

## **Presentation to the ISU Extension Retirees at the 2007 ISU Extension Annual Conference**

Good afternoon. I am honored to have the opportunity to address such a distinguished audience of Extension professionals. Although with all of your experience and know-how, it might be more appropriate if *you* were addressing *me*.

It is wonderful that you still feel connected to Extension, although I'm not surprised. The "business" of Extension was eloquently summarized by Ralph L. Reeder, professor emeritus of agricultural communications at Purdue University, who said,

Extension's future lies with helping those who have the greatest need. That is where the pioneers of Extension started their work. ... It is an awesome assignment for an organization and its personnel if they are to find ways to 'pick up' those left behind. Yet it is no more of a challenge than the pioneers faced when Extension began. Extension's program continues to be in the hands of those people for whom Extension carries the name Service. Hope for the future remains in a basic concept of democracy, of all civilized society, that the majority of their citizens will hold firm to their 'mission of concern' for those in need.

I believe that "helping those who have the greatest need" gets in your blood and that it doesn't end at retirement. In fact, I saw a t-shirt the other day that was perfect for you all. It said, "I'm not aging, I'm increasing in value!"

The same could be said for today's ISU Extension. We are continually seeking ways to add value to Iowans. So we continue to do what we have always done best, helping those who have the greatest need through building partnerships and providing relevant, research-based learning opportunities, all of which lead to one objective: **to improve the quality of life in Iowa.**

Extension has evolved over the years from its popular public image as a friend of the farmer that provided scientific information to improve rural agriculturally based activities. To be sure, the county extension agent remains inextricably interwoven into the fabric of rural America as personified in Norman Rockwell's 1948 portrait of an extension agent kneeling next to a Guernsey heifer, instructing a 4-H youth.

But today, ISU Extension agents also are developing partnerships with state commissions and organizations serving underrepresented groups. And, they are providing opportunities for youth to demonstrate knowledge in science, engineering, and technology. Moreover, they are helping Iowa industry leverage globalization to improve their competitiveness and serve as a catalyst for campus economic development research activities.

There are many avenues or programs that Extension uses to reach that objective:

1. 4-H Youth Development
2. Families
3. Community and Economic Development
4. Business and Industry—which also goes by the name CIRAS (Center for Industrial Research and Service)
5. Agriculture and Natural Resources
6. Continuing and Distance Education, soon to be know as ISU Online

Each program centers around three values:

- Healthy People
- Healthy Environments
- Healthy Economies

### **Funding**

Over the decades, Extension has seen many program changes and also changes to its funding sources. Last year's annual budget for Extension was almost \$92 million. Over the years our funding sources have shifted by necessity:

- 37 percent of Extension's budget came from federal and state appropriations (\$34.5 million).
- The rest came from funding that ISU Extension self-generated, mostly from user fees and grants and contracts.

ISU Extension is hailed as a national model in imposing modest user fees for many of its services in order to continue its high level of service. We were the first to move aggressively into user fees and most other states are now following our lead.

I would like to bring you up to speed on some of Extension's current initiatives, which have emerged from our Extension top priorities.

### **Urban Extension Development**

Urban centers are the financial, commercial, and industrial centers of Iowa. They also are the hub for wealth and services for their surrounding areas. In addition, urban communities are population centers for their surrounding areas. With almost half of the school age youth living in urban centers and surrounding suburbs, these youth and their parents provide a new and underserved audience for ISU Extension. This is where Iowa's future population growth will occur. This is where the potential students for Iowa State University live. These urban centers also will be major employment centers for future Iowa State University graduates. The success or failure of these urban centers will have a critical impact on the surrounding area and the future of Iowa.

Urban Extension Development will lead to improved quality of life for urban residents and enhanced services within urban communities. The programs will link Iowa State University to Iowa's urban centers and build partnerships to provide research-based learning opportunities for urban residents.

### **Business and Industry Extension**

Extension's Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) will be able to match student design teams with Iowa companies to identify solutions to their most pressing development challenges. Students will gain experience as they work on industries' design challenges; and companies will take advantage of an additional avenue for exploring new ideas so that they can better compete in a global economy. The close interaction between students and company personnel will increase the likelihood that the students will stay in Iowa upon graduation. This increased interaction between ISU students and the Iowa business community will enhance undergraduate education, support economic growth in the state, and create powerful incentives for our graduates to stay in Iowa as they see firsthand the opportunities that exist for them in these companies.

### **ISU OnLine™**

ISU OnLine, formerly Continuing and Distance Education, will accelerate growth and access to highly sought-after online classes that meet the needs of place- and time-based students, businesses, professional organizations, and public sector agencies. It will extend the excellence of ISU by offering ISU's truly best academic courses and curricula—those in which we have a unique expertise or special level of expertise. ISU OnLine will serve Iowans who are time- and place-bound students whom our campus cannot serve for many reasons, including lack of capacity, and students whose educational needs or interests cannot be well met by other educational providers.

### **Expanding the Horizons program**

Horizons brings together all segments of a community to affect structural and systematic solutions. Iowa State University Extension collaborated with 10 educational organizations and the Northwest Area Foundation to design Horizons. The program was piloted in 44 communities and has expanded to 200 communities in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and Washington. Iowa State University Extension is the delivery organization for the Horizons program in Iowa. For families and communities to thrive, everyone must have an opportunity to prosper. By expanding the Horizons program, Iowa State University Extension can help communities build a comprehensive leadership base to address poverty, economic decline, and the exodus of young adults.

### **Mobilizing the Iowa Bioeconomy.**

One of our state's fastest growing industries is the bioeconomy. As Iowans explore developing the state's biorenewable resources, they must consider the agronomic, economic, social, and environmental impacts of this rapidly growing initiative. Iowa State University Extension can help them make informed decisions and be engaged in shaping a desirable future. As Iowans embrace the bioeconomy, ISU Extension will synthesize the results of ISU's multiple research agendas and integrate this information into timely educational and training activities and resource materials for Iowa producers and their service providers.

Again, I would like to thank you for coming today and encourage you to stay involved with Extension.