

EXTENOVATIONS

For All of Extension

MINNESOTA EXTENSION SERVICE

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

'PAINT THE TOWN' WARNS POLLUTERS



Brainerd teenagers, from left, Laura Lockwood, Rhoda Tomberlin and Tina Bieganeck sprayed the no dumping warning near a storm drain in their community in October. The participants in the "Paint the Town" campaign were 4-H and Brainerd High School Key Club members. (Photo by Joe Courneya)

In some communities, teenagers armed with cans of spray paint could equal a graffiti nightmare. Not so in Crow Wing, Stevens and Grant counties. There, 4-H members are wielding spray paint and warning stencils to promote awareness of water pollution and the hazards of dumping hazardous materials into storm drains.

Sponsored statewide by MES and the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the "Paint the Town" effort involved 10 communities where storm drains empty directly into local rivers. Teens used stencils to spray the message, "Don't Dump — Drains to River" on pavement near the drains. In Crow Wing County, the river is the Mississippi. In Stevens and Grant counties, the river is the Pomme de Terre.

In addition to painting the warning messages, the teens also distributed brochures explaining how pesticides, motor oil, paint, antifreeze and other waste can be toxic to fish, birds, pets and people. Joe Courneya, MES educator in Crow Wing County, organized the project there "to start raising awareness. 'Paint the Town' is one thing where we can have fun and make an impact." He adds the effort gave local teens the opportunity to do meaningful public service on a problem that many of them care deeply about.

The painting drew media attention and resulted in newspaper articles and local television coverage that helped inform more people about the pollution problem.

Deedee Nagy

EXTENSION INNOVATIONS

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'TRUTH IN TAXATION' TRACKS WHERE \$\$\$ GO AND WHY

W

here does my tax money go?

Why are my property taxes so high? Or, finally, wouldn't a world without taxes be great?

It's a challenge for elected officials to answer these questions, but an Minnesota Extension Service (MES) program of publications, meetings and news stories has helped.

By law, government taxing units must have "Truth in Taxation" hearings in December. The meetings can be testy. "Elected officials catch a lot of heat from people who are mad about their property taxes," says Scott Loveridge, extension economist, community development policy.

In the last few years there's been increasing pressure on county, city and township finances. Causes include the federal budget deficit, more mandated services and a changing national attitude about who should be responsible for local services. Many local governments have responded by increasing property taxes dramatically.

Loveridge, along with Carole Yoho, Liz Templin and Nancy Lenhart, has written a publication and facilitator's guide called "Taxes, Where Does the Money Go?" Yoho is an extension economist, public policy. Templin and Lenhart are extension educators, Washington and Carver counties, respectively. The publication (BU-6080-S) was produced by the Educational Development System and is available through the EDS Distribution Center.

The program started with metro counties in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. The latest development is county profiles of local government finance for every county. And, 19 MES resource people with public finance expertise are available throughout Minnesota.

Elected officials have appreciated the tax information program. One is Mary Page, University of Minnesota Regent who also serves as a Renville County commissioner. Another is Scott Umsted, Dodge County auditor. He wrote a letter to Kathy Moenning, Dodge County extension



Scott Loveridge, MES economist on the right, holds the publication "Taxes, Where Does the Money Go?" which has helped counties conduct Truth in Taxation hearings throughout the state. With Loveridge at taxation meeting in Rochester are Carole Yoho, MES economist on the left, and Sheila Craig, Fillmore County Extension Educator.

educator, complimenting the four-part tax series that appeared in local newspapers.

"The series was understandable and gave a very clear and complete overview of the tax system in Minnesota. I was very pleased that the series was interesting and not technical. This had to be hard to do.

"By having the articles published in the local papers the public will now have a clearer understanding of what we do with their tax dollars. Several people have asked me about the articles and were pleased to see them," Umsted wrote.

Extension educators organized "Train the Trainer" meetings in their counties. One of the topics the citizen leaders found most interesting was a segment called "A world without taxes."

No taxes would mean:

- Electricity and water would be more expensive without government regulation since they'd become monopoly services.

- If you live in a rural area, you might be taking a chance on the safety of your well water without government agencies to regulate agricultural chemicals and waste disposal sites.
 - With no police, courts or prisons you'd have to be a lot more careful about crime.
 - There would be more poor people. Without public schools, there would be more uneducated people who would find it hard to get good jobs.
 - In urban areas, it could be hard to breathe without pollution control and enforcement.
 - Most roads would be either dirt or toll roads
 - There would be fewer good doctors since lack of public education would make good training very expensive. And, there'd be more quacks due to lack of regulation.
- "Clearly, we need government services and most of them are paid by taxes," Loveridge says.

