

Senior Moments



Summer 2007 Edition

The official Newsletter for Florida's ESP Life members

Retiree Alert .. They Need Our Help

Tax Reform vs. Budget Cuts

IFAS/Extension Administration and Extension faculty are requesting that the retirees get involved in the upcoming debate over property tax reform and anticipated cuts in our Extension budgets statewide. The best defense is a good offense. The best thing we can do is to approach our legislators and county commissioners with a common voice using statewide data provided by IFAS.

A letter is attached with this newsletter outlining the various talking points. It is stressed that we work with our respective CED's in our resident counties before we take independent action.

We all want property tax relief, but at what cost? This legislative action is going to impact some counties more than others, but we all need to be prepared to act fast if the need arises.

WANTED: To help us stay in touch with our retirees, please forward us your working e-mail address. Send to: mckcar@msn.com We promise no Spam!
Also, let us know about you and others you might know about. You can also mail to: Mike McKinney, 1850 Ravenridge St. Wesley Chapel, FL 33543

Retirees Luncheon Set for Tuesday, September 25th

You and one other person will be the guests of the Extension Professional Associations of Florida for the Retirees Luncheon, Memorial Service and Communicator Awards on Tuesday, September 25, 2007. The ESP Membership Meeting is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. and all retirees are invited. The retirees meeting with the Dean is scheduled for 3:00 p.m.

This year's Annual Conference will be held at the Renaissance Resort at World Golf Village in St. Augustine, Florida. Plan now, especially you retirees in Northeastern Florida, to join us for this special occasion.

Changes in this year's program include moving the Auction to Tuesday night with the DSA Banquet on Wednesday. The opening night barbeque will be at the St. Johns County Extension office. Mike Sweat will be sending out the Retiree's registration packet around the first of July.

If you have a computer, click on www.epaf.ifas.ufl.edu for all the details and agenda. We hope to see you in St. Augustine in September!

Pauline Calloway & Joy Satcher Cruising with ESP

Pauline Calloway, former Florida colleague and retiree Joy Satcher will be representing the sunshine state on the National ESP Family & Friends cruise leaving Miami on January 6th. ESP cruisers from Minnesota, Arizona, Oklahoma, Maryland, and Pennsylvania will be joining our Floridians for the seven-night Western Caribbean excursion on the world's largest cruise ship, *Freedom of the Seas*. Ports of Call will include Haiti, Jamaica, Georgetown, Grand Cayman and Cozumel.

Dick Stouffer, a retiree from Penn State and Georgia Extension who now lives in Inverness, Fl, will also be joining the group. There is a possibility a few staterooms may still exist at the ESP rate. Anyone wishing to consider joining us should contact me ASAP at mckcar@msn.com.

All Roads Lead To Charleston. . . .

Florida retirees are urged to take part in the National ESP Conference in Charleston, South Carolina (September 10-14th) at the historic Francis Marion Hotel. If you have a computer, click on:

www.espnational.org/2007NationalMeeting/index.htm or refer to your Spring issue of ESP Connection. Linda Cook informs me that a few Life member rebates still exist. Don't forget to check out the fantastic tours they have scheduled during the Conference.

Visit your local Extension Office and CED and find out what you can do to help during this budget crises.

What Are They Doing Now?

Bill Summerhill is the President of the local NARFE Chapter in Gainesville. John Woeste is the Vice President.

Ray Andrew is President of the Retired Faculty Univ. of Florida (RFUF).

Susan Hedge is currently working as the Ecological Educator for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Va.

Mike McKinney is the first male to be elected President of the League of Women Voters in Hillsborough County.

When in Dillard, Georgia stop by The Sassy Chicken Antique Shop and check out Ann Parramore's antiques.

Barney Harris, Prof Emeritus & Extension Dairy Scientist, passed away on May 7, 2007. He began his career in IFAS in 1963 and retired in 1994.

WANTED: Volunteer to chair the Life Member Committee and/or serve as editor of *Senior Moments*.

Editorially Speaking . . . Twenty-five years ago and prior to my moving to Florida, I survived a major cut in Extension's funding when I was an agent and CED with Purdue Extension in Indiana. Entire programs were eliminated and smaller counties lost their 4-H agents. That experience made me a true convert to the virtues of having strong Advisory Councils and Committees. It will be interesting to see just how strong our Advisory system is here in Florida. Let's hope it is strong! Advisory members report becoming disenfranchised when they feel underutilized or worse yet, taken for granted.

Mike McKinney, Editor

TO: Retired Extension Agents and Friends
FROM: Epsilon Sigma Phi Fraternity
SUBJECT: Tax Reform

Property tax reform is an emotional, personal issue. The purpose of this letter is not to try to change your view, but to request your assistance in informing your local legislators of the value of Extension programming to their community and the implications this Tax Reform bill on this long standing community service.

For the past few months, University of Florida IFAS officials, County Extension Directors and others have been meeting with advisory committees, providing scenarios for what might happen with drastic cuts to county budgets as a result of tax reform. It is our opinion that any property tax reforms should give local governments the ability to continue these services. There are some proposals that would require greater cuts along with some that would require fewer. The big difficulty is that we do not know what is on the table.

The final impact to our overall programming will be based on the cuts that have to occur and how each county implements this cut in balancing their county's budgets. At the very minimum, some services and programs will no longer exist and the possibility of user fees for other services. At a minimum, we are hopeful that we will be able to keep an Extension presence in all Florida counties.

It must be stressed that:

- Extension is a three-tier partnership between county, state & federal governments (all three tiers provide both program and financial support)
- Extension's Solutions for Your Life website is focused on providing timely and relevant solutions. The url is <http://SolutionsForYourLife.ufl.edu>.
- Today, UF/IFAS includes 74 extension offices statewide with at least one in every Florida county.
- In 2006 extension faculty delivered research-based information to more than **8.6 million** Florida residents.
- Last year over 66,000 extension volunteers expended more than 1.3 million volunteer hours. They made nearly 6 million customer contacts providing services to communities who ordinarily could not

afford these services.

- Florida's extension receives the majority of its funding through state and county governments. In 2005-2006, 89% of the \$72 million budget for extension in Florida was received from state and local governments.
- The counties contributed 43.47% and the state 43.41% of these dollars. This support does not include their facilities, as those are paid for by the counties. Other funding comes from the federal government 10.63% and fees & grants 2.22%.
- County funding and program allocations are determined by the funding received, directives from the county commissioners, volunteers and local advisory committees. This formula varies from county to county.

IFAS will continue to be fully engaged during the special session. However each county extension director will do their best to keep you informed on the changes as they occur. Please feel free to contact any of the offices throughout the state for a more county based scenario on the tax reform implications. Our message will be that local services are important; including Extension and that Extension is local.