Strategic Roadmap

Introduction

Since its inception, eXtension has been in the forefront of strategically planning its future. This report contains the essential strategy development material of eXtension's new "Strategic Roadmap." It represents the overall master plan for managing eXtension for success both for the long term (5-7 years) and short-term (1-3 years). Throughout 2008 eXtension's leaders, professional staff and contributors will further build out this master plan by completing its future organizational model and communicating and launching important new strategic directions.

The Process

In November 2007, the eXtension Governing Committee, with representation from each Cooperative Extension Region, the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES), the Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP) and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) approved moving forward with a strategic planning effort to create a new "master plan" designed to build on eXtension's success and expand capabilities into the future.

Key goals included:

- **Reach and Prominence:** To create a large, loyal, growing and diverse customer base across a broad spectrum of traditional Cooperative Extension customers and all the way to new groups of global learners in multiple communities of interest.
- **Compelling Value Proposition in Communities of Interest:** To develop and implement the vision and master plan to achieve a powerful competitive advantage for Cooperative Extension in the provision of un-assailed, scholarly research and relevant information for practical application.
- **Capable, Collaborative and Inspired Leaders:** To develop and enlist an enabled eXtension management team whose enhanced knowledge, skills, abilities and mindsets enable them to become the catalytic, motivational leadership team that drives performance improvement and transformation throughout eXtension.
In December 2007, Russ Roberts, a management consultant and Adjunct Professor of Management and Organization, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University was hired to facilitate the planning effort to result in development of the new "master plan." The following chart represents the process used in developing the new strategic roadmap.

**Strategic Planning Retreats**

The first of two strategic planning retreats was held at The Hyatt Lodge in Oakbrook, IL in March 2008. This meeting focused on understanding the Cooperative Extension System’s and eXtension’s current and future competitive and internal environments and the implications of these for eXtension’s future strategic direction. Due care was taken to ensure that leadership’s vision of the future and strategic direction was as clear, specific and actionable as possible. The principal informational inputs drawn upon by the leadership team in developing its future strategic direction included the following external and internal data.

**External Data**

- An examination of the key global economic, competitive, technology, information and societal trends effecting educational materials and intellectual properties and the dissemination of such material, as well as the customers for such material.
- An examination of most of these same forces in the U.S. economy together with an assessment of their impact and some innovative approaches for responding to these highly challenging developments.
• The changing future of technology, communications and information and the likely implications for state universities, land grant colleges and the Cooperative Extension System (CES) efforts linked to them, including how Cooperative Extension can differentiate itself, survive and thrive in the coming new strategic era.
• An overview of the changing role of technology both as an enabler and strategic differentiator, and how this changing role places new demands on Cooperative Extension and eXtension leadership. Particular emphasis was placed on how an increasingly more networked global economy will require eXtension to pursue a more proactive approach to forming highly productive and collaborative external business and consumer partnerships.

Internal Data
• A compendium of internal CES views of eXtension as represented by the verbatim interview transcripts of directors, leaders and employees who participated in confidential interviews. A total of four groups participated in these interviews including: a) Cooperative Extension directors and leaders; b) the eXtension leadership team; c) eXtension professional staff; d) subject matter experts from outside of CES proper, including government funders and consultants.
• A survey of CES and eXtension Strategic Preparedness designed to further probe and quantify the views of the four above groups regarding specific issues of importance, including issues such as planning and organizational effectiveness, which were identified in the confidential interviews.

Strategic Planning Retreat Participants
• Ronald Brown, Executive Director, Association of Southern Region Extension Directors
• Nancy Bull, Associate Dean, Outreach and Public Service and Associate Director Cooperative Extension System, University of Connecticut
• Thomas Coon, Director of Michigan State University Extension and Professor, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University.
• Dan Cotton, Director, eXtension Initiative
• Carla Craycraft, Associate Director, eXtension Initiative
• Greg Crosby, National Program Leader - Natural Resources and Environment, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), USDA; eXtension Governing Committee and Directors’ Council
• Aaron Ebata, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, University of Illinois; Just-In-Time-Parenting Community of Practice
• Kevin Gamble, Associate Director, eXtension Initiative
• Karen Hinton, Dean and Director, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
• David King, Interim Associate Provost, University Outreach and Engagement, Oregon State University
• Richard Koelsch, Livestock & Poultry Environmental Management Learning Center Community of Practice; Assistant Dean of Extension, University of Nebraska
• Michael Lambur, eXtension Evaluation & Research Leader
• L. Washington Lyons, Executive Administrator, Association of Extension Administrators; eXtension Directors’ Council
• Terry Meisenbach, eXtension Communications & Marketing Leader
A Strategy Implementation and Organizational Effectiveness Retreat was held in April 2008, again, at The Hyatt Lodge in Oakbrook, IL and this time involved the full eXtension staff. The retreat provided the staff members, under the guidance of Russ Roberts, an opportunity to contribute their ideas to the new strategic roadmap, while aligning job accountabilities, values and behaviors with newly clarified strategic directions.

These retreats and the groundwork laid during both set the stage for what follows in this document.
What We Learned—eXtension’s Challenges

The timing of this strategic planning effort is important. eXtension recently launched its web site to high initial acclaim—a significant milestone event on the way to fulfilling its mission. The site stands as tangible proof that collaborative work is taking place and that eXtension is working; however, challenges remain as we seek to meet the needs of various Communities of Interest. The context within which eXtension operates is complex and presents both opportunities and challenges for success. The graphic below delineates six “challenges” that eXtension faces in the future. These challenges are also discussion points around which eXtension staff, supporters, administrators, and others can organize thinking and action for the future. The question posed in the graphic: “Do we truly understand just how important eXtension is to Cooperative Extension’s future and the challenges we must address to make it as successful as it can be?” helps to set the stage for the discussions that formed the organization’s strategic planning efforts as detailed in the following pages.