Jack Sperbeck

MES JOINS OTHER AGENCIES TO COMBAT RACISM

T

he faces of Minnesota are changing.

Rural communities that were once predominantly white are becoming home to more and more nonwhites. That poses both opportunities and challenges as residents struggle to understand newcomers whose ways may be different from their own.

Rather than seeing racial diversity as a prescription for trouble, Minnesota Extension Service staff are working in communities embracing the challenges of multi-culturalism. Donna Rae Scheffert, MES leadership program coordinator, has worked with county extension educators throughout the state using MES innovative grants to bring community leaders together to look at racist attitudes and behavior and what can be done to change them.

In the past year, MES has helped organize four regional meetings and a statewide session involving more than 100 civic leaders, school board members, social workers, clergy, students, parents, employers and youth group leaders from many communities and nationality groups. Participants are putting plans of action together to meet their communities' needs for racial awareness and sensitivity.

Scheffert stresses that these community leaders are committed to changing their communities for the better through education. As a network of leaders, they share resources, ideas and training materials with each other and with communities that are just beginning to tackle racist attitudes and behavior. Participants representing all parts of the state are preparing community plans of action

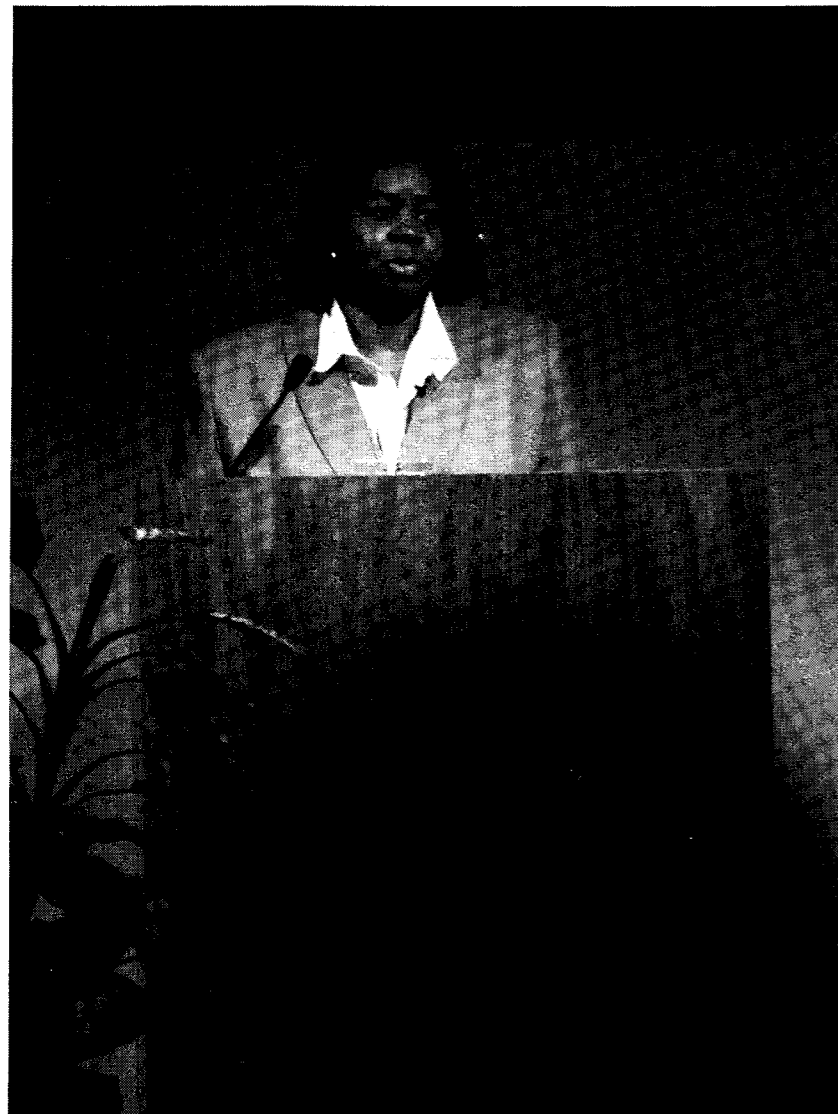
and working with or helping set up task forces that will work with schools, law enforcement agencies, churches, news media and many other agencies and groups to help Minnesotans celebrate the state's increasing diversity.

