer, she is going home to wash her uniform; another who spots Preston in a restaurant and asks if she'll have cream in her coffee. Firms are encouraged to send their employees to the work-

shop during their working hours—a clear message that it's important to attend.

Preston, a retired vocational-technical education consultant with the Minnesota Department of Education, had just returned from a meeting in Grand Marais where the county agent cooperation was great. That kind of agent cooperation usually means the workshop will be great, too, she mentioned.

In each community workshop there is a panel of local residents discussing how to know more about the community so employees can be better salespersons. Another panel talks about how to become involved in tourism.

The first grant to make all this possible came in May 1982 with \$20,000 designating extension a Small Business Development Center and Frank J. Smith, agricultural economist, as its director. Eight college locations in the state are involved and the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul administers the program. Since then extension has received addi-

tional grants totaling \$100,000.

The first focus of the SBDC was assisting management skills for the forest products industry in Minnesota. Ed Schuh, head of Agricultural and Applied Economics, has described the basic problem of small business as "development of a sensible business strategy." Helping devise those strategies will be a goal of the program as it attempts to fan out, providing networking help to communities and businesses statewide.

Another series of tourism workshops is called Marketing Minnesota Tourism. It aims at tourism firms and community leaders rather than employees. Don Breneman, communication specialist, Communication Resources, conducts a tourism brochure critiquing service that is "incredibly popular," Ballman says. "We thought we would do 100 brochures in the first year, but we have nearly doubled that with the requests in the first six months."

Ballman does one-to-one consulting in the SBDC program, too. It is both for new businesses before they start and for operating businesses deciding whether to expand.

First Steps to Your Own Business is another extension help to small businesses although not part of SBDC. Bud Crewdson, extension economist and business development specialist, taught the free (six, three-hour sessions) course in Marshall and Morris this spring. In Morris, Rural Women Mean Business, Continuing Education and Extension, and the Stevens County Agricultural Extension Service were the sponsors.

"There is a new generation of owners and managers in firms—sons or grandsons are taking over decisionmaking and looking for tools to speed up that process," says Crewdson, explaining interest in "first steps." He sees them coming to the county agent's office "because we are an objective source of information, have no axe to grind, and this information is not readily available other places."

With some 80,000 small businesses in Minnesota, extension and SBDC hope to continue on the scene.

—Mary Kay O'Hearn
Communication Resources

NETWORKING

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ment, hospice education, and quilting, plus children and senior fitness programs at the YMCA, and a fishing seminar. They also supported the educational programs of the Phoenix, a local community youth center.

"By serving on the board, I help give extension exposure," said Berge. "It's important for the community to see and recognize extension as an education resource in the community."

Agents' success with networking, says Klixbull, "has expanded exten-

sion's efforts and visibility. There's always been some networking going on in extension but now it's being encouraged more and supported."

Other examples around the state of networking by home economics agents include: Food Shelf program, Marion Anderson, Big Stone, and Donna Rae Waldock, who formerly worked in Dodge; the Warren chapter of Women in Agriculture, chaired by Nancy Mathiason, Marshall; public health, Jeanne Pitt, Aitkin; parenting education, Jean Anderson, Isanti, and

Coleen Gengler, Nobles; child abuse, Ann Bosch, Kandiyohi; Migrant Council, Nancy Frosaker, Clay; community nutrition, Kathy Olson, Goodhue; displaced homemakers, Catherine Huebner, Stevens, and Sharon Torbenson, Becker; and small business development, Jeanne Baedke, Faribault.

—Greg Doerning
Communication Resources

4-H spirit alive in Dakota County volunteer

Cindy Manwarren of Dakota County is an adult volunteer, and she's one of the best. Although she has been part of 4-H for only five years, she has started and been involved with projects that work; her endeavors show the strength of an adult volunteer who considers herself absolutely "motivated" and sold on the idea of 4-H as an organization that can meet the needs of today's family.

Manwarren didn't belong to 4-H as a child, but as a home ec and journalism student on the St. Paul campus, she noticed that the students with 4-H backgrounds were the ones who most often had leadership qualities.

After Manwarren graduated from the university and started raising her own family in Apple Valley, she didn't forget about 4-H. She contacted her county 4-H agent and soon became actively involved with the "Apple Seeds," a club of 29 young people from 8 suburban Apple Valley families.

Her interest became even more focused and strong after she attended the North Central Leaders' Forum last year in Brainerd. It was there that Manwarren spoke with volunteers from 12 states and realized that sharing ideas was the way to truly motivate leaders and keep them active.

When Manwarren returned, she wanted to do something special to allow more of a give-and-take among Dakota County leaders. So, she started a column, "Leader to Leader," and it's now an important part of the Dakota County newsletter. She sees her column as a way of sharing the

wealth of information that leaders in her area possess.

She was also part of an effort to pool resources in Dakota County. The adult volunteers realized that oftentimes the leader of a local club might not have the expertise necessary to successfully organize a project. However, they also realized that leaders could help each other by forming county committees consisting of adults who could act in an advisory capacity to the local clubs. This way, the kids can benefit from experiences and knowledge that might not originate from the local level.

Finally, Manwarren's energy at present is going into a recognition project aimed at making sure all volunteers are given that important "pat on the back" for a good job done. Manwarren and her fellow volunteers are traveling the county in hopes of soliciting funds that will allow them to honor volunteers. They would like to see a reception and perhaps a visit to the theater as just reward for the many hours a committed volunteer will give to the club.

In short, Cindy Manwarren is promoting the idea of networking and thus supporting the traditions and ideals of 4-H. Ironically, the woman who is so concerned about making sure that other volunteers are recognized, says that the motivation she feels when she watches children grow into concerned adults is reward enough. As she enthusiastically concludes, "You see how kids grow. It's neat... you just feel motivated."

—Helen Quinn
Communication Resources



Cindy Manwarren, volunteer 4-H leader, surrounded by a few of her fans.