Greetings Members of Epsilon Sigma Phi,

As we celebrate our 150th year in Extension I am filled with extra pride for ESP and the work that we are doing with and for our great institution. This is a time for renewal, rejuvenation, and a time for recommitment to the goals of our association. As I review the work of our leadership team and committees, I am filled with pride and excitement. As you will see in this issue, there is much happening within our state!

I do hope that you are planning to attend the Galaxy Conference in September. I continue to hear about the great sessions that are being planned. Please consider volunteering at the conference to make it the best one ever. This will be one way of supporting our conference co-chair, Kathy Dothage and our national president, Mark Stillwell. I plan to be there and hope to see you there.

Please visit our chapter website, as many updates appear there. Also, please look around you and consider nominating your colleagues for some of the Epsilon Sigma Phi awards that are described in this issue.

I urge you to encourage your colleagues to join our association. There is still time for them to join and attend the upcoming conference.

I would like to thank each of you for the work that you are doing on behalf of the association.

Keep up the great work!

Joint Council of Extension Professionals Galaxy IV registration will open June 1

Every five years, the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) hold a National Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference for all of its member Extension Professional organizations, known as Galaxy. This conference invites participation from all JCEP organizations, ECOP and other partners critical to the Extension mission. Participants will represent all six Extension professional organization members of JCEP. Those member organizations include National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA), National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS), Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals (ANREP), National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA), Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP), and National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP).

Don’t miss this opportunity to connect with 2,500 or more Extension professionals from
all specialty areas of our nation's land-grant university Extension system for the Galaxy IV conference. The Galaxy Conference provides a unique opportunity to work together on a joint conference while celebrating the diversity of the individual organizations.

- Registration fees for Galaxy IV will be $450 through July 15, $525 July 16-August 31, with on-site registration set at $575. Hotel reservations will be made through conference registration. If a participant chooses to stay outside the hotel block an additional fee of $500 will be added to the registration fee.
- Hotels designated for each association are:
  - NACAA—Marriott City Center, NACDEP—Wyndham Grand, NAE4-HA - Omni William Penn, NEAFCS—Renaissance (overflow to the Doubletree Suites), ANREP—Doubletree Suites, ESP—Wyndham Grand
  - Associations will be headquartered in their hotel and some board meetings, pre-conferences and other events will take place in the association hotel. Please encourage members to register early to assure being housed in their association hotel.

ESP will be looking for volunteers for Galaxy

Like all National Extension meetings, volunteers will be needed to make the event run smoothly. Plans are under way by many of the subcommittees defining where volunteers will be needed for Galaxy IV. We ask that you consider volunteering to assist in some aspect of the Galaxy Meeting to be held September 16-20, 2013 in Pittsburgh, PA. You can sign-up to be a volunteer on the Galaxy IV website during Galaxy IV registration. Stay tuned and say "yes" when asked to volunteer. Thank you! Galaxy IV Volunteer

It is time to recognize our effective co-workers and partners

Lynda Zimmerman, Recognition and Awards Committee Chair

In four short months, it will be time to submit nominations for our Epsilon Sigma Phi awards. Now is a good time to start thinking about who you will nominate this year! The 17 different awards provide many opportunities to recognize colleagues and friends of extension:

- Outstanding Regional Extension Faculty (Woman)
- Outstanding Regional Extension Faculty (Man)
- Outstanding State Extension Faculty
- Early Career Service Award
- Mid-Career Service Award
- Distinguished Service Award
- Continued Excellence Award
- Distinguished Service Award
- Administrative Leadership Award
- Visionary Leadership
- International Service Award
- Diversity Multicultural Award (Individual and Team)
- Meritorious Support Service Award
- Distinguished Team Award
- Retiree Service Award
- Friend of Extension Award
For individual awards, the nominee must be an Epsilon Sigma Phi member. The exceptions are nominations for the Friend of Extension Award and the State Meritorious Support Service Award. Team awards require that 50% or more of the team members who are eligible for ESP membership are ESP members. The list of active ESP members can be found at: http://extension.missouri.edu/esp/members_2012-13.aspx

Go to our ESP website to see descriptions of the awards with eligibility requirements, examples of nomination forms and past award recipients: http://extension.missouri.edu/esp/awards.aspx
The award requirements will be the same as last year, although 2013 applications will be submitted online to simplify the process.

