

EXTENSION
SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**Anita Wilkinson**Communications
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Extension director, associate dean, Dr. Shelly Nickols-Richardson enjoyed connecting with local 4-H members, Extension staff, partners, and volunteers during her recent unit tour with College of ACES dean, Kim Kidwell.

College of ACES Dean and Extension Director Connect With Staff and Stakeholders

The work being done through University of Illinois Extension programs and partnerships in Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties is recognized for its positive impact at many levels through the University system. College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) dean, Kimberly Kidwell, recently returned for her second unit tour, along with the new Extension director and associate dean, Shelly Nickols-Richardson. The duo spent the day learning about a few of our programs, engaging with unit staff, and networking with volunteers, 4-H members, and partners.

“Your unit is like an all-star team,” commented Dean Kidwell. “I appreciate having an opportunity to connect with our folks in the trenches and to marvel at the difference you all make in the communities there.”

A portion of the morning focused on the launching of a new enterprise led by the University of Illinois System and consisting of the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and Illinois Innovation Network (IIN). Local collaborators working to locate one of the IIN hubs in the greater Peoria area include U of I Extension, Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, Illinois Central College, U of I College of Medicine at Peoria, and OSF Health Care.

Extension community and economic development educator Kathie Brown facilitated the discussion focused on innovations in health care, agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation. “The purpose of the DPI-IIN effort is to stimulate statewide economic development and waves of local job creation by connecting university research with local economies,” explained U of I Extension county director Earl Allen. “The face-to-face discussion with the local partners allowed Dean Kidwell and Dr. Nickols-Richardson to deepen their understanding of the potential benefits of a local hub, identify next steps, and carry the message back to campus leadership to keep the effort moving forward.”

The remainder of the day gave us time to highlight a few additional programs: 1) efforts to reach Hispanic audiences through Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), 2) 4-H Teen Teachers, 3) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education Food for Health Partnership, 4) Annie’s Project, 5) Mason 4-H Shooting Sports, 6) Fulton County 4-H livestock projects, and 7) Master Gardener partnership with local health departments. The afternoon activities included additional special guests: Extension Council members, Illinois 4-H Foundation director Angie Barnard, and neighboring Extension unit staff.



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