In addition, there are other challenges eXtension faces, which must be understood and addressed constructively. The more prominent include:

*Scalability:* Knowing that eXtension has made significant progress since its creation three years ago, people are anxious to see it scale more rapidly while doing so in a cost-effective manner.
**Relevance and Value:** While Communities of Practice have aggregated and developed important content, content needs to be relevant and applicable to the sometimes significantly different needs and specific conditions of individual states or regions of the country. Academic material that began life as university faculty research findings needs to be packaged to actively engage the web audience. Cooperative Extension may no longer be looked to as a sole source provider; therefore, strategies and processes to better “compete” for Communities of Interest (audience) need to be developed and practiced.

**Content Development & Collaboration:** Some fear remains that a collaborative, wiki-based, content development approach may not adequately protect Cooperative Extension’s superior fact-based, peer-reviewed research and information when collaborating with non-faculty community participants, even when collaborators are Cooperative Extension employees or Community of Practice partners.

**Personalized Delivery:** The challenge for eXtension is addressing changing demographics and existing and potential customer needs in a personalized manner, which for its first 100 years has been the hallmark of Cooperative Extension.

**Truly Complementing Cooperative Extension:** eXtension should be a vital and essential complement to the traditional brick and mortar local Extension office. Many customers prefer anytime-anywhere information and through eXtension local Extension educators can spend more time devoted to transformational learning. Additionally, eXtension’s content should become the local Extension agent’s or educator’s first and best source for the comprehensive and authoritative information they need to better serve the needs of their walk-in customers. eXtension will help broaden the reach of Cooperative Extension, attract new customers, drive up the value received and drive down the cost per customer served.

**The Changing Roles in Cooperative Extension:** There are unspoken but very real personal concerns evoked by such questions as “How can I help to enhance Cooperative Extension through involvement in eXtension?” “How does eXtension help me do my job at the local level while expanding my visibility and reach among my peers nationally?” Those less taken with the potential payoff of eXtension either have not been introduced to the potential benefits, find them less likely to be achieved, or value them less. Some believe that many or most Extension customer needs require uniquely local solutions in spite of the fact that people are increasingly seeking Internet-based answers to their questions.

In conclusion, there is a need to ensure that eXtension is strategically directed for the next several years. In so doing, it helps Cooperative Extension remain viable in a dramatically different, information-enabled world, as is evident in Cooperative Extension’s last futuring document.

Integrating eXtension effectively within Cooperative Extension can only be achieved by starting with an objective, unbiased attempt to understand the world today, with particular focus on evolving global information trends, market places, competitors and the customers for these services – Cooperative Extension’s customers. This is essential for Cooperative Extension if it is to differentiate itself in a whole new strategic era of information sharing and problem solving.
Unlike the past, it is an era where the competition is intense almost everywhere and where survival is not assured.

eXtension needs to be proactive in identifying the most powerful vision possible to enhance CES’ success in this changing world. Together Cooperative Extension leaders and stakeholders must take ownership of this vision. In these discussions eXtension leadership can answer questions, gauge excitement and solicit the feedback, approvals, and funding to help further sharpen and build out Cooperative Extension’s vision of the future.

**Our Strategic Intent**

Perhaps the most visible and most often used sign of strategic direction for any organization is the language it uses to talk about itself. Mission, vision, values, goals...all words that tell stakeholders, employees, clients, and customers, in simple, understandable words the bottom line...what an organization is all about. eXtension through this strategic planning process has revised these important descriptors. In addition, it has further developed and defined even greater descriptors of its strategic intent.

**Competitive Advantage**

Our competitive advantage will draw upon these foundational strengths:

- *Customer-Focused:* eXtension is committed to understanding our customers thus ensuring that information and educational programming are relevant and responsive to the needs of individuals.

- *A Trusted Resource:* eXtension is committed to providing anywhere-anytime access to objective, research-based, and credible information and educational programming. Subject matter professionals with high-level expertise and skills will develop content and programs in a collaborative, non-duplicative manner.

- *Community-Based:* eXtension values customer engagement and participation, individually or in learning communities bound together by shared interests and enthusiasm for continued learning. Working in partnership with local offices, eXtension will extend and complement Cooperative Extension's interactions with customers and communities.

- *Guaranteed Access:* eXtension provides access and delivers information and programming in compelling and instructionally sound formats consistent with the ever-changing technology choices of customers.

**Commitment to Success**

eXtension, in its commitment to meet the needs of online customers, will ensure the greatest possible success of the entire Cooperative Extension System. We do this by:

- *Building the Cooperative Extension Service Network:* eXtension represents the organization’s subject matter interests and expertise joined together in Communities of Practice and charged with supporting the information and educational needs of customers in new ways.

- *Producing Effective Content:* eXtension supports an appealing and easy-to-use workspace that attracts Communities of Practice, encourages collaboration, and yields
interactive, high-quality information, useful in answering questions, solving life issues and stimulating interaction.

- **Increasing Visibility:** eXtension, by providing relevant and timely access to high quality content and services, enhances the visibility of Cooperative Extension. We work with member institutions to increase content discoverability, while reducing duplicative and/or borrowed content. We will create as many links and references as possible so that CES is ranked higher in common search engine listings.

- **Increasing Local Use and Value:** Cooperative Extension employees derive value from eXtension in many ways. People can share programmatic loads and expertise with colleagues, add breadth and depth to content offerings and know that programs will be maintained over time. Local offices are able to direct local customers to a complementary information source for questions and answers, as well as use, repackage, and brand content to support local programming. This saves local offices time and resources to be reinvested in other transformative educational efforts. eXtension also supports customers interested in linking to local offices and related resources and refers customers to local offices for more in-depth and/or precise local information.

- **Reaching More Customers:** eXtension reaches more customers because of greater choice, greater convenience, and availability.

Strategically, we encourage and foster the development of new Communities of Practice to address important market needs. We work to avoid duplication of effort, while emphasizing collaboration and team building. We seek to maximize the effectiveness of all Cooperative Extension in the development of effective Communities of Practice.

Recognizing the changing nature and increasing expectations of web-based learning models, eXtension emphasizes practical creativity and cost-efficiency, while considering all possible approaches for developing quality content, building community, interacting with customers, sponsoring opportunities for collaboration, building to scale and measuring learning outcomes. Also, we seek partnerships with others to grow and strengthen the value of our offerings.

