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To: Extension Employees, Partners & Stakeholders

From: Joe Zublena  
Associate Dean, CALS and Director, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service

Date: December 20, 2013

Subject: N.C. Cooperative Extension Service Vision & Planning Initiative Update

To our Extension family,

I'm writing to provide an update on the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service Vision and Planning Initiative, which was launched to develop and implement a plan that will best position our organization for long-term success. As I've mentioned before, we've experienced \$20 million in permanent state and federal budget cuts since 2000, resulting in the loss of numerous field faculty, administration, support, and faculty specialist positions both on campus and in the counties. This thorough review of our business model, and any subsequent change, is a necessity.

The initiative is marching forward as we identify the most valued programs and services that will meet the needs of North Carolina citizens and businesses during our next 100 years. Since the effort was first announced in a memo from me on September 25, 2013, we've made significant progress thanks to the time and dedication of our employees, local governments and other valued partners and stakeholders.

I must reiterate our sincere appreciation to all of those who have gotten us to this point; your participation and passion have been inspiring. To quote one of the greatest leaders the world has ever known: **"It always seems impossible until it's done." ~ Nelson Mandela**

With your support and understanding, we'll see this effort through to the end and have a stronger, optimized Extension Service for the people of North Carolina. Please take some time to review the specifics of our efforts as we prepare to welcome the new year.

### **LISTENING SESSIONS: LOUD & CLEAR**

We recently wrapped up a series of 14 public listening sessions in addition to the State Extension Conference employee session in November. These sessions took place over a six-week period at locations ranging from Plymouth on the coast to Bryson City in the mountains. Nearly 2,000 employees, volunteers, elected officials, ag producers, and other interested citizens participated!

Summaries, photos and video of the process and feedback from the sessions are available online at our initiative website ([www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative)) under the “Listening Sessions” section. Our Visioning Committee will review the input early in 2014 – see below.

### **CONTINUE TO ENGAGE & INFLUENCE OUR CHANGE**

The listening sessions have concluded, but there is still an opportunity for you to be heard. Provide direct input that will influence the pending changes to our organization using our **online feedback tool**: [go.ncsu.edu/extensioncomments](http://go.ncsu.edu/extensioncomments).

**Please share this direct link with colleagues and constituents that haven’t had the opportunity to lend their voices yet.** We have had over 110 individual comments provided already!

\*All online comments should be **submitted by Wednesday, January 15, 2014.**

### **WHAT’S NEXT?**

**Visioning Team Meetings and Plan Development** – The Visioning Team, comprised of Extension employees and representatives from partnering organizations, local governments and community groups, will begin analyzing stakeholder feedback in a focused meeting the week of January 20, 2014. The team will meet over the course of three days in January and February and throughout the spring to review the input provided and other data. They will evaluate your needs, concerns and ideas in order to craft a recommended plan and strategy for moving forward, which we plan to reveal in May 2014.

**Public Announcements & Updates** – We plan to distribute another news release to state, regional and national media outlets providing an initiative update in January 2014. This external awareness campaign will consist of media relations, social media outreach and Extension promotion. We will also share the announcement with you via our listservs, websites and other online resources.

### **RESOURCES REMINDER**

Following is a list of key resources to save, bookmark, follow, like, etc. for timely updates and materials regarding the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service Vision Initiative.

- **Vision Initiative Website:** [www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative)
- **Online Comment Tool (also located on Initiative website):** [go.ncsu.edu/extensioncomments](http://go.ncsu.edu/extensioncomments)
- **Facebook (NCCES):** [www.facebook.com/NCEExtension](http://www.facebook.com/NCEExtension)
- **Twitter (NCCES):** [https://twitter.com/ncce\\_news](https://twitter.com/ncce_news)

Sheri Schwab, associate director of NCCES and director of county operations, continues to provide overall leadership for this effort. Sheri is working closely with our Visioning Team and myself to facilitate these important conversations and ensure progress. Sheri is the primary point person for this initiative and can be reached at [sheri\\_schwab@ncsu.edu](mailto:sheri_schwab@ncsu.edu) or 919-515-1381.

We are on track to have a plan in place in time for our centennial celebration in May 2014, though it will take time to implement the entire plan. As with all key stages throughout this process, we will keep you informed of our progress.

I thank you for your continuing dedication, trust and service during this effort. Together we'll continue on this path to another century of stellar service for the people of North Carolina.

Wishing you and yours safe and Happy Holidays!

- c: Richard Linton, Dean, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, NCSU
- William Randle, Dean, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, NCA&T
- Randy Woodson, Chancellor, NCSU
- Warwick Arden, Provost, NCSU
- Mary Watzin, Dean, College of Natural Resources, NCSU
- Marvin Malecha, Dean, College of Design, NCSU
- Kevin Howell, Assistant to the Chancellor for External Affairs, NCSU