

Economic and Community Development Update

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USDA Receives Leadership Training

By May 2008, 12 future leaders in the USDA Office of Rural Development will be more effective leaders. Penn State Cooperative Extension partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture's Pennsylvania Office of Rural Development to train mid-level supervisors in all aspects of leadership.

The series, set to end on May 14, 2008, began on November 6. Five sessions of two-day workshops will cover the entire Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow curriculum in its original sequence.

The first session was held in Harrisburg and covered a formal introduction by Cooperative Extension's own [Michael McDavid](#). McDavid is responsible for coordinating the leadership training curriculum and Extension educators, and delivering the training to the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Development's staff of future leaders. Northampton County educator [Liesel Dreisbach](#) led the module "Values and Ethics" on November 7, following "The Leader Within You." Dreisbach asked the participating staff members to identify their own values to begin a lesson about how values inform leadership decisions. The small size of the class and safe environment of a classroom gave opportunities for free and open discussion. Participants named their own values, among them family and personal time. Dreisbach then challenged them to think about how their job will impact those values.

Workshops continue January 22-23, covering "Understanding Your Leadership Style" and "Communications Basics" in Allentown, Pennsylvania. In March, instruction will cover "Managing Conflict," "Productive Groups," and "Effective Meetings" in State College. April will include sessions on "Group Decisions" and "Dealing with Change" in Butler, and the series will close in Harrisburg with modules "Public Issues" and "Understanding Pennsylvania Local Government." Michael McDavid coordinates close-by, certified educators to conduct the workshops. For more information about the Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow curriculum, visit the [LTLT website](#).

by [Robin Alford](#)

Pennsylvania Farms Host Educational Tour

The [Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network \(WAgN\)](#), a partner of Cooperative Extension, hosted a farm tour of York County on September 26. The tour introduced attending Pennsylvania farmers and WAGN members to successful and innovative farming techniques.

The tour visited three farms in York County. The first, Swissland Acres, featured an organic approach to farming. Participants learned about how farmers at Swissland Acres grow, market and distribute their organic value-added products. The second farm, Sproutwood Farm, showed participants how a large, community-active farm ran efficiently. The tour focused on the Farm's educational classes and the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program; a program that allows active participation of members with growing and products on the farm. The third tour featured Perrydell Dairy Farm. Participants gained insight about a three-generation dairy farm's on-going business. The family talked about their experience starting their milk-bottling business and how making ice cream to sell at their on-farm store proved a successful business option.

The Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network hosts numerous educational and networking events throughout the year for women in agriculture and agricultural professionals. For more information, visit wagn.cas.psu.edu.

by [Robin Alford](#)

Westmoreland County Revitalizes Historic U.S. Route 30, Plans for the Next 30 Years

Since 2001, the [Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County \(SGPWC\)](#) has sought to guide growing communities in long-term land use planning. SGPWC, a nonprofit organization based at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in partnership with the Penn State Cooperative Extension and others, provides education and technical assistance to older core communities undergoing revitalization, rural municipalities of Eastern Westmoreland County, and to the growing suburban communities of Western Westmoreland.

Since early 2006, SGPWC and Westmoreland County, with the assistance of the Westmoreland Cooperative Extension, have worked specifically to improve areas near U.S. Route 30 (known locally as the Lincoln Highway), a primary East-West corridor and the economic center of the county. In 2006, SGPWC began to develop the *US Route 30 Master Plan* and, in October of this year, conducted an architectural design effort, or charrette, to produce a prototypical, site-specific plan for future development along Route 30, while also modeling a relatively new National Charrette Institute (NCI) Charrette process of design. Cooperative Extension Educator John Turack, himself a resident of Westmoreland County, joined the project in early 2007. He brought with him the resources and networking of Penn State and Cooperative Extension.

The first phase of the *US Route 30 Master Plan* was completed in June 2007. It consisted of working with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), community planners, state officials and local, county, and other agencies with the vision of creating a sustainable economic oasis surrounding the 40-mile stretch. Phase one of the master plan surveyed over one hundred representatives of municipalities along the corridor and throughout the county for their vision, essentially identifying three components: promoting "walkability," accessibility and quality. Residents also expressed concerns about existing infrastructure and communities, as well as future development in currently rural areas. The week-long design charrette was held from October 22-26 in order to map out a specific plan for a site of development along Route 30. This prototype site plan will now be used as a model for development principals that can be utilized throughout the corridor and the rest of Westmoreland County.

Following extensive publicity and advertising of the charrette, well over 200 participants voiced input on design ideas and opinions, and everyone was invited to view a final design at the end of the week. Architects, engineers, environmental and real estate professionals, as well as residents and official representatives from neighboring communities were actively involved throughout the charrette process. One more public meeting will be held on December 13 to formally present the prototype site plan.

The Smart Growth and Westmoreland County partnership and area residents look forward to the preservation of historic U.S. Route 30 and its

communities, economic gain for commercial areas along the highway, fluid transportation, and enhanced community design as result of the charrette and the Master Plan. For more information, visit www.route30plan.com, www.route30plan.com/newsletters.asp, and www.route30plan.com/design_charette.asp

by [Robin Alford](#)

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