

Minutes  
Regional Directors Meeting  
January 10, 2006

Present: Charles Goan, Clyde Chesney, Mike Gordon, Herb Lester, Tim Fawver, Connie Heiskell, Brenda Voiles, Lois Fehling, Herb Byrd, Alice Ann Moore, John Toman, Latif Lighari.

1. **Travel (Fawver)**

- UT is now using CONUS travel rates for out of state travel. These rates are different. Hotel and meal rates vary according to city. New rates are listed on IRIS website. Conference hotel reimbursement remains the same.
- If trip is less than 12 hours, no meals may be reimbursed.
- **When agents go to meetings and share rooms - each person should have their own receipt.**
- Do not use direct bill for UT employees staying at hotel. Auditors have had findings on this. Each employee should pay bill and be reimbursed. Byrd will follow up on this procedure for our upcoming Extension Advisory Council meeting in February.
- Fawver asked what regional directors thought about agents generating money from fees, etc. and putting in county gift accounts to use for supplementing travel to professional meetings. Some agents also use \$200 from UT career development.

2. **Procurement Card Audit Report (Fawver)**

Fawver passed out summary audit report for UT procurement cards, and thanked regions/agents for doing a good job.

3. **Furniture Orders/Computers (Fawver)**

Due to uncertainty of federal budget, furniture orders will be suspended until June 30. If we have made commitments, we will follow through with them, but will not make any new furniture orders for remainder of fiscal year. Cost shares will continue. Regions should work with regional IT folks to transfer computers from regional to county offices as appropriate. Prefer not to use start up money for computers.

4. **SUPER Training (Byrd)**

Handed out listing of SUPER online training completions. Face-to-face training will start February 1. Online training should be completed by then. Regional Directors should encourage agents to complete. Hope to have delivery by January 18, and begin January 23.

Regional Directors should have notified Joseph Donaldson of agents registered for

training. Training dates are:

Feb. 1-2 - Western

Feb. 6-7 - Central

Feb. 9-10 - Eastern

Feb. 14-15- State Staff

5. **MIS and Annual Reports (Byrd)**

Byrd asked if regional directors can access the database to see if MIS is up to date. We need to have all contact data completed no later than January 21. Let Regional IT person know if there are any problems with seeing the reports. Last year we had problems with contacts not being submitted and we needed the data for legislators; we cannot have this happen this year. Got to make sure folks report.

Annual reports must be entered by February 1. Data will be entered into federal report on that date.

6. **Hiring Guidelines (Byrd)**

Byrd distributed a copy of the UT Extension hiring guidelines. Use with appropriate stakeholders as needed. Need to remind county directors that the hiring guidelines are on web at:

<http://ext1.ag.utk.edu/Employment/Jobs.nsf/Web%2FHiringGuidelines?ReadForm>

All hiring of employees must go through regional office.

7. **Corporate Function Changes (Byrd)**

Byrd handed out information on corporate function changes for IRIS/SUPER interactions and discussed. Will be working on how to get into IRIS. Need to get a list of assignments for TSU employees. Note that Secretarial/Clerical and Program Assistants are different - use ag, fcs, 4-H, RD, Exec Admin and/or Org Support instead.

8. **PDQ Reviews (Byrd)**

Byrd mentioned that, for the most part, responses were positive on the PDQ reviews. Appeals have been sent to HR.

9. **Training Pages (Byrd)**

Byrd distributed copies of *Training Pages* for agents and 4-H Center personnel. Will send out web address to get credit for training.

10. **Agent Vacancies (Byrd)**

Regional directors should send in a priority list of which vacancies need to be filled. Regional directors reported on their vacancies:

Western (7):

Tipton-Ag announced

Fayette FCS, Henry 4-H , Lauderdale Ag, Fayette 4-H/Ag, Madison 4-H, Shelby 4-H unannounced

Central (11):

Trousdale Ag/4-H, Wilson 4-H, Giles Ag/CED, Rutherford FCS, Moore 4-H /FCS announced

Davidson 4-H, Rutherford 4-H, White FCS, Pickett FCS/CED, Wilson 4-H, Franklin 4-H/FCS unannounced

Eastern (8):

Washington Ag, Jefferson 4-H, Cocke 4-H announced

Blount FCS, Greene FCS, Hawkins FCS, Sullivan 4-H, farm management unannounced

Goan suggested maybe having a session devoted to discussion of filling county and specialist positions.

