



To: N.C. Cooperative Extension CEDs
Date: May 15, 2015
Subject: Digital Signage in County Extension Offices

Good morning Extension colleagues,

In furtherance of our strategic plan and the ongoing branding initiative, we are pleased to announce that we are taking another step toward a high-tech, high-touch presence in almost all of our off-campus Extension centers this summer. County Operations has one-time equipment funds to purchase **digital signs** for those offices whose networks are managed by Extension Information Technology (EIT).

The digital signs are special flat screen TVs equipped with a very small computer system that will deliver digital content over the wireless network. These hi-definition screens will engage visitors as they walk in each local office with Extension's work and impacts, as well as help create an environment of innovation and cutting-edge outreach.

The systems will deliver statewide, branded marketing messages along with relevant local content that pulls directly from your website and the CES web system. Some examples include upcoming local events and job vacancies. A simple application will let you add custom content whenever you want!

The funds we have for this project must be expended before the close of this fiscal year, so this is a very fast-moving project! Therefore, we have already purchased the digital signs along with mounting brackets and they will soon be on their way to those EIT-networked offices.

How will the installation process work?

We do ask that local offices make arrangement for installation. Please follow your local protocols and rules for facilities modifications/installations. If on-site resources are not available for the installation, we do ask that your local office cover installation costs for mounting the TV.

You should mount the TV wherever you feel is the most effective location in your center. Aim to hang it somewhere that the public tends to congregate, such as in a lobby, outside a meeting room or around your entrance area. These are to be used for ongoing announcements rather than for program delivery, so they should not be placed in conference rooms, teaching labs, or individual offices.

EIT will visit to install the computer after your TV is mounted. We ask that you work with your county facilities personnel to complete this by the end of June 2015 so the EIT installations can be completed by the end of August.

After reading this information, if you have any questions about your order, installation or other items related to this, please direct your questions to the EIT help desk at ces_help@ncsu.edu, or 919-513-7000.

Mounting Tips

Make sure there is a power outlet on the wall to power the TV and computer. Ideally, the outlet would be on the wall at the bracket. If the outlet is near the floor, you might want to have it moved (if not cost-prohibitive), though this expense would be your office's responsibility. A lower-cost alternative would be to use the existing outlet and hide the cables using cable molding. Cable molding can be purchased at home improvement or hardware stores.

Will this create more work for me?

We want to assure you that managing the sign needn't create more work on your end. A sign management application called *Rise Vision* will enable EIT to manage the signs centrally, equipping each eligible office with professionally designed slides for your screen, as well as providing you access to add content specific to your office.

How are we able to use funds for TVs during a reorganization period?

We are utilizing “one-time funds” to purchase the digital signage for county offices. It’s important to emphasize that these funds are a separate budget category than “recurring funds,” which are used for employee salaries. Recurring funds can’t be used to purchase items like TVs, just like these one-time funds can’t be used to pay employees.

The funds we’ve allocated for the digital signage will be forfeited if not used by the end of this fiscal year (June 30). As such, we’re seizing a tremendous opportunity to bolster communications and branding at the local level – a key strategic plan goal – and help enhance your operations.

Why are only certain offices eligible? Will they get something else for marketing purposes?

Technology requirements limit the signs to offices where Extension Information Technology manages the networks. This is because EIT must have access to the network to manage and secure the small computers.

Offices not on an EIT network will receive alternative signage/banners later this year, at no cost to you, as part of the rebranding process. We will reach out to you in advance of any branding updates taking place later this year to gauge your local signage needs and work to address them as best as possible. We are currently wrapping up multiple rebranding-related updates for employees, which will share additional details over the next week.

We hope that you will welcome this new technology we are implementing to help spread the word about all the great things happening in North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

Sincerely,



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www.ces.ncsu.edu/vision-initiative/strategic-plan