We look forward to receiving your ESP awards nominations in the fall! Feel free to contact me at zimmermanl@missouri.edu if you have any questions.

Reaching extension audiences through social media

Meridith Berry, Professional Improvement Committee Chair

Reaching new and larger audiences through social media was the topic of Dr. Ann Adrian’s sessions at the Fall Conference in 2012. The national Epsilon Sigma Phi professional development mini grant helped pay to bring her to Columbia. The balance of the grant will be used to purchase books for ESP members who are interested in learning more about social media. A limited number of books titled “The Zen of Social Media Marketing: An Easier Way to Build Credibility, Generate Buzz, and Increase Revenue” by Shama Kabani will be available to members requesting a copy. These books will be given out on a first come, first serve basis. To request a copy, contact our chapter’s professional development chair, Meridith Berry, at berrym@missouri.edu. Be sure and type “ZEN, your region” in the subject line.

Annalist Report – April, 2013

Tim Baker, Annalist

As ESP Annalist, one of my duties is to insure that financial records, membership lists, programs, photos, and other records that document the life of our chapter are stored for future generations. Many of our records originate as electronic documents, thus the longevity of these files becomes questionable. You know the story, hard disks crash, files may or may not be backed up, and if something like that happens, you have lost those valuable records forever.

So after a quick poll of the other officers, I approached ETCS about creating a special place on the share drive where we could store these files. ETCS was quick to reply, and you can now see the start of our collection at: S:\Professional Associations\ESP. The share drive will be backed up regularly by ETCS. While this is not the total answer for archival purposes, it is at least a start.

We set up this folder on the share drive so that only officers may upload documents to the drive. Anyone can read the files, and I encourage you to do so. You may be interested in checking out the photos from last year’s Fall Conference…. You just might see yourself there!

Public Issues – The MoTax Initiative

Nellie Lamers, Public Issues Committee Chair

VITA Volunteers Provide Economic Impact over $15 Million in 2013. With the MoTax Initiative program, participants save an average of $200 in tax preparation fees per year, avoid high-cost refund
anticipation loans and learn basic financial management strategies, which leads to families being able to purchase necessities, increased cash flow, getting and staying current on bills, reduced family debt, establishment or increase of emergency savings and/or the repair or replacement of a vehicle. This benefits other community members by stimulating the economy, beginning in the taxpayer’s community, through federal and state tax refund dollars and dollars from tax credits, reducing demand for public assistance and stabilizing the county tax base.

The MoTax Initiative offers a gateway to financial education through taxpayer assistance. MoTax is supported by University of Missouri Extension along with local community agencies and federal and local partners. The MoTax Initiative includes the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program which provides free tax preparation for low-moderate income families ($50,000.00 or less) and uses this opportunity to emphasize the importance of financial planning management, providing assistance to help families use their tax refund to the greatest benefit for themselves and their families.

In 2013, VITA volunteers assisted over 4,800 low and moderate income families with free tax preparation at nineteen locations throughout the state of Missouri. Sites included University of Missouri Stanley Hall, Andrew, Christian, Dunklin, Stone and Taney County Extension Offices, as well as many partner organizations including the IRS, College of the Ozarks, Taney County OACAC Office, Stone County OACAC Office, Stone County Annex (Galena), Metropolitan Community College, AmeriCorps, Northeast Chamber, Northeast Library, Don Bosco, United Way of the Mark Twain Area, North East Missouri Community Action Agency, University of Missouri Personal Financial Planning Department, GAMM, Inc. and others.

VITA volunteers prepared over 9,455 federal and state tax returns for taxpayers in Audrain, Boone, Butler, Callaway, Christian, Clark, Cole, Jackson, Lewis, Marion, Mississippi, Monroe, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Pettis, Scott, Shelby, Stoddard, Stone and Taney Counties. Families received $5,229,730 in Federal Income Tax refunds including $1,663,996 in EIC and $958,058 in state refunds. In addition, the taxpayers saved $974,400 in tax preparation fees (average cost per return of $200). The economic impact of the VITA programs to the economy is estimated at $15,469,470.

With approximately 125 VITA Volunteers contributing over 6000 volunteer hours to the program, the economic savings in volunteer time by the VITA Volunteers is estimated at $111,420.

MU Extension Needs Assessment: As an increasing number of workers have to rely on personal savings and private pensions to fund their retirement and as individuals increase their use of financial markets, it becomes increasingly critical that individuals and families understand at least the basics of money management, saving, and investment.

