Informing the Strategic Priorities of Extension: A Community Engagement Strategy

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A Brief Overview

• Dean of the College of Agriculture launched a new five-year strategic planning effort in Fall 2014.

• Extension wanted to weigh in on the substance of that plan. Opted to seek input and advice from stakeholders across the state.

• The most critical question at that point: “What process would we employ to capture the insights of Indiana residents?”

• Decided to embrace a series of community forums across the state.
The Steps

1. Location of Forums
2. Forum Methodology
3. Who to Invite
4. Key Forum Roles
5. Getting Ready
6. Host Forums
7. Communicate Results

College of Agriculture
1. Location of Forums

- Five Extension Districts in Indiana
- District Directors asked to Recommend Four Sites in their Districts
- Opted to have one additional forum in the Indianapolis area, the largest city in the state
- End result – plans to host 21 Extension forums
- This complemented the 6 listening sessions hosted by the Dean of Agriculture in 6 urban sites.
Map of the 21 Community Forum Locations
2. Forum Methodology

• Employed the World Café Format

• Four rounds over the course of the meeting

• People asked rotate to different tables for 3 of the 4 rounds

• Highly interactive process
3. Who to Invite

“We have named these ‘Community Forums’ for a reason. They should fairly represent your community. When thinking about whom to invite, consider a diverse reflection of those who call your area home. This means a healthy blend of current core stakeholders and those who may have less experience with, or knowledge of, Purdue Extension . . . “

Jason Henderson
Director, Purdue Extension
Proposed Forum Invitees

- Business & Industry
- Local & Regional Governments
- Educational Leaders
- Nonprofit & Voluntary (Civic) Groups
- Local Residents, including underserved groups
- Faith-Based Groups
- Community Foundation
- State & Federal reps.
- Extension stakeholders
4. Key Forum Roles

• Forum Facilitator
• Table Facilitator
• Table Recorder and Reporter
• Roundtable Participants
5. Getting Ready: Forum Facilitator Training
6. Host Forums: Agenda at a Glance
(held during the January-March 2015 period)

Welcome and Introductions
Purpose of the Community Forum
Video of Jason Henderson, Director of Purdue Extension
Overview of the Forum Format
The Four Roundtable Sessions
Closing Comments
The Roundtable Sessions

Round 1
• Children, Youth & Families

Round 2
• Digging Deeper into the Top Issues from Round 1

Round 3
• Community, Economy, Agriculture & Natural Resources

Round 4
• Digging Deeper into the Top Issues from Round 3
7. Communicate Results

The Community Forums and Deans' Listening Sessions were held in 27 sites across Indiana and gathered the insights of nearly 800 residents.
Thank You

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