Economic Impact of State Cuts

The Clemson Extension System has experienced a 46% budget cut during the last two fiscal years. Without a doubt, this doesn’t happen without some drastic and sometimes painful changes. In January of this year, we moved our office to a different location on the Clemson Sandhill REC. This moved co-located us with Clemson Regulatory, Leadership South Carolina, and the Department of Natural Resources. This has allowed Clemson to reduce operating costs by closing two buildings. An added benefit was the collaboration that has begun to take place between these agencies and their respective programs.

In July 2010, Clemson offered a voluntary retirement to qualified employees. Patty Harris, who had served as the administrative assistant in Richland County for the past 15+ years, took advantage of this opportunity. (continued on page 6)

The Urban Horticulture Center

The Clemson Extension Urban Horticulture Center (UHC) delivered home gardening information to 7,934 people visiting Riverbanks Botanical Garden, home of the UHC, during the fiscal year. Approximately 1350 people participated in 27 home gardening related workshops. As part of the UHC community outreach program, gardening workshops were conducted for 72 neighborhood residents in five (5) Richland County communities. This program was funded by the Richland County Recreation Commission.

During the annual “Springtime at the Garden Festival” sponsored by Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, the UHC contributed 12 information and demonstration stations that were staffed by 35 Master Gardeners and seven (7) Extension staff members. Approximately 7,600 attended the festival.

The education activities of the UHC during the year were supported by 3112 Master Gardener volunteer hours.
4-H is Active in Richland County

Paulette Gay – Richland and Lexington County Volunteer Coordinator

There are currently 24 4-H clubs in Richland County: 4 community clubs, 4 after school clubs and special interest clubs, 11 Fort Jackson Military clubs, and 5 horse clubs. The 4-H horse clubs continue to be very popular in Richland County. Through the 4-H Horses and pony project youth can learn how to identify colors and breeds, selection, determine age, grooming, riding styles, anatomy, basic care and training, disease prevention, proper fitting, showing, and much more. Projects are available for both the horse owner and the horse lover (non-owner). There are five active Horse Clubs in Richland County. Three clubs are in Blythewood, and two in Lower Richland. There are 105 members in the five clubs.

All five 4-H Horse clubs have participated in one or more horse events from stall decorating at the South Carolina State Fair to competing in the State 4-H Horse Competition Southern Regional Competition bring home numerous awards.

4-H2O Pontoon Classroom

A weeklong educational program on Lake Murray is offered to 20 youth ages 10 to 12. The program teaches the importance of Lake Murray and watersheds that feed the system its 50,000+ acres; 500 miles of shoreline, and approximately 7.2 billion gallons of water.

Participants learn about storm water pollutants, and water quality for fish, recreation, irrigation and drinking water source. They study and identify macroinvertebrates using “critter count” as a water quality monitoring tool. They measure pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity. They construct and take measurements with a secchi disc. They learn to test for coliform bacteria such as E. coli using cultured coli scans.

The Pontoon4-H2O camp is in its 11th year with 220 youth from Lexington and Richland Counties.

More than 300 Volunteers and 150 Sponsors have given of their time and recourses to help youth learn the importance of protecting our water resources.

4-H and Horticulture

The Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program began 7 years ago. To-date there is 335+ youth with 40+ Volunteers. This gardening program fosters a love for gardening and the environment through hands on learning and community service projects. Designed for 3rd through 8th graders. Participants learn plant processes, propagation, water dynamics, insects, fruit, vegetables, landscaping and personal skills. The JMG group meets at the Riverbanks Botanical Garden for structured gardening glasses; participates in the Riverbanks Farmer’s Market where they sell the plants they raise. They complete most of their service projects by educating the thousands of visitors to the botanical garden.

