



To: N.C. Cooperative Extension Employees
Date: May 15, 2015
Subject: N.C. Cooperative Extension Rebranding Update
From: N.C. Cooperative Extension Leadership

Dear Extension colleagues,

We hope this message finds you well as we near the end of a dynamic fiscal year. First, we want to extend our sincerest appreciation to each of you, as you've navigated ever-changing currents over the past year and continued to make significant impacts statewide. We appreciate your unwavering dedication and support. We'd like to take this time to update you on the rebranding topics that are being discussed across the universities and the county offices.

WHERE WE ARE

N.C. A&T and NC State universities have both undertaken university-wide strategic planning initiatives in the past year, which will impact how we collectively market the N.C. Cooperative Extension partnership. We (CALS, SAES and communications leadership at each institution) have spent the past seven months discussing how these university changes might influence the branding of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service at NC State, the Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T, the partnership and entity known as N.C. Cooperative Extension and, more importantly, the impressions on the counties and citizens we serve.

N.C. Cooperative Extension Service (NC State)

NC State recently launched a major brand refresh – announcing the adoption of its new brand standards on April 9 – which involves transitioning the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service (NCCES) to a university sub-brand. This initiative will create unprecedented opportunities to advance the organization's strategic plan in exciting and innovative ways. Coinciding with the university's strategic goals and ensuing brand efforts, NCCES is undergoing the process of rebranding to better leverage and support the NC State brand and more effectively market the organization, both individually and as a partnership.

The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T

As a result of the N.C. A&T State University branding initiative introduced in August 2014, the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (SAES) and the Cooperative Extension Program will be incorporated into the integrated marketing and strategic communications phase of N.C. A&T's branding campaign tentatively scheduled for launch in late 2015. Plans will be developed within the framework of A&T Preeminence 2020 and support the university's overall institutional goals and the strategic priorities of SAES.

N.C. Cooperative Extension

Like many brands in higher education, the N.C. Cooperative Extension image is fragmented, ambiguous and lacks the consistency necessary to convey a strong identity. In response to those concerns, Cooperative Extension leadership at the two universities, along with our invaluable local government partners, will be coming together to talk about who we are, what we do, what should be expected of us (our public value), and how we need to communicate those ideals as we move forward. Together we will revamp and reinvigorate Cooperative Extension across the state.

Refreshing the brand involves much more than logos and taglines. It also encompasses deliverables and expectations (ours and others'), so we're starting from the ground up and reforging the foundation upon which we advance our collective and individual identities. The result will be a new communications platform, and guidelines to help everyone support it, which will better reflect our universities, increase public awareness and visibility statewide, and position N.C. Cooperative Extension for long-term success.

Our Strategic Intent

Our Cooperative Extension partnership delivers research-based knowledge and solutions from our respective institutions to the people of North Carolina, and our employees are proud of the universities they represent. Going forward, we will optimize our position as key components of these world-class universities and in turn strengthen a partnership unmatched in its history and service to North Carolinians.

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

This powerful, unifying identity will articulate the excellence in service, innovation and collaboration that defines the core of our outstanding partnership. When our institutions and partnership are recognized for these characteristics, we build trust and value, and benefit everyone who is part of this community.

But these are only the first few steps. Our success in building the reputation you deserve is contingent upon how well we all understand the principles and standards of the new co-brand – and how consistently we apply them.

WHAT'S NEXT

Currently, the launch timeframe for the N.C. Cooperative Extension rebranding rollout is trekking toward late 2015. Every day we make progress, but a key principle we adhere to is **“no shortcuts allowed.”** We are working together to more effectively represent our two prestigious state universities, 101 local governments and millions of citizens.

We will work until we get it right.

How to Market N.C. Cooperative Extension for Now

We still encourage employees and partners to avoid long-term marketing investments (e.g., large quantities, permanent signage, business literature, etc.) until the updated N.C. Cooperative Extension brand guidelines and toolkit are complete. Existing inventories should be used whenever possible.

Though we understand that some of you have year-end funds that you may need to spend, we want to help you avoid dedicating funds to materials that could soon be outdated. Utilize the communication contacts listed below if you have specific questions or would like to discuss your situation.

Communication Contacts


[Justin Moore](#) – Director of Marketing and Communications, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service

[Bill Patterson](#) – Interim Director of Agricultural Communications and Marketing Services, N.C. A&T School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences

Now is the time to build on the momentum that our respective universities, partners and the state of North Carolina have created. As we go through the process of creating a revised and enhanced communications platform and drafting guidelines for our N.C. Cooperative Extension partnership, we will develop a framework that facilitates not only strong, consistent communications, but also establishes a clear, resounding identity across the state.

With the advent of a refined identity and vision, we will lay to rest the notion of N.C. Cooperative Extension as “the best kept secret” in the state. We thank you for your ongoing participation in and contribution to this critical effort.

Sincerely,



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