We are committed to constant innovation to meet the ever-higher demands of customers regarding content, collaboration and functionality. We seek ways to delight our customers and eXtension partners through innovation and creative ideas and technologies. This calls for organizational models that are new, different and sometimes a departure from the organization we have been in the past. Therefore, we locate and adapt brilliant ideas developed elsewhere for our own use. We share such best practices with our customers and partners to become better, reduce production costs, and remain competitive within the knowledge marketplace.

**A Return on Investment**

As we continue to mature, we will work hard to:

- **Demonstrate Our Value:** We will describe what success looks like and develop metrics that assess how we are progressing toward our shared vision. Such metrics will show how effectively eXtension is delivering as promised to our many stakeholders that include our investors, content and program contributors and local offices. We will track our performance against a performance dashboard of key customer metrics describing use, growth, referrals, customer satisfaction, outcomes and impacts, content downloads,
and loyalty; and similar metrics will be used to measure internal use and the contributions of eXtension contributors.

- **Strengthen Content Development**: Increase the pace and flow of new content development, reduce the time it takes for new Communities of Practice to organize and begin work, and develop more overall cost effective work processes.
- **Grow and Diversify Our Funding**: In order to ramp-up current processes and build to scale, we will identify additional funding sources including government partners, corporate sponsors, and industry collaborators.

Our intent is to present a significant return on investment to our partners and supporters thus justifying their continuing faith and support of eXtension.

**eXtension’s Critical Success Factors**

Based upon our new strategic intent, eXtension leadership has identified the most important capabilities we must put in place to ensure success. We call these our “critical success factors” or “CSF’s”, which are as follows:

- **User-Focus**: Constantly assess the needs of our external users and identify enhancements needed to respond to their changing needs. Provide rich, valuable experiences offering the opportunity for community, information sharing, learner collaboration, and more to make our online educational offerings both compelling and relevant.
- **Content Development and Support**: Develop high quality, trusted, valued content and the skills necessary to produce educational content for customers in a collaborative, customer-focused and non-duplicative manner. Provide an acceptable range of support for content contributors, partners and customers while making participation in Communities of Practice appealing, easy and convenient.
- **Shared Vision**: Create a system-wide shared vision and buy-in to eXtension’s role in serving our customers that our state and federal partners and investors understand and support. In turn, Cooperative Extension leaders will create greater synergy and support across the entire system to allow us to make decisions and take action consistent with our strategic direction.
- **Effective Organization**: Implement our strategy in a flexible, nimble, and creative way, doing the right things in the smartest way while continually strengthening our effectiveness and productivity as an integral part of Cooperative Extension’s future growth and success.
- **Empowered People**: Build an exciting, challenging, developmental, and rewarding environment that attracts and retains the very talented, motivated, productive people we need to succeed.
- **Value Added at All Levels**: Ensure that everything we do adds value, avoids redundancy, enhances connectedness, and maximizes the innovative learning experience of our customer.
- **Funding and Partnerships**: Grow the public and private funding and resources needed to support eXtension operations in a way that rewards their support and maximizes what we can accomplish together through creative collaboration.
- **Transparency and Accountability**: Determine, track, assess, and communicate progress, and manage to achieve our key performance goals to fulfill our vision and embed integrity and full disclosure in everything we do.
Our Promise

We pledge to help make all of Cooperative Extension – for we are all members of the same organization with the same goals and values – an even more vital, responsive, and viable entity for decades to come. By working together we will deliver on the promise and demands of the Smith-Lever Act in ways that reflect 21st century challenges and lifestyles. To that end we pledge to make Cooperative Extension more visible, distinctive, and in-demand, in ways that understand and assist our customer with the needs we were created to serve.
Action Plans

A significant outcome of this strategic planning process came as we analyzed our current situation and compared it to our forecast for the future of eXtension. Gaps or needs were identified and weighted and developed into categories that fell very closely toward the critical success factors mentioned earlier in this document. Not all could be fleshed out into full-blown action plans and many of those issues are still to be resolved and can be addressed in the future. The Action Plans that follow were identified through both the Strategic Planning and Strategic Implementation retreats to have the highest priority at this time. They will be supplemented with actual timelines and milestones upon which eXtension can act, react, and build over the coming years and months.

Action Plan for Improving Services to Our Customers

Situation
As eXtension moves forward to actively compete in today's knowledge marketplace it’s common sense that now, more than ever, involving customers and clients of the Cooperative Extension System and those who have yet to discover eXtension, becomes even more important. This action plan for improving services to our customers truly addresses the issues eXtension faces beginning with knowing more about our customers, users, and clients.

eXtension depends on the needs identification processes of state Cooperative Extension Services, but currently, there is no systematic process to assess the specific needs of our online customers and potential customers. We need to better understand the programs and content they are interested in, how they benefit, how and where they prefer to engage with Communities of Practice (CoPs) and other learners, and in what formats. We lack market analysis experience with respect to changing market needs, market size and assessment techniques, which if better understood, will ensure that CoP efforts are in line with the needs of customers who are increasingly choosing technology-based information-seeking behavior.

Customer engagement is lacking because we rely too heavily on a web-centric approach. We need to deliver content using a variety of delivery technologies (e.g., widgets, syndication). And, we need to package content for different types of devices (e.g., mobile, SMS - Short Message Service). We tend not to be involved in social networks where people with like interests gather to participate in learning experiences with one another. Cooperative Extension should be engaged with online communities in the same way they have historically engaged and still engage with communities of place. Too little Extension information is available via syndication (i.e., feeds formats like Atom or RSS), and subsequently, 21st century customers may not be exposed to Cooperative Extension and its information.

