

# EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Extension helps train community development professionals through national organization

The hallmark of any Extension program is the information shared be research-based and communicated in a manner that helps to drive change in a community. Richard Proffer, University of Illinois Extension community & economic development educator in the Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit, has been contributing to the future of his profession for the last two years by teaching at the nationally accredited [Midwest Community Development Institute \(CDI\)](#).

CDI is one of a few training institutes coordinated by the Community Development Council (CDC) across the nation. The Midwest CDI is sponsored locally by Western Illinois University's Institute for Rural Affairs and serves mostly participants from Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. The program consists of three, 4-day training sessions. Proffer serves on Midwest CDI's faculty and taught four classes for Year One and Year Three participants.

"During the Year 1 session, I teach the Community and Economic Development Practices class," Proffer explained. "Year 1 focuses on the foundations of community development. In my class, I teach how we work within the community or community groups."

With 18 years experience, in the profession, Proffer has a wide range of real-life examples that add to the class discussion and learning. His second class is Community Assessments where topics relate to community needs assessment and how success is measured to aid in community planning.

Year 2 session focuses on economic development. Then Proffer jumps back in the team that teaches during the Year 3 session.

"The Year 3 session helps students put it all together," Proffer stated. "Not only is it helping them improve their skills to coordinate community and economic development efforts, it is also preparing them for the exam to become a Professional Community and Economic Developer."

Richard is a Certified Professional Community Economic Developer as he sat for the test in Arkansas and has been recertified once. He is one of 350 certified professionals in the country.

CDI participants include local economic developers, mayors and local officials, state economic development agency staff, federal and regional agency staff, concerned community leaders, and entrepreneurs. The trainings are interactive and practical. Proffer says, "it is the examples that often teach the most because it is real life and the students can relate to the impacts on the community."



Photo by Richard Proffer | Illinois Extension

*Adults involved in local government and community development, plus community leaders and entrepreneurs are some of the professionals drawn to the Midwest Community Development Institute. Illinois Extension CED Educator Richard Proffer is one of 350 Certified Professional Community Economic Developers and now uses his experience to help train new professionals.*

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