Agent Tip Sheet

Meeting with local officials

- You are encouraged to meet with local officials to explain the new structure and the implications for your county.
- On the intranet site you will find an array of tools to help you with these meetings. Included are a PowerPoint presentation that you can customize to your situation and a short video of Beverly explaining the situation and the new structure. Both should be helpful in local meetings. The video can be played from the web through your computer/projector or you can burn it to a DVD.
- Be prepared to tell local officials why Extension is important to citizens in your county. Use impact data from the Impact Site to support your points. Using the Impact Site you can show 5 to 10 years of trend data.
- These meetings are a good opportunity to demonstrate the Impact Site for local officials so they can see the good work you are doing in their district. However, check the site first and make sure you have submitted your latest work so your best work is represented to them. Submitting strong, well-written, documentable impact reports is vital this year. The site is open for submissions. Don’t wait. Get them in now so the editors can have them live for your meetings.
- Officials who have further questions should contact Dean Angle.

Meeting with ELS, agriculture producers, community partner groups

- Many of the materials you use with local officials will be useful in partner organization meetings, too.
- In addition, you will find a Q&A handout that you can customize to your situation or the group in the meeting.

Meeting with 4-H parents/schools

- Choose from the online tools that will help you reassure 4-H families that we are offering some type of 4-H program in every county. Let them know how it will be delivered and how they can access 4-H resources.

Working with media

- A column from Dr. Sparks will be distributed via Georgia FACES (http://www.georgiafaces.com) to all media subscribers. The column focuses on the statewide situation and plan. Check with your local media to make sure they are subscribed and received the column. Encourage them to use it.
- Offer a follow up column or companion news story that further details how the statewide picture given in Dr. Sparks’ column applies in your county.
- Make local radio and TV stations aware of the online video. They can get soundbites from it for a story.
Answering questions from local citizens

- Remain positive even if the visitor/caller is angry about the changes.
- Reiterate that this change is necessary due to lost funds and faculty.
- Assure citizens we are doing all we can to offer some level of continued service to all Georgia counties.
- Offer avenues to respond. Letters to the Editor of local newspapers or letters to local elected officials that detail why Extension is important in your community and how it benefits the community are appropriate. Blaming officials for making cuts precipitated by the economic downturn are not. Nobody wanted this economic situation to make these cuts necessary, but stressing the importance of restoring funds for needed positions when funds are available would be helpful.