A member of the Glencoe Cultural Diversity Council praises MES's involvement with the racism project. "The leadership in rural Minnesota has not had to deal with minority issues and has had little experience in effecting a harmonious transition from a monocultural community to a multicultural one. The project is greatly needed," the council member states.

Deedee Nagy

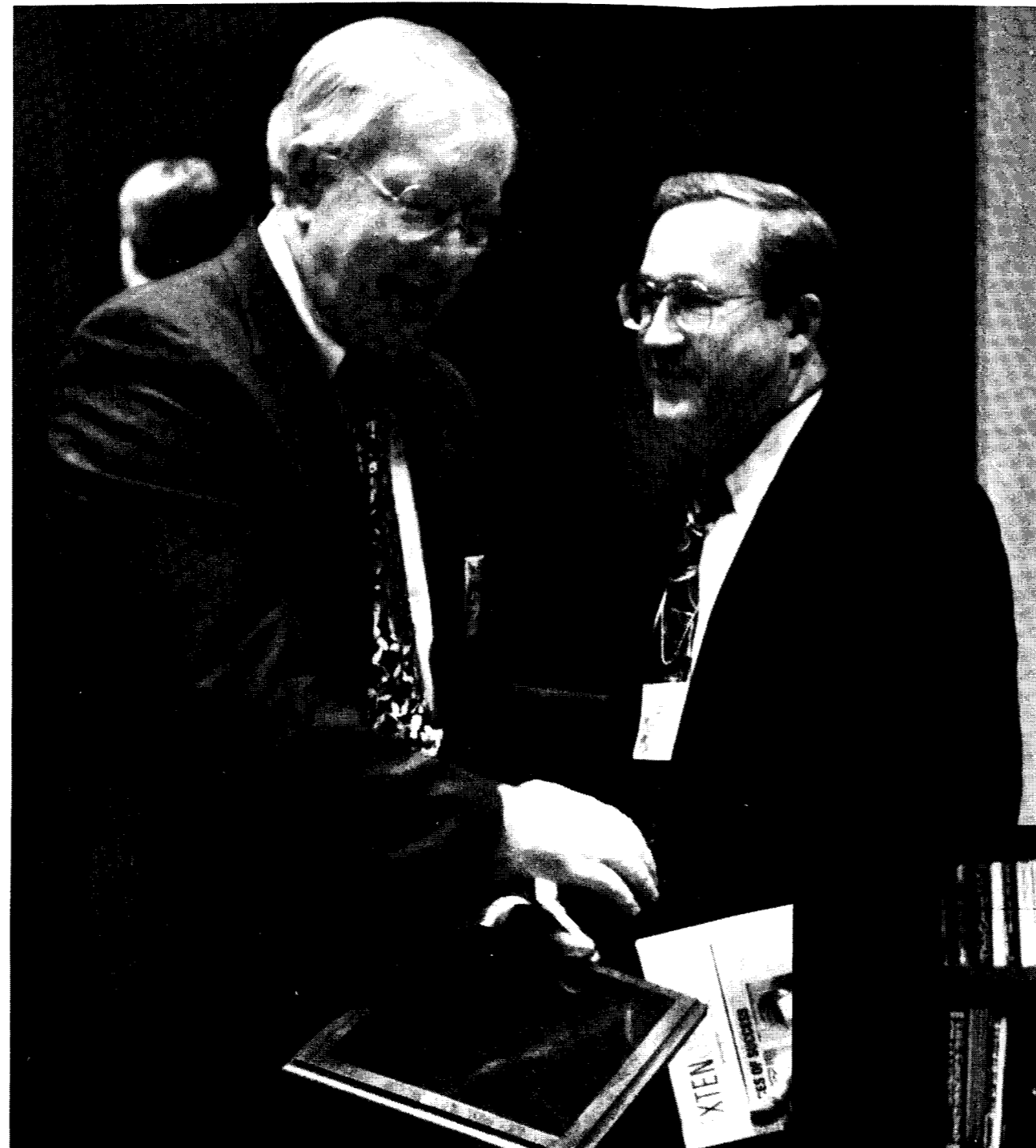
FACES OF MES ANNUAL CONFERENCE MIRROR THEME: 'FACES OF SUCCESS'

MES staff gathered in Brainerd in October for education, accolades and fellowship at Annual Conference. Following the theme "Faces of Success," the conference offered workshops on the "faces" of many timely topics including health care, biotechnology, the environment, food safety and team building. The awards ceremony on the first evening included a videotaped address by University of Minnesota President Nils Hasselmo on "The New Direction of MES in the U. of M. Mission" as well as remarks by University Vice President C. Eugene Allen. The final day and a half of the conference was devoted to working sessions for the ten newly formed MES specialization teams. These photographs by Dave Hansen of EDS capture some of the highlights of the 1993 Annual Conference.



