

# Annual Report Style Sheet

## *Committee notes and recommendations*

*Last updated Thursday, April 26, 2007*

The following recommendations are based on current communication and graphic design research as well as "best practice" recommendations within the industry and feedback from graphic designers. These peer group recommendations are research-based, just like all other University of Missouri Extension ideas.

## **Goals:**

- Develop a consistent style and look in the design and text of our annual reports.
- Shorten the overall length of time that it takes CPDs and staff to do an annual report.
- Make the document more readable and more appealing.
- Develop a product that will be inexpensive to print and can be used year-round.
- Develop a product with a look that is consistent in this region and therefore could be used as a single regional product when grouped together.
- At all times, remember the target audience is the county commission and council.
- Develop a system or method of helping county offices put together annual report.

## **Recommendations from committee**

- If you used a template last year ...
  - *The 2003 template is still valid, but please remember to add the new University of Missouri Extension logo and add "sexual orientation" to the MU EOE statement.*
- In 2007, look at past Annual Reports for ideas and text
- The target audience is the county commission and county councils
  - *Campus does require the posting of your annual report in an 8.5x11 .pdf format online.*
  - *Annual Reports of high quality should be used all year as a public relations tool.*
- Increase use of graphics and photos in our annual reports
  - *Use quality staff photos (local and regional); take new mug shots if needed.*
  - *Use photos from Extension hosted events in your area; be taking these photos all year.*
  - *New extension logo should be clearly, prominently and frequently used*
  - *Crowded text is difficult to read and will be skipped.*
  - *Never publish a page of just text; every page should have graphic elements on it and the goal should be to have a quality photo on each page.*
  - *Many skim readers will only look at the pictures; make your photos unique each year and make them meaningful, using people when possible.*
  - *Every photo needs a cutline describing what is taking place in it and who is in it.*
- Good quality printing is important
  - *Paper must be opaque enough to avoid bleeding of ink (24 lb. Paper)*
  - *It is recommended that annual reports be printed on 8.5x11 paper with clear covers and comb binders.*

- Subdivide text and make use of white space
  - *Use titles and subheads where possible*
  - *Don't pack too much information or text onto a page*
  
- Keep writing, especially description of programs, brief
  - *Use the word "impact" to show the results*
  - *Don't list every single program. Could use main categories and say "an example of this program during the year was ..."*
  
- There is such a thing as too brief
  - *No tri-fold brochure annual reports ... they will get lost among other papers*
  - *Our goal is to have a consistent style so all reports will be 8.5 x 11 and at least 8 pages.*
  - *Quality is the goal; use good grammar and good design ideas.*
  
- Have a consistent design and style for all counties
  - *A template exists for 8 page and 12 page annual reports.*
  - *Templates, as well as a catalog of photos, are available from David Burton.*
  
- Standards in text style (don't use multiple text fonts)
  - *Clear, sharp text styles (Times News Roman, 12 point for main text)*
  - *Columns of text should NOT be justified. Use jagged left alignment.*
  - *Use Times New Roman Bold for headlines and subheads*
  - *Do NOT use a font size smaller than 12 for main text or 11 for cutlines; smaller font sizes are unreadable for other people and are no longer the industry standard.*
  
- Good writing
  - *Good writing is clear and concise. A journalistic writing style is best.*
  - *As with other writing, the AP and SW Region Styleguides should be used. Become familiar with the basics of our regional styleguide. Hints and tips are also provided monthly in the special staff only e-mail entitled, "Monthly News Tip."*
  - *The annual report must be accurate in all statements and assertions.*
  - *Proofread content before printing it. Better yet, have everyone in the office as well as council officers read and mark the report before printing a final copy to distribute.*
  
- Financials
  - *Need to include a statement of MU's contribution back to the county*
  - *Statement about funding sources is necessary*
  
- Statements of support and introduction
  - *Annual reports do need "letters of introduction" signed by council chairpersons, CPDs and council secretaries*
  - *Incorporate statements of support into the report as graphics using just one sentence and the name of the person being quoted*