

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Richard Proffer hired as new Extension community and economic development educator

University of Illinois Extension, Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit is pleased to announce [Richard Proffer](#) as the new community and economic development educator. He brings a wealth of experience in business retention and expansion work, small business development, economic development, and strategic planning.

"With the continued decline in rural growth across the country, it is important to help rural communities reinvent themselves," noted Proffer. "I help communities focus on what sets them apart, be it tourism opportunities, downtown redevelopment, or new local business development. It is all about how I can help the community grow."

Prior to joining the Illinois Extension team, Richard worked for [University of Missouri Extension](#) for over 16 years. He began his extension career as a business development director. In his most recent role as community economic development field specialist he served 18 counties in southeast Missouri.

Some of his leadership responsibilities included implementing the [Exceed](#) program throughout Missouri, developing the award winning Building Local Prosperity program, and creating Strategic Doing Missouri Style.

Extension's national professional association [Epsilon Sigma Phi](#) awarded Proffer the Missouri Chapter Rookie of the Year award in 2007. In 2010, he was awarded the Missouri Associated Industries Business Development Counselor of the Year.

"Richard has a long list of CED professional certifications and trainings," stated [Earl Allen](#), Extension county director. "He is positioned to launch strongly with U of I Extension, and I am excited with what he brings to the team."

While Proffer's physical office location is the Mason County branch in Havana, he will be working with communities throughout the four-county unit. Additionally, he will be offering his expertise across the state through targeted trainings, online blogs posts, and work with the state Extension CED team.

Proffer earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from [Southeast Missouri State University](#) and a Masters of Business Administration from [Davenport University](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was raised in Crump, Missouri on the family farm and currently resides in Pekin, Illinois.

"I began my career in cable advertising in Peoria," commented Proffer. "Working in Fulton, Mason, Peoria and Tazewell counties feels like I am coming home."



Photo by Anita Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

Richard Proffer is the new community and economic development educator for U of I Extension serving Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties. He joins the team with extensive CED experience including over 16 years with University of Missouri Extension.

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