

**Strengthening Michigan's Economy:
Roles for MAES and MSUE**

After the County Issue Meetings

County MSU Extension offices are completing the series of public meetings to gather input about the issues and opportunities that can be addressed by MAES research and MSUE educational programming. Now it is time for the county staff to take the input and shape it into a realistic plan of work. Here are a few tips on developing that plan and sharing results with the public

Shaping the County Plan

- 1) Pull together ALL sources of input:
 - a. The summary statements on priority issues from the public meetings
 - b. Citizen survey results, if available for your county
 - c. SOSS results (on the issues id website – www.msue.msu.edu/issueid/)
 - d. Additional input from the local Extension council and other advisory groups
 - e. Consideration of demographics from county profiles and other sources
 - f. Staff content expertise and knowledge of the community

- 2) Pare down all of the input into a realistic number of goals for the county. The number of goals will vary, depending on the size of the county, the number of MSUE staff, and the number of community issues that have been identified. These goals should represent broad programmatic initiatives, not everything every educator is doing. Here are some questions to guide the process:
 - a. What are we already doing and need to continue?
 - b. Do we currently have the resources (time, staff, budget, etc.) to address these goals? Are there avenues to procure additional resources if needed?
 - c. What issues can we most effectively impact?
 - d. What are our hoped for outcomes?
 - e. Who can we partner with?

- 3) Use the template (www.msue.msu.edu/issueid/) to submit your county's plan. Remember that the goals need to be written to show community impact, specifying the type(s) of change expected (knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors or community change).

Sharing the Results

Remember that plans are important but it is what happens as a result of the plan that makes a difference in the community. It is also important to show the people who have participated in the process that their input has been incorporated into a plan. Here are a few suggestions:

- 1) Write up the major new goals into concise statements that demonstrate potential community impact. Insert these goals in the box on the front page of the next edition of the county's partner report.

- 2) Include a listing of the new goals in reporting to the county board and a board subcommittee. If legislators or other elected officials participated or were aware of your process, you may wish to brief them on the results.
- 3) Depending on your situation, consider writing newspaper columns, an opinion piece or letters to the editor thanking the community for participating in this process. These communications can also describe MSU Extension's commitment to future programming goals.
- 4) Results should be shared with those who participated in the two county meetings, with the county council and with other key advisory groups, such as 4-H councils, etc.
- 5) You may want to share the input from the issue meetings and the resulting county plan with community groups such as Human Service Coordinating Bodies, USDA partner agencies, school and agency partners, collaborating service groups, foundation partners and others such as Farm Bureau.
- 6) Remember to emphasize that this is a **plan**. It represents the general direction for local programming during the next 3-5 years. The plan does not represent everything the local team will do, it will be updated annually, and it will change based on current needs. Extension's major objective is to respond to local concerns by providing research based educational programming.

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