LEAF Squad

LEAF Squad is a 5th year group of youth who have graduated from the JMG program and are ambassadors for the JMG program in the Midlands. The LEAF Squad currently consists of 12 volunteers and 8 members. The JMG group meets at the Riverbanks Botanical Garden for structured gardening glasses; participates in the Riverbanks Farmer’s Market where they sell the plants they raise. They complete most of their service projects by educating the thousands of visitors that visit the botanical garden. This gardening program fosters a love for gardening and the environment through hands on learning and community service projects. It is designed for 3rd through 8th graders. Participants learn plant processes, propagation, water dynamics, insects, fruit, vegetables, landscaping and personal skills.

SEEDLINGS

The SEEDLINGS program is in its second year. the program educates youth that are too young for the JMG program. The group consists of 4 volunteers, 8 youth, ages 6 and 7. They learn about the growth of plants including vegetables and their uses. The group meets at Windward Point Yacht Club on Lake Murray.
The mission of the Clemson Extension Master Gardener Program is to select, train, and utilize knowledgeable volunteers to facilitate the educational work of the local Consumer Horticulture Agent, by delivering research-based information to citizens of the state.

Master Gardeners in the Midlands contributed a total of 15,565 volunteer hours to Clemson Extension Master Gardener endeavors during Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Clemson Extension Master Gardeners in Richland County contributed 4,184 of those total Midlands hours.

The hours donated in Richland included 2,675 educational service hours that were in direct keeping with the Clemson Extension Master Gardener mission of educational outreach. Richland County Master Gardeners lead the state in the number of volunteer hours contributed to their local community last year.

Richland County Master Gardeners delivered Clemson Extension programs to over 11,200 people. Master Gardeners were invited speakers for local churches, civic groups, garden clubs, senior centers, and schools.

Clemson Extension Master Gardeners partnered with library branches located throughout the Midlands to deliver educational “Garden Like a Master” lectures and provide research-based horticultural displays. Master Gardeners were present at several farmers markets during the spring and summer months where they identified weeds, diagnosed plant problems, and provided general horticultural information to homeowners via “Ask a Master Gardener” booths.

Richland County Master Gardeners provided services and programs unique to Richland County. Master Gardeners maintained multiple sites on Clemson’s Sandhill Research and Education Center grounds such as the Turfgrass Demonstration Site, the Demonstration Garden Site, and the Carolina Children’s Garden.
The Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) is a federally funded program. Established in 1969, EFNEP has reached more than 600,000 youth nationwide, and more than 100,000 adults to gain knowledge and develop practical skills. For 41 years, EFNEP has helped children, youth and young families develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior needed to lead a healthy lifestyle.

EFNEP is delivered by Nutrition Educator Assistants (NEAs) who are trained in basic food, nutrition, and health topics by State Coordinators, EFNEP Specialists, and faculty from Clemson University. Currently there are only 12 EFNEP NEAs across the state of South Carolina. NEA’s teach a series of lessons based on MyPyramid and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The hands-on, “learn-by-doing” approach allows the participants to make positive behavior changes to lead a healthier life.

EFNEP children and youth participate in a series of educational lessons geared at helping them to eat better and be more physically active through the “Color Me Healthy”, “Jump into Food and Fitness”, and “EatFit” programs.

In 2009-2010, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) served over 75 families through the Department of Social Service’s Employment Preparation Program in Richland County.

EFNEP classes were full of hands on activities to motivate clients for positive behavior changes. Classes often started with ice breaker to bring the group together. One such activity was homemakers were asked to draw a penny individually and add all the features in the penny such as the picture of Abraham Lincoln, the date etc. Then the group was divided into small groups and asked to work on the penny and feature as a group. The group with the most features received $10 gift certificate for healthy food shopping at the grocery store. The activity highlighted the value of teamwork as a family or group for a positive result.

EFNEP also taught “Clean, Safe and Healthy Home” lessons to the participants. These lessons taught the dangers of indoor air pollutions, cleaning supplies and basic environmental dangers and remedies.

Upon completion of the EFNEP program, a graduation ceremony was held and each participant received a certificate. Ninety percent (90%) of the graduates to seek employment were able to use the certificate to help them obtain jobs.

EFNEP in Richland County reached 357 children and youth during the year of 2009-2010 through daycare centers, child development centers, after school programs and day camps.