The former Federal Reserve Board Chairman, Alan Greenspan, addressing the National Council on Economic Education said,

“For (our) ever-more complex financial system to function effectively, widespread dissemination of timely financial information is essential. Informed judgments by consumers are required to foster the most efficient allocation of capital.

Education enabling individuals to overcome their reluctance or inability to take full advantage of technological advances and product innovation can be a means of increasing economic opportunity. As market forces continue to expand the range of financial services, consumers will have more choice and flexibility in how they manage their financial matters, and they will demand education about use of the new technologies to make informed decisions.

Indeed, surveys repeatedly demonstrate a strong link between education and the use of new financial technologies. For example, data from the Federal Reserve's periodic Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) suggest that a higher level of education significantly increases the chances that a household will use an electronic banking product. In particular, in 1998, the typical user of an electronic source of information for savings or borrowing decisions had a college degree—a level of education currently achieved by only about one-third of U.S. households.
The most recent data from the survey reveal a good news-bad news picture of the financial status of households, providing evidence that we need to reach further to engage those who have not been able to participate fully. For example, while the median real net worth for all families increased 17.5 percent between 1995 and 1998, this trend did not hold true where the head of the household had a high-school level of education or less, family earnings were less than $25,000 annually, or the ethnicity of the respondent was non-white or Hispanic. That families with low-to-moderate incomes and minorities did not appear to fully benefit from the highly favorable economic developments of the mid-1990s is, of course, troubling, and the survey results warrant a closer look. In the details, we find that families with incomes below $25,000 did increase their direct or indirect holdings of stock, and more reported that they had a transactions account. However, they were less likely to hold nonfinancial assets--particularly homes, which constitute the bulk of the value of assets for those below the top quintile according to income. Obviously, falling into financial distress is not solely the result of lack of knowledge about finance. But in many cases such knowledge could avoid or ameliorate the negative consequences of uninformed decisions. Thus, in considering means by which to improve the financial status of families, education can play an important role.

Extension Fellowships: Get ‘em while they’re even hotter!

Beverly Maltsberger, Loan and Fellowship Committee Chair

In the last newsletter you saw information about the application process for receiving and ESP Fellowship. This information has recently been updated. Please note the increase from $1500 to $3000 you can receive over your Extension career.

Amount
Up to $1,000 per award will be granted. The total amount individuals may receive during their tenure with the University is $3,000. Funds should offset expenses not covered through other sources. Applicants must submit a budget identifying anticipated expenditures and other sources of financial support, including personal contributions. Awards will not exceed actual expenses.

The number of awards granted will depend on the availability of funds in the Extension Loan and Fellowship Fund.

Wait time between applications
Successful applicants must wait five years to apply for additional fellowship dollars.

Application and selection process
Only email applications will be accepted. After completing the application, individuals must send it to their supervisor, who will forward it to the committee. Supervisors: Send applications via e-mail to Lisa Wallace at wallacel@missouri.edu.

MU Extension Fellowships application form (DOCX) updated January 2013
http://extension.missouri.edu/staff/documents/awards/Fellowship-app-2013.docx

Fellowship score sheet (DOC)
http://extension.missouri.edu/staff/documents/awards/fellowship-score-sheet-June2012.doc

Applications are reviewed quarterly. To be considered in a given quarter, applications must be received by January 1, April 1, July1 or October 1. Nominations will be reviewed by the Fellowship and Awards Committee appointed by the Extension Vice-Provost. The committee — comprised of representatives of
UMEA, Epsilon Sigma Phi, the UM campuses, and the Vice Provost’s Office — will make recommendations to the Extension Vice-Provost, who will make the final selection.

Individuals selected to receive fellowships will be notified within 45 days.

**Reporting outcomes**
Within one month of completing the activity, individuals must send an email to the Vice Provost summarizing the experience and its benefits. A copy also should be sent to the Fellowship and Awards Committee. Chairman, Lisa Wallace

**Missouri Alpha Tau Officers for 2013**

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Complete contact information for your officers can be found at the URL below.

[http://extension.missouri.edu/esp/officers.aspx](http://extension.missouri.edu/esp/officers.aspx)

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**The mission of Epsilon Sigma Phi**
is to foster the standards of excellence in the Extension System and to develop the Extension Profession and Professional.

Stay current with ESP

[http://espnational.org/](http://espnational.org/)

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