

Extension Communications Plan of Work for FY07

Extension Communications contributes in two ways to the successful completion of the Extension Mission. The first is to provide support services for the faculty and staff of Extension and the second is to assist in the dissemination of information to a wide variety of audiences using the most effective method of communication for the targeted audience. It is clear that the environment in which Alaska Extension has operated in the past is changing. In an effort to not only adapt to this new environment but improve, Communications has outlined several goals and strategies. Following is Communications' plan of work for the rest of FY07.

Be aware that these are all pieces to a puzzle and that while some have to happen before others can begin still others are moving along separately. Also note these are not our normal day-to-day projects but new infrastructure and operational type projects.

IT Goals and Infrastructure

Communications has made an assessment of its IT infrastructure and outlined strategies for meeting those goals. Projects in line with this function include:

1. *Redesign of the Extension website.* This redesign will not only include a new "look and feel" for the site, but added functionality. The redesigned website will be dynamic and use a content management system. The dynamic component will include a web-searchable publications database, staff directory, events calendar, news, and newsletter databases. Use of a content management system will provide more secure and stress-free website maintenance by any faculty or staff responsible for their content on the website. In addition, the CMS will facilitate easier creation of localized websites through the use of templates. Creation of publications and staff directory databases will reduce maintenance time and increase functionality. An events calendar and newsletter database for localized activities and newsletters--accessible to staff around the state--will delegate responsibility to each district for maintaining the sites at the local level and improve efficiencies and timeliness of posted information.
2. *Publications database.* Communications has established a networking and mentoring relationship with SeaGrant. As a result, SeaGrant has given us their publications database for modification to meet our needs. When complete, this database will enable us to conduct targeted marketing, maintain accurate counts of district inventories, better estimate and distribute numbered and non-numbered pubs, resulting in increased system efficiency and better projection of budget expenditures.
3. *Photo database.* Extension has a huge, relatively untapped resource--photos. Communications is working toward the completion of an online photo database to serve as a central location of photos for use in Extension publications, brochures, webpages, etc. Faculty and staff from around the state will be encouraged to

- submit their own photos. Since budget and resources do not allow for a full-time photographer to travel around the state, many photos currently in use are taken in the Interior where Communication's Media Technician is located. By gathering and opening this resource to all of Extension, the photo database will provide a continuously available and more accurate picture of Extension in Alaska.
4. *Hardware/software database.* Communications has begun the process of building a database of information on Extensions media and computer hardware and software. This database will allow for a planned approach to maintaining and upgrading these assets as well as more efficient use of our shared hardware resources.

Marketing Strategy

It is Communications' intent to annually identify its strengths and weaknesses in the marketing and distribution of Extension publications and its role in the marketing of Extension as an organization.

With marketing, the first step is to build name recognition with constituents, stakeholders and the public, but these efforts depend on the strength of faculty and staff contributions. To assist in this, Communications has developed several guidelines, policies and procedures on topics such as: style, web, logo, graphic identity, etc. We have also developed a survey strategy for collecting information about our constituents and their impression of Extension and our products. We have almost completed production of this year's information packet (Extension in Review, Informational Brochure, Fact Sheets and Publications Catalog). In the future, with more information about our constituents and from faculty and staff, we will be better able to target the information packet for greater impact.

In the area of publications, we have developed several new distribution tactics and opportunities and have begun implementing them. We will continuously review our successes and failures to learn from and adapt our strategies. We have also completed an assessment of our publications and video assets. And we are in the process of building a constituent database from which we can gather information and perform targeted marketing.

We hope to hire a Public Information Officer with editing and marketing experience. This will considerably amplify our efforts to increase awareness and knowledge of Extension, its publications, and its mission.

Summary

It is Communications' intent to operate more efficiently, increase distribution, improve quality and participate in the marketing of Extension.