The quality and quantity of our content should keep pace with customer demands. Customer expectations require that learning be intuitive, interactive, collaborative, and engaging. Content needs to be more discoverable--meaning that Cooperative Extension needs to be involved in learning communities so they can help us make our educational offerings easier to find. We need
to work with partners to avoid duplication of content; and apply search engine optimization techniques for linking, describing and labeling content and programs.

eXtension tools and services will depreciate in value if not maintained and enhanced. Understanding and applying new technologies is a must if we are to meet our obligations to customers. Tools and services need to maximize knowledge captured from daily activities. If used in this manner, applications will add value in a variety of ways while encouraging greater participation on the part of content contributors.

Recommendations

• Develop strategies to improve understanding of customer needs. Build upon known needs analysis efforts currently underway (e.g., Financial Security for All doing needs-analysis study related to online investment strategies). Leverage the work being done by the ECOP Marketing Task Force/Copernicus on CES marketing.
• Encourage CoPs to engage with customers to form interactive "Communities of Scholarship", content-related communities applying social media. The communities of learners already exist. We need to be more proactive in discovering and engaging communities in locations of their own choosing.
• Create additional entry points to the eXtension system. Examples include local web sites, mobile platforms, SMS and virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life). We need to think of eXtension as a connector with opportunities in aggregation and re-syndication.
• Work with members/partners to adopt standard schema and syndication feeds (e.g., Atom and accepted microformats) so that content can be machine aggregated.
• Spend greater effort and resources working with state information technology staff on content aggregation and provision. Increasingly, people are getting information mediated through their social network. They are also getting their information through syndication and consuming it using tools like feed readers and personal start pages.
• Work with members/partners to encourage re-use of content among customers using existing state systems, open-content libraries, and open-sharing services (e.g. slideshare, Google Docs, YouTube, Flickr, etc.).
• Strengthen the quality and competitiveness of our content and programs by applying second-generation instructional design and construction techniques. Doing so will ensure that content is engaging and interactive, while increasing learning potential. This will be the preferred way to engage Extension’s next generation of customers, and for some, will be the only way they choose to use CES.
• Make our content more discoverable to help drive traffic to our resources. This will involve applying search engine optimization techniques and practices.
• Improve current tools and services by making them easier to use, better integrated and able to serve content in various formats. Define additional information/educational products that can be created with eXtension content and that add value at the local level; e.g. stand-alone FAQ system, stand-alone content subject widgets, learning management system (Moodle). Work with customers to define and develop new information products based on the research information of the land grant system.
Action Plan for Empowering CES Employees

Situation
Until eXtension is widely used and accepted as a normal way of doing business for Cooperative Extension system-wide, the danger exists that eXtension will be viewed as an "add on" to employees' job responsibilities. Since eXtension is still in its infancy with the public launch occurring just a few short months ago in February 2008, it is difficult for most employees to identify "what's in it for me" in regard to eXtension. Many in Cooperative Extension, including Directors and Administrators, although committed to the concept of eXtension, still need to have better examples, actual impact data and more success stories from their own faculty and staff as to the direct benefits of eXtension before they are willing to communicate to their employees that eXtension is part of their job and evaluate performance based upon their use of and contributions to eXtension.

We need to demonstrate that eXtension is cost effective, reaches new audiences, allows for higher quality and more in-depth content and educational programming, and is a better way of doing business for Cooperative Extension.

Recommendations
- Develop and implement Phase II of Be, Grow, Create, an internally-focused marketing campaign to inform and increase participation in eXtension:
  - Increase the number of CES employees with eXtension IDs.
  - Enlist more CES employees as eXtension content contributors, while eliminating known barriers to participation.
  - Encourage contribution to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)/Ask an Expert components of eXtension and encourage participation in CoPs.
    - Integrate eXtension web-based resources into CES employees' everyday work; these include tools like the FAQ system, Moodle, and wiki, which are available for general use by Extension faculty.
    - Encourage ID holders to use eXtension as a knowledge management system to leverage local programs (e.g., adding news items, events and calendar items, responding to FAQs, etc.).
    - Conduct a needs assessment to discover other ways local staff believes eXtension can be beneficial to them.
- Provide professional development training addressing eXtension-related technologies, services and societal trends.
  - Provide information to administrators/directors on eXtension benefits and how their faculty can participate in eXtension while using eXtension to leverage local programs.
  - Work with the Professional Development Community to help institutionalize eXtension training programs into state professional development plans.
  - Make use of eXtension collaborative and delivery tools a cornerstone of eXtension professional development efforts, including offering Moodle courses.
  - Assist CoPs with developing content and programs using collaborative tools and services (e.g., wiki, Google Docs, etc.).
  - Make content more discoverable through search engine optimization training.
- Offer training to CES employees at association meetings.
- Organize a national meeting to focus on helping CES better understand the informational and educational needs of online audiences, how we need to respond in order to meet those needs, and what we need to do to increase our value in the knowledge marketplace.
- Seek a Workforce Development Partner responsible for developing and delivering training programs on best practices related to:
  - Utilizing eXtension in local educational programs.
  - Contributing content and programs.
  - Reaching new audiences through eXtension.
  - Identifying and developing case studies highlighting successful use of eXtension in local and state programs.
  - Building a "Speakers Bureau" of faculty and staff who utilize eXtension in their programming.
  - Working closely with all eXtension staff involved in "telling the eXtension success story."

- Work with directors and administrators to incorporate eXtension contributions of faculty and staff into merit evaluation criteria and promotion and tenure processes.
  - Develop examples of merit evaluation and promotion and tenure materials that include eXtension contributions for county staff as well as faculty.
  - Share how some institutions are incorporating eXtension into evaluation and promotion and tenure processes (e.g., Louisiana State University, University of Missouri and the University of Nebraska).
  - Encourage Cooperative Extension leadership to name a working group to develop an action plan regarding promotion and tenure, and faculty recognition.