Through EFNEP youth learn to eat a wider variety of food. They gain knowledge of essential human nutrition and food safety practices. ‘Veg-Olympics was again the highlight of summer day camps this year. Youth were encouraged to consume fruits and vegetables and to be physically active through a variety of games and activities.

Linda Green demonstrates the food pyramid to a client.
Cotton farmers are faced with many decisions about which varieties will do best on their farms. Most of these decisions will be based on yield data. Until recently these decisions often were made based on yield data that was generated in another state or region of the country. At the urging of local farmers and cotton industry representatives it was decided to initiate a series of county cotton variety trials, all using the same varieties. This would give farmers in our state a look at 7-10 plantings of the same varieties across the state and indicate how effective these varieties would be for our area. This required the cooperation of not only farmers in 7-10 different counties, but input from the cotton seed industry, who would be asked to donate $20,000 to $30,000 in seed each year. Each company was allowed to put their top two varieties in the trial.

The county cotton trials are entering their fifth year. Support from farmers and the cotton industry has been outstanding. Farmers are asked to plant strip trials of each variety and manage it as they would the rest of their cotton. The plots can be either dryland plots or irrigated. At the end of the season, yield data is taken with the assistance of the local cotton industry representatives. The participating companies are given access to the yield and fiber quality data, and the state’s farmers are provided the same data to help make their planting decisions. The data is used in conjunction with the state Official Variety Trials conducted by Dr. Mike Jones, State Cotton Specialist.

The County Cotton Variety Trials have been popular with both farmers and cotton industry representatives because they generate local data, and because they are done under farmer control and conditions. Farmers get to look at the industries top varieties, side by side, and cotton industry representatives get to put their best products on the line. The value of these trials can be expressed in several ways. The cotton industry gains by showcasing their varieties. Clemson gains by increasing farmer interaction in field research, and farmers gain by having access to information that helps them make better decisions. The total acreage of cotton in Calhoun, Orangeburg, and Richland counties in 2010 was 49,490 acres. Based on research data, the information provided by the County Cotton Variety Trials helps farmers make variety decisions that conservatively gain them 150 pounds of cotton per acre, by allowing them to see and get yield data from the top cotton varieties available in the marketplace and grown in their area.

Ag Assistants answer walk-in questions in Richland County

Richland County has continued to fund three part time agricultural assistants to answer walk-in questions. In fiscal year 2009–10, Ag Assistants responded to 4578 questions by phone, e-mail and in person, and submitted 1912 soil samples to the Clemson Agricultural Service Lab for analysis.

The diversity of questions and meeting the people that ask them is what makes our job so interesting say Don Carter. After answering a question of how to best plant a tree, we might be making recommendations on how to eliminate ants from someone’s kitchen, how to keep deer from eating prized roses, how to water a new lawn, which peach varieties grow best in our area, trying to identify what’s been eating the leaves of an okra plant.
Carolina Clear to the Rescue!

Mary Nevins – Carolina Clear Agent

What’s a school to do when heavy rains running off a large roof threaten to wash away the playground? Carolina Clear to the rescue! In November of 2009, Bookman Road Elementary School was faced with a serious erosion problem. With a grant from the Richland County Conservation Commission and technical support from the Richland Conservation District and the SC Natural Resources Conservation Service, Clemson Extension’s water quality education program Carolina Clear designed a rain garden to handle the excess runoff. A rain garden is a special kind of planting bed, set six to twelve inches lower than the ground, which collects rain water and gives it a chance to sink into the soil. As the water slows down and infiltrates, it leaves behind pollutants like silt, fertilizers, bacteria, or auto fluids that it may have picked up along the way. These pollutants are broken down in the soil, and plant roots soak up extra water to speed up the process.

To install the garden, Carolina Clear organized a workshop for homeowners who wanted to learn how their own yards could benefit from a rain garden. Twenty-three participants attended the workshop, where they learned about water pollution, rain garden function, design, and plant selection. Then everyone went outside to plant the garden. Eight months later, the garden is doing its job well. Rain storms no longer turn the playground into a lake and