11. **Tennessee State University (Chesney and Lighari)**

- Spring semester started at TSU with Faculty institute, January 5-6. President Melvin Johnson announced the following personnel actions:
  - ▶ Retirements effective June 30, 2006:
    - Dr. Augustus Bankhead, Vice President for Academic Affairs
    - Mr. Homer Wheaton, Vice President, University Relations and Development
  - ▶ Positions to be filled:
    - Provost and Executive Vice President
    - University Attorney
    - Vice President, University Relations and Development
    - Vice President for Student Affairs
    - Vice President for Business and Finance
- Geier Desegregation Consent Decree will end in 2006. Court will determine if parties met goals of decree and whether progress will continue without court monitoring. Still unfinished is state matching cost share for TSU Extension and Research Programs.
- Hired Jenell Sargent, Extension Associate Professor, and Distance Education – Consent Decree goal to provide closer working relationship with UT Extension.
- Personnel Search Positions:
  - ▶ Extension Assistant/Associate Professor, Community Resource and Economic Development and NRCS Outreach Coordinator
  - ▶ Two Secretary III positions
  - ▶ Accounting Clerk III
  - ▶ Extension Agent for TSU Research and Demonstration Farm in Cheatham County
- Initiated Extension Awards and Recognition Program (annual program in conjunction with Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Research)
  - ▶ James E. Farrell Program Excellence Award
  - ▶ Ola G. Hudson Volunteer Leadership Award
  - ▶ Distinguished Extension Specialist Award
  - ▶ Distinguished Extension Agent

- ▶ Distinguished Extension Program Assistant
  - ▶ Distinguished Administrative or Technical Support
- Cooperative Extension Program Reorganization (handout)
    - ▶ TSU State Action Agendas
  - Small Farms Expo Recognition Program will be August 3 at Cheatham County farm.
  - Discussing changing 4-H program to spend 50% of time to start after-school 4-H clubs in the communities and homes, using parents and volunteers.
12. **County Director Contact with Organizations in County (Goan)**  
Goan asked regional directors to remind county directors that it is important to have contact with all organizations in their counties.
13. **Agent Association Annual Meeting, April 19-21, Paris Landing (Goan)**  
Reminder to register and make your hotel reservations.
14. **Vice President for Agriculture (Goan)**  
Dr. Joe DiPietro, will be the new Vice President for Agriculture and will begin work on February 20. He will be visiting the Agent Association meeting on Wednesday and Thursday, April 19-20, and will make comments sometime during the program.
- Regional Directors should send in to Goan a listing of any regional events they would like for the Vice President to attend in their region.
15. **County Budget Requests (Fawver/Goan)**  
Within the next two weeks, information will be sent to Regional Directors on the annual county budget requests for FY2007. No major changes.
16. **Benchmarking Excellence in Extension (Goan)**  
Goan handed out a draft document on *Benchmarking Excellence in Extension*. An ECOP committee was formed to develop goals and recommendations on Cooperative Extension's uniqueness and excellence. Goan will be participating in a conference call on January 19 to discuss. If regional directors see anything that should be added to this document in defining Excellence in Extension, let Goan know before the January 19 conference call.
17. **Extension Advisory Council Meeting, February 8-9 (Goan/Byrd)**  
Extension Advisory Council will meet at Embassy Suites in Nashville on February 8-9. The meeting will begin on February 8 at 11:00 AM with an orientation session and lunch for new members. The entire group will depart for Montgomery County around 1:30 PM to meet with John Bartee and hear county program reports. Dinner will be served in Montgomery County before returning to the hotel. There will be a business session on the morning of February 9 at Embassy Suites.

**Next Meeting** - Tuesday, March 14, 2006. 10:00 AM at Tennessee State University, Nashville  
(no meeting in February)