- Communicate the eXtension Story
  - Encourage CoP members to publish in the *Journal of Extension*, while exploring with JOE the possibility of establishing an eXtension track devoted to CoP best practices, achievements, the benefits of collaborative work, and other professional experiences.
  - Encourage CoP members to publish in their respective professional journals and with association resources, as appropriate.
  - Capture and share anecdotal information from successful Community of Practice members regarding the benefits of their eXtension work and how they have been rewarded personally and professionally as a result. Use our eXtension blog to share and promote topics of interest and seek ways to reach those who may be unfamiliar with eXtension. Share how local agents/educators can get involved; how they are involved; how eXtension has improved local programming.
Action Plan for Transparency and Accountability

Situation
To be successful, one must know what the dimensions of success are and how they will be measured and communicated. Currently, eXtension does have a set of goals and performance metrics. These are available at:  
http://about.extension.org/wiki/Revised_eXtension_Goals_12.07

These goals and metrics need to be routinely reviewed and endorsed to make sure they measure eXtension’s success.

Information and processes used in eXtension to create and monitor content and other information are very transparent. The problem is that people do not have easy access to this information for performance reporting, as well as for tenure and promotion processes.

While evaluation guidelines for CoPs exist that provide guidance for measuring use of and outcomes/impacts of their eXtension work, an eXtension reporting mechanism/system does not exist to collect this data. Continued evaluation assistance needs to be provided to CoPs to further their understanding, appreciation, and work on evaluating and reporting the use of and outcomes/impacts of their informational and educational materials on the public website. In addition, effort needs to be expended in documenting the transformative effects of eXtension on the Cooperative Extension System.

Recommendations
• Review, revise and enhance eXtension’s performance metrics:
  o Circulate the current goals and performance metrics to eXtension staff and seek their input. The metrics should focus on:
    ▪ demonstrating the success of eXtension,
    ▪ documenting success with no or minimal additional cost, and
    ▪ communicating success regularly to stakeholders.
  o Share the metrics with the Directors’ Council and the Governing Committee for review and additional input.
  o Publicize them within the Extension system. Provide the opportunity for review and input.
• Continue to work with CoP evaluation contacts and evaluation sub-committees on their understanding, appreciation, and work on evaluating and reporting the use of, and outcomes and impacts of their informational and educational materials on the public website. This work will be accomplished through individual consultation by the eXtension Evaluation and Research Leader, as well as training sessions in person at appropriate events (e.g., the national CoP meeting) and via Adobe Connect (i.e., web conference). Input from the eXtension Evaluation and Research Advisory Committee will also be sought to improve CoP evaluation efforts. The CoP Evaluation Guide, available on the wiki, needs to be continually updated with relevant evaluation information. The guide may be found at:
• Create a central location (wiki page) to house all appropriate content and process information (e.g., wiki information—especially tenure and promotion related information—Google analytics, syndicated feeds, etc.) for easy access by CoP members and other Extension personnel. The location of this page will be communicated to the Extension system.

• Investigate and begin developing a system for collecting eXtension process and impact data. Care should be taken not to duplicate other reporting systems (e.g., the federal planning and reporting system). In addition, an impact template will also be developed that CoP’s can use to communicate results to stakeholders.

• A major study will begin in 2008 to investigate how eXtension is enhancing and impacting the Cooperative Extension System. This is anticipated to be a multi-year project (three-years minimum) to adequately document these effects. Key activities in year one will include:
  o Conduct a review of organizational transformation and change literature.
  o Based on this literature review and a review of eXtension, identify indicators of transformation appropriate for eXtension.
  o Seek input from Cooperative Extension System stakeholders on their perspectives of how eXtension is enhancing services to citizens.
  o Clarify indicators from information collected.
  o Prepare an evaluation plan to measure the effects of eXtension on the Cooperative Extension System.
Content Development Action Plans

eXtension’s top challenges today regarding content development for the web include reducing the time it takes, increasing the quantity and lowering the cost. There appears to be significant upside opportunity for discovering and implementing productivity improvements through creative, disciplined action in each step of the supply chain shown in the following graphic.

Two immediate aspects of content generation are simplifying content generation and aggregation; and to look for ways to add more content by adding additional Communities of Practice, while at the same time making those that are in place more sustainable. The two action plans that follow address these issues.

Action Plan for Adding and Supporting Existing Communities of Practice

Situation

eXtension needs to strategically expand the number of content areas offered to the public. Expectations are high within CES to increase content areas represented in eXtension. Numerous content areas currently addressed by CES are not represented in eXtension. However, there are several major limiting factors including available budgets and eXtension resources. With flat budgets, adding more CoPs means fewer dollars available per CoP.
Recommendations

• Simplify the CoP formation process making it less expensive in terms of time and money.
• Continue with a call for CoPs by application without eXtension start-up funds. This method of formation allows inclusiveness of a wide array of content topics and allows highly motivated groups with niche content areas.
• Continue the process for the "State Needs-Based Model" to identify content areas that are regional Extension priorities. This is a 2008 strategy.
• Develop another model for initiating and supporting emerging Communities of Practice using feedback collected from local agents, educators and the public. This is expected to be a 2009 strategy.
  o Analyze incoming questions from the public (e.g., public web site, county "Ask eXtension" widget and internal FAQ database of unassigned questions) to see what topical areas are yet unserved by eXtension.
  o Determine from county agents/educators system-wide the content areas most useful in meeting their local programming needs.
• Explore forming CoPs based initially on FAQs and Ask an Expert alone, to see if CoPs can be formed more quickly and at less expense.
• Incorporate youth development programming into eXtension. This will require investigation and partnership with CSREES, 4-H Youth Development, CYFAR, CYFERnet and the National 4-H Council (Access 4-H).
• Establish and support internal CoPs to address learning priorities grounded in core competencies as identified by CES leadership (e.g., impact and accountability, evaluation, community action, communications skills, and more). This broadens the impact of eXtension in providing a direct service to Extension itself.
• Implement "best practices" in content development to speed up publishing processes.
• Support existing "certified" Communities of Practice by providing annual leadership funding to improve on-going activities and to update educational materials and make them more interactive and engaging to customers.

