

President's Column

NACDEP is Thinking Big -- How About You?

Greetings NACDEPers. A lot of innovation has happened since our last issue: a new member sharing system on NACDEP's website, a promising collaboration with natural resources colleagues at ANREP, and increased engagement with the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP). This is sparked by input we've received from members like you. It's also our continuing effort to actively engage with other Extension professionals through JCEP. The board of directors is "thinking big" about our future. In particular, how do we go to the next level for our organization. In fact, we're not just thinking, we're on the way there.

Member Sharing Portal. Please see the article in this issue. This new Portal promotes all of our members to the public. The world can now find you through searches by your name, title, state, region, or organization. This is true for everyone who is a current member. Now for the innovative part. For those who opt in, you can share several files and/or videos. This "portal" system is for our members only. As far as we know, we are the only national Extension organization to offer this dual-purpose benefit to its members. It's a work-in-progress that we will perfect over time. So check it out, use the Portal and share your favorite, proudest, or most practical items with other NACDEP members. This is a way to help yourself and help your fellow community development Extension professionals at the same time. Kudos to Susan Kelly, Chair, and all of the Communications Committee members who contributed to this effort. And to our hard-working colleagues at PAR, Jen Schottke and Sara Ponischil (formerly) and Peter Metsker (currently).

Joint Conference in 2016. There are a bunch of folks who are both NACDEP & ANREP members. At their request, both organizations worked together to evaluate whether a joint conference might work. The exploratory committee (thanks to our Kelly Nix and Stacey McCullough) both came back in February with a positive report and so we're going forward. What we need now is a great site in the Northeast Region to be able to host 500-600 folks together. Ideally in May or June that year. Check out the RFP ([link](#)). In the last 12 months, we have cooperated with ANREP at the PILD Conference in D.C., Galaxy IV in Pittsburgh and recently at the JCEP Leadership Conference in Memphis to host joint events for our members. 2016 will take it to the next level. On a related front, the Community Development Society and NACDEP also had a joint exploratory committee recently. Our Board hasn't yet had a chance to discuss the findings, but naturally this is another promising opportunity.

NACDEP at the table with "the bigs". A big reason that we were founded was to gain respect and recognition by the large national Extension organizations such as ESP, NACAA, NAE4-HA, and NEAFCS. This has taken time and investment by our little organization. We're showing up,

paying our dues, and contributing community development smarts and skills to the Joint Council of Extension Professionals. It's clearly paying off. Michael Wilcox is JCEP Secretary and I will be Treasurer next year. James Barnes volunteered to represent us on the Leadership Conference planning committee and helped organize joint breakout sessions with ANREP. Charlie Vavrina and Rose Merkowitz are doing the same for us on the PILD Conference Planning Committee. Finally, as announced previously, Galaxy V will not be happening in 2018. I contributed to JCEP making an informed decision by formally debating with a colleague at the winter board meeting the proposition "There should be a Galaxy V Event in 2018". Alison Davis will represent NACDEP in a special "blue ribbon" committee to consider what kind of Extension-wide event might replace Galaxy. As you can see, we're at the table in several important ways.

Looking forward, you should be getting excited about our Grand event, the conference in Grand Rapids June 22-25th. The Art of Reinvention is the conference theme. Check out the article. I will just point out that this conference is making a special point of reaching out to our colleagues with split appointments who could benefit from our community development skills, knowledge and research. Again, we're "thinking big".

So what about you – what are your big thoughts about your association? Please share them with any board member or me. Or bring the ideas to the gathering in Grand Rapids. I can't wait to see everybody there.

Michael Darger, President