Above: MaryKay Penn, special projects consultant with the Girl Scouts of America, delivered the opening general session address at MES Annual Conference. She spoke on diversity, pluralism and leadership in a rapidly changing world.

Right: Technology helped MES Annual Conference participants see on-site speakers better through large screen projection and also to hear and question speakers in other cities who were linked via satellite to the meeting rooms. Here Randy Evans, video conference technician with Relay House, monitors the satellite feed from Washington, D.C.



Above: Rochester physician Dr. R. Scott Wright, at the podium, led an Annual Conference workshop called "Faces of Health Care: Understanding the Issues." Representative Tim Penny is visible at left on screen through a satellite hook-up with his Washington, D.C., office. Others on the panel discussing the changes that will be coming in rural health care included Dr. A. Clint MacKinney of Cresco, Iowa; Dr. Stuart Hanson of Park Nicollet Medical Center in the Twin Cities; and State Senator Duane Benson.

Center photo: Agricultural engineer Fred Bergsrud, left, received congratulations from Gerald Miller, collegiate program leader. Bergsrud received one of the Director's Awards to Distinguished Faculty (campus-based) at the Annual Conference honors banquet. The two recipients of the Distinguished Extension Support Staff awards were Terri McClure, Jackson County administrative secretary, and Lee Perry, executive secretary in the College of Human Ecology.

Upper right: Rice County Extension Educator Marian Anderson, center, visits with Beth Russell, left, Chippewa County, and Ann Bosch, Kandiyohi County. Anderson received the Director's Award to Distinguished Faculty (county-based) at this year's Annual Conference. Other major awards went to the Arrowhead water quality team led by Kendall Dykhuis, St. Louis County Extension Educator, for its broadly based team effort on lakeshore management and pollution control, and to Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone and Rock counties for their work within their own staffs and with schools and community groups to understand and appreciate the state's increasing racial and ethnic diversity. Senator LeRoy Stumpf of Thief River Falls received the Director's Award for Distinguished Contributions for his support of MES on the Higher Education, Funding and Agriculture committees of the Minnesota Senate.



BRIEFLY

EPSILON SIGMA PHI, the national honorary extension fraternity, recently elected Marian Anderson, Rice County, as president of the PI chapter in Minnesota. She succeeds Juanita Reed-Boniface, retired, as the organization's president. President elect is Charles Christians, animal science; secretary, Sheila Craig, Fillmore County; treasurer, Dennis Seefeldt, retired; and directors, Marilyn Grantham, MES program leader, and Janet Beyer, Winona County.

NEWLY INITIATED MEMBERS of Epsilon Sigma Phi are Joyce DeBoe, EDS; Peggy Knutson, Grant County; Dan Marten, Benton County; Harvey Buchite, Anoka County; and Lonna Smith, Rock County.

SCHOLARSHIPS funded by the Minnesota Extension Workers Scholarship fund were awarded to Shirley Anderson, Lyon County; Jeanette Pitt, Aitkin County and Roselyn Biermaier, Yellow Medicine County. Epsilon Sigma Phi chapter awards went to Tim Dolan, Sibley County; Ann Bosch, Kandiyohi County; Mary Lou Ihrke, Blue Earth County; Francis Januschka, retired, Stearns County; and Sue Englemann, Sibley County. The Epsilon Sigma Phi state team award was presented to educators in the Southeast District along with Claudia Parliament, agricultural and applied economics; Joe Fox, retired district director; and Roger Steinberg, community resources. Former editor of *The Farmer* magazine, Robert Rupp, was presented the State Friend of Extension Award.

KANABEC COUNTY 4-H MEMBER Andrew Vanecek has received the organization's highest honor at National 4-H Youth Congress held in Chicago earlier this month. The 4-H Presidential Award went to 12 young people from throughout the country and includes a \$1,500 scholarship and a silver tray presented in the name of the President of the United States. Andrew is 18 and a freshman at Macalester College. He graduated from Mora High School where he was active in sports, student government, dramatics and the school newspaper in addition to being a six-year 4-H member. His award was in recognition of work in the citizenship program, which won him top honors at the county, district and state levels before being judged nationally.

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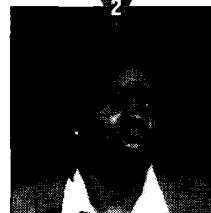


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