Action plan for Content Development and Support

Situation

In 2007, a usability study of the Community of Practice (CoP) Wiki was conducted. The survey revealed that CoPs generally appreciate MediaWiki because it lets them collaborate to develop content between multiple contributors. More specifically, they appreciated the ability to edit, revise, and view the history of a document. On the other hand, functionality was the least liked feature of MediaWiki. Users indicated it is confusing to navigate; it’s difficult to remember file names when uploading files, they are unable to use graphics, and once content has been submitted it’s difficult to locate it. Furthermore, they are not sure where to put materials, how to organize content so others can access it, it’s not very intuitive, too much technical knowledge is required to format materials, it is intimidating to get started, and remembering category lists for pages is difficult. It is obvious from the usability study that there are major issues with developing content using MediaWiki as our content development tool. Also, some content
providers would like the option to use other content development tools (e.g., SharePoint (MOSS), Drupal, etc.).

**Recommendations**

Content development options need to be developed and implemented to ensure eXtension content is discovered by search engines and that published works are maintained and supported. The following efforts will be pursued:

- eXtension will specify policy and protocol (Atom feed) for accepting peer-reviewed, ready-to-publish content from any content management system used by a Community of Practice.
- eXtension will define requirements for selecting and implementing a new content development tool(s).

This work will be done in multiple steps:

- Work with a subset of content contributors to identify specific business requirements for content development that align with the strategic roadmap. The result will be a comprehensive set of requirements driven by eXtension business needs.
- Review requirements with the Information Technology Advisory Committee to determine how they align with current institution-based systems, requirements, and lessons learned.
- Based upon the comprehensive set of requirements, identify the most critical requirements along with a list of "nice to haves."
- Determine content development options, involving:
  - Exploring potential partnerships with other entities (e.g. Wikipedia, LGU institutions) that develop or provide content development services.
  - Finding an alternative content development tool(s) (open-source or otherwise) to offer in addition to MediaWiki.
- Based upon the business requirements, evaluate products and determine the most suitable content development option(s).
- Along with a subset of content contributors, conduct usability tests using selected content development tool(s), understanding that any decision will need to take into account available resources.
- Select and implement content development tool(s).
Action Plan for Increasing Funding and Partnerships

Situation
eXtension launched in February 2008 with 16 published Communities of Practice (CoPs). By the close of 2008, as many as 38 CoPs could be in some stage of development. While this is an excellent start, it represents only a portion of the content and services the public is interested in having access to and participating in, as well as what directors and administrators envisioned when they established the initiative. Therefore, eXtension needs additional funding to add more CoPs, maintain and improve current ones, and to accelerate their growth and development.

Potential investors include:

- Federal government
  - Increase in appropriation through USDA-CSREES
  - Greater inclusion in existing grant programs
  - Grant programs geared specifically for eXtension
- Partnerships
  - State partners
  - Other federal departments and/or agencies
  - Broader land grant system
  - Non-land grant colleges and universities
- Private Support
  - Grants, contracts
  - Sponsorships
  - Advertising

With regard to private companies and foundations, we should consider them potential sponsors who expect something in return for their dollars (i.e. sponsorship and recognition on the site, support for research, opportunity to provide content, participation in the CoPs, etc.). Partnering with such private entities and providing them recognition may be new to some in Cooperative Extension. Furthermore, fund-raising is new to many of the participants in eXtension; they do not have the knowledge, contacts or experience to speed up the fund-raising process; or in some cases to envision the potential significance of partnership between a Community of Practice and a sponsor/partner. Of even more interest is the potential that advertising could represent in terms of revenue generation versus traditional organizational philosophies and practices.

Current Budget Status
The pre-select business plan for eXtension published in 2004, called for an annual budget of approximately $8.8M per year for the first five years of development ($43.9M total). In reality, eXtension has been budgeted at an average of $2.64M ($13.2M total) over the five-year period (1/2004 through 12/2008). Of this total, approximately:

- $6.10M: 46% content development support of CoPs
- $3.80M: 29% technical infrastructure
- $1.00M: 7% communications & marketing
- $0.25M: 2% evaluation
- $0.25M: 2% professional development
$0.25M: 2% strategic planning  
$0.25M: 2% private development  
$0.10M: 1% legal services  
$1.20M: 9% operations and management  

$13.2M = 100%  

The first eXtension Communities of Practice were named in October of 2005. These eight Pioneer CoPs each received between $56K and $75K of start-up funding. The following October (2006) an additional nine CoPs were awarded start-up funds of $40K to $67K. In the spring of 2008, five additional CoPs were named based upon a state needs-based model and awarded start-up funds of $60K each. Once CoPs have publicly launched and become Certified CoPs they are eligible to receive leadership (maintenance and improvement) funds (currently $15K annually). At the funding level provided to current CoPs, they are functional and successful, but do not include the desirable interactivity elements desired by our next generation of customers.

Again, by the close of 2008 there should be close to 38 eXtension Communities of Practice that either have or will have formed from a variety of ways including a general call for engagement including start-up funds, naming of CoPs based upon the state needs-based process, which included start-up funds, and a general application without start-up funds. CoPs that have formed through the general application process have generally started with funding from existing or outside (of eXtension) sources.

Using current budget projections based upon the existing CoP support model, eXtension will reach a plateau in the number of CoPs it can effectively support when the number of CoPs reaches approximately 50, which is expected to occur in 2009-2010. In addition, more funding is needed to make sure content keeps pace with customer preferences with regard to interactivity and multimedia approaches.

So, while the development of the current CoPs has been successful, exactly what is needed in terms of budget and time to reach a higher level of functional and productive eXtension Communities of Practice -- CoPs that can move from development to effectively and efficiently serving the needs of their constituency groups (Communities of Interest or CoIs) within 12 months? And what budget is needed to effectively enhance, update and increase the quantity and quality of content and interaction offered Communities of Interest over time?

With approximately three years of experience in the development of eXtension CoPs, the following budgets project those figures. These budgets are designed to support fast-starting, highly functional CoPs that develop and create needed online-based educational materials such as frequently asked questions (FAQs), basic information pages, and more complex deliverables and interactive products that effectively engage modern Communities of Interest.

