November Centra: “Urban External Funding”
Nationally recognized for their urban programs, our guest speakers gave an overview of the University of Illinois Extension urban program in Chicago and surrounding areas.

Dr. James Oliver
Associate Chancellor & Assistant Dean
Urban & Metropolitan Affairs

&

Ms. Willene Buffett
Director, Cook County Extension
Cook County Unit

With the funding from the Illinois state legislature, the 21st Century Initiative funds have allowed the urban program to expand its faculty and program impacts. Dr. Oliver explained their “comprehensive concept” approach for legislators and the importance of letting them know how the land grant can help address their local issues. Working closely with elected and non-elected (natural leaders) individuals was stressed. Work with people who can help get things done and keep them informed and involved so they know who you are. In Cook County, they make an effort to ensure that Extension is part of the Chicago agenda by networking and identifying opportunities for joint funding.

Ms. Buffett shared the organizational structure for Cook County and indicated three new positions as a result of the Initiative. An Extension Partnerships position and a Grants and Contracts position work along side the Public Relations position. She indicated that non-traditional hires were important when looking at expansion of programs “outside the box” and that marketing and evaluation are an ongoing part of everyone’s job responsibilities. Five percent of the budget is set aside for marketing.

Check out their website at: http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/
E-Mail Communication Tips

E-mail has added to our work instead of decreased it. It is so handy to just zip off an e-mail and take care of the response and be through with that, right? Wrong! We need to use caution and courtesy when communicating electronically. A speaker at the National ESP Conference in Charleston, SC, gave the following e-mail communication tips:

1. Use a clear subject line and be as specific as you can.
2. Use a greeting to establish rapport.
3. Do not use abbreviations unless you are sure the recipient knows their meaning.
4. Check spelling before hitting “send”.
5. DO NOT USE ALL CAPS (or all little letters).
6. Use a closing.
7. Use a friendly style, because sarcasm doesn’t work.
8. Do not reply to “all” or cc everyone.
9. KISS – “Keep it simple sweetheart”.
10. Know when to pick up the phone.
11. NRN = No Response Needed. Include it in your e-mail.

Source: Denise Ryan, Lead Presenter, Firestar
http://firestarspeaking.com/
Spotlight

Safety Education in McLennan County
McLennan County 4-H & Youth Committee collaborated with the CEA, Progressive Agriculture Foundation and community leaders to develop an intensive education program to educate youth on various safety issues. TCE developed a “Farm Safety Day” targeted towards 6th graders in the 14 school districts in the county. Over 400 youth spent a day at the Heart O’ Texas Fair Grounds rotating from station to station learning about safety issues. Topics included safety with: seatbelts; horses; large equipment; electricity; water; poison; CPR; first aid; ATVs; strangers; fire; alcohol; 911; bicycles and firearms.

The program has been so successful that the “Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp” has become an annual event.
Contact: Kim Miles, CEA-4-H, McLennan

P-16 Partnership
The P-16 (Pre-kindergarten through College) Partnership is between the Texas A&M University System, including Texas Cooperative Extension, and three school districts in South San Antonio. The Partnership’s goal is to help students improve their academic performance to prepare them for college-level work and entry into the workforce.

TCE is spearheading the effort to bring the services of more than 30 community agencies and businesses to the schools to benefit school counselors, nurses, social workers, and family liaisons. These services are delivered through community fairs, student/family help cards, and resource guides.

Created to service the three school districts in the Mayor of San Antonio’s Southside Initiative, the Partnership is unique in that it has brought resources from the office of the Mayor of San Antonio, the school districts, the higher education institutions in the area of the Partnership, and various components of the A&M System together to strengthen the abilities of the parents and school personnel to function as full partners in the educational endeavors of the schools.

The A&M System P-16 Partnership has become a model for Texas as well as other states. The Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board launched a statewide P-16 initiative to promote better communication between public and higher education. Similar efforts are under way in California, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Georgia and Nebraska.
Contact: Dr. Connie Sheppard, CEA-FCS, Bexar