To take eXtension to the next level, moving from 38 to perhaps as many as 175 highly functional CoPs that engage and interact with Communities of Interest, additional resources must be secured from a variety of sources. To have CoPs form faster with more engaging and interactive content, more funds are needed per CoP than have been supplied by the start-up funds to date.
The following budgets describe the costs associated with starting new and sustaining existing CoPs, while representing how we transition from first to second generation CoPs with online products that are both engaging and interactive. Typically, this involves the use of multimedia development, instructional design, editing, visual enhancements and software enhancements.

**Community of Practice Start-up Budget and Narrative**

This budget is designed to cover costs from the “start-up period” to public launch of a CoP. Ideally this should be no longer than 12 months, depending upon the pre-existing working relationship of the CoP leadership team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community of Practice Start-Up</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section A. Direct Support to the CoP</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoP Development &amp; Organization</td>
<td>$48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoP Leadership Buyout (.75 FTE)</td>
<td>$97,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>$15,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Analysis</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Generation Content Development</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of Direct Support to a CoP</strong></td>
<td><strong>$247,500</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section B. Infrastructure Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Overhead for CoP Support (i.e., communications, evaluation, technical infrastructure and other value-added services)</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of eXtension Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td><strong>$65,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section C. Contributions by Faculty &amp; Institutions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Content Creation</td>
<td>$82,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of contributions by faculty &amp; institutions</strong></td>
<td><strong>$82,500</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Total Cost for CoP Start-Up</strong></td>
<td><strong>$395,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Section A. Direct Support to the CoP**: This is the estimated budget to directly support an individual CoP.
  - To date, the highly functional CoPs start with two to four face-to-face work sessions that are two to three days in duration during this time period. $48K covers associated expenses and travel for these face-to-face content creation sessions.
  - A critical component for success of a CoP is effectiveness of the CoP leader and leadership team. With CoP membership including faculty and staff from across the county and involvement of private and agency expertise in CoPs, it is essential
to have a highly dedicated and motivated CoP leader and leadership team. To lead and manage a virtual and dispersed membership of this magnitude, this budget allows for .75 FTE for both the CoP leader and his/her leadership team or a total of $97,500 ($100,000 salary plus 30% benefits @ .75 FTE).

- As a CoP is developing, constant communications between the leadership team and its membership are essential. Successful CoPs have regular communications through web conferences or audio calls. The communications budget is $6.5K.
- To effectively advertise, promote and market the launch of a new content area to their Community of Interest the budget is estimated at $15.5K.
- Formal needs analysis of needed educational programs and content for a Community of Interest should be completed within the first several months of the development of the CoP. $5K is allocated for this purpose.
- Content evaluation and feedback by CoI is an essential and ongoing component for success of a CoP in meeting CoI needs. $5K is allocated for evaluation of content during the CoP start-up phase.
- Second-generation content development moves content into a highly produced online product that is both engaging and interactive. A total of $70K is allocated during the start-up phase including multimedia development, instructional design, editing, visual enhancements and software enhancements. It is estimated this includes two major curriculum projects and five small projects during this budget period.

• **Section B. Infrastructure Support**: This reflects the budget associated with the eXtension infrastructure support. Currently this budget is funded by institutional assessments and the federal budget line "New Technologies for Ag Extension." The budget figure of $65K per CoP is based upon having a total of 38 CoPs by December 2008. This number will decrease to a point as the number of CoPs increase, and is currently estimated to be $65K per CoP. Infrastructure support includes direct operational support for CoPs including technical infrastructure (for example, the development and maintenance of the collaborative work environment supporting content development and applications supporting the virtual newsroom, events and calendar related functions), communications and marketing (including contracting with firms such as Fleishman Hillard, Inc. and Bremmer Goris, Inc.), evaluation as we attempt to measure use and impacts of eXtension, and contact relationship building with private companies interested in our content and programs through corporate development, as well as many other value-added services.

• **Section C. Contributions by Faculty and Institutions**: This represents the contributions by faculty and institutions (on average) and is estimated to be $82,500 (1,100 hours of work X $75.00 per hour). The work of faculty and staff, assisted through this funding for content development, will allow them to transform how they work to serve their clientele; this budget amount represents faculty and staff time for content development. The budget amount is estimated based upon creation of 200 frequently asked questions and 300 pages of basic information and does not include time represented in Section A.
Community of Practice Annual Enhancement and Sustainability Budget and Narrative

Once a CoP has formed and created content for public launch, its responsibilities to the Community of Interest have just begun. Constant interaction with their Communities of Interest is essential, along with making updates and enhancements to their existing online content. In addition, it is expected that each CoP will continue to develop and add additional content and customer decision-making tools to eXtension. As a CoP matures as an organization, its membership grows, both in terms of the CoP and the Community of Interest. Over time the leadership team will change. While some budget aspects increase in scope other needs decrease. These are also reflected in the budget presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community of Practice Annual Enhancement and Sustainability</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A. Direct Support to the CoP</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CoP Development &amp; Organization</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoP Leadership Buyout (.50 FTE)</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-generation Content Development</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of Direct Support to a CoP</strong></td>
<td>$183,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section B. Infrastructure Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Overhead for CoP Support (i.e., communications, evaluation, technical infrastructure and other value-added services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of eXtension Infrastructure</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section C. Contributions by Faculty &amp; Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Content Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of contributions by faculty &amp; institutions</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall Total Cost for CoP Sustainability              | $326,000 |

- **Section A. Direct Support to the CoP**: This is the estimated budget to directly support an individual CoP.
  - CoP organization and management is reduced to $24K (50% lower than start-up) and includes an annual F2F meeting of the CoP leadership team. The most successful CoPs continue to meet annually to work on content priorities and content development.
Having a dedicated and effective leadership team continues to be essential to the success of a CoP. This budget reflects dedication of .5 FTE or $65K to the CoP leadership and is reduced from the FTE of .75 FTE in the start-up budget.

Ongoing communications among the CoP leadership and its members through web conferencing and/or audio calls continues to be essential and $4K is allocated in the budget.

Ongoing marketing to the Community of Interest is estimated to be $10K annually.

Content evaluation and feedback by Communities of Interest are an ongoing component for success of a CoP in meeting Community of Interest needs. $10K is allocated for evaluation of content annually.

It is expected that CoPs will continue to develop new content for eXtension. This budget line is for the second-generation content development that is a highly produced online product that is both engaging and interactive. A total of $70K is located annually including multimedia development, instructional design, editing, visual enhancements and software enhancements. It is estimated this includes two major curriculum projects and five small projects during this budget period.

**Section B. Infrastructure Support:** This reflects the budget associated with the eXtension infrastructure support. Currently, this budget is funded by institutional assessments and the federal budget line "New Technologies for Ag Extension." The budget figure of $65K per CoP is based upon having 38 CoPs by December 2008. This number will decrease to a point as the number of CoPs increase, and is currently estimated to be $65K per CoP. This included direct operational support for CoPs including technical infrastructure, central communications, marketing, evaluation and development, as well as other value-added services.

**Section C. Contributions by Faculty & Institutions:** This represents the contributions by faculty and institutions (on average) after the start-up phase and initial public launch is completed and is estimated to be $78,000 annually (320 hours of work to maintain existing content X $75.00 per hour + 720 hours of work to create new content X $75.00 per hour). Since content creation is part of faculty and staff job responsibilities and eXtension represents a transformation of how faculty and staff work to serve their clientele, this budget amount represents faculty and staff time for annual content development. The budget amount is estimated based upon the creation of content for an additional 100 frequently asked questions and 300 pages of basic information per year and does not include time represented in Section A.

**Future Budget Needs**

Based upon the costs described above, approximately **$300,000 is needed to start-up a new Community of Practice.** This includes both the direct support (Section A) and infrastructure support (Section B) as described in the "Community of Practice Start-Up" table.

**To sustain a CoP the cost is approximately $250,000 annually.** This includes both the direct support (Section A) and infrastructure support (Section B) as described in the "Community of Practice Annual Enhancement and Sustainability" table.
Over the next five years eXtension could grow to perhaps as many as 175 Communities of Practice. This number would include existing CES programs, and programs emanating from potential partnerships within the greater land-grant university system. Given a CoP needs approximately $300,000 to get started and up to approximately $250,000 annually to sustain itself, the following table represents the funding needed to fully support Cooperative Extension's intent to meet customer needs through eXtension in a way that will appeal to new 21st century customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New 5-year Community of Practice Cost/Growth Projection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of New CoPs $7.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost to Sustain Existing CoPs $10M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong> $17.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of New CoPs 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Existing CoPs 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of CoPs 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: These estimated numbers of new CoPs are based upon the current model of Communities of Practice. Should the model for developing them and/or related nomenclature change, the number and amount needed to support them would change, accordingly.*

**Recommendations**

To develop the funding needed to grow eXtension over the next five years, an aggressive blend of ongoing and new efforts will need to be implemented.

- **Funding**
  - Inform and seek support for the budget plan from directors and administrators.
  - Consider new models of support to protect eXtension's ability to generate new CoPs (e.g., transformative actions such as increasing in-kind contributions, acquiring more private funding, additional federal resources, etc.).
  - Establish and launch a new funding plan to increase financial support of eXtension considering all available sources of revenue generation. The eXtension Governing Committee, as charged by ECOP, will lead but not have sole responsibility for this effort.
• Federal Government
  o The eXtension Finance Task Force, at the discretion of the Governing Committee and in conjunction with ECOP, will work to increase federal investment in eXtension.
  o Integrate eXtension into CSREES agency grant programs and/or create new mechanisms for grants specifically geared to eXtension.
  o Develop procedures and policies to establish content partnerships, links and collaboration.
  o Look for new ways to develop new partners in content creation through a content partnership plan.
  o Implement a work plan to solicit resources from other potential federal partners and agencies (e.g., USDA, Department of Energy, Department of Justice, etc.).

• Institutional Support
  o Encourage state directors and administrators to continue their assessments while working to increase other sources of funding. It’s possible that as new funding from other sources come to eXtension institutional support might take new forms including increased in-kind support that might evolve into an institution, for example, buying out the time of CoP leaders. Such support could eventually serve to offset assessments.

• Commercial (private)
  o Increase commercial sponsorships.
  o Consider hiring a commercial vendor to assist with corporate development (e.g., web sponsorships, advertising).
  o Prioritize the list of current and prospective CoP content areas based on their ability to attract commercial support.
  o More actively engage CoPs and other key Extension personnel in fundraising activities (e.g., develop champions within CoPs to assist with development activity).
  o Provide useful metrics to sponsors that demonstrate customer impacts.
  o Allow sponsors to join and participate in CoPs, as appropriate.
  o Develop guidelines for allowing potential sponsors to publicize events and add news for a fee.
  o Develop templates and tools needed to encourage sponsors to support CoPs.
  o Ask CoPs to tailor and implement a funding plan targeting sponsorships.
  o eXtension will prioritize time and resources on sponsorships.
  o Enhance content offerings through partnerships with commercial providers.
  o Develop and distribute fee-based educational programs.
  o Sell online educational programs to other distribution channels for negotiated royalties.

• Memberships
  o Develop a strategy/process for non-land grant institutions and/or international university partners to join or affiliate with eXtension.
  o Explore the establishment of international partnerships to increase support of eXtension both financially and in terms of content offerings.
• Other
  o Involve the development committee in fund-raising strategy development and execution.
  o Explore ways for CoPs to become self-funded through the sale of services and products. Establish e-commerce services for eXtension.
  o Determine the cost effectiveness and value of eXtension to and communicate results to stakeholders (e.g., directors, administrators, faculty, staff, etc.).

Conclusion

eXtension has been built, tested, and launched. And, it works. We continue to reinforce eXtension’s role within Cooperative Extension in meeting the needs of a new generation of customers while addressing the ongoing concerns and issues traditional customers face every day; a critical role eXtension can play in Cooperative Extension’s future. As eXtension looks to the future and moves forward with its strategic planning, the next logical step in this process is assigning timelines, deadlines, and individual or group responsibility for accomplishing the action plan recommendations above. This report is an overall reflection of the context, process, and actions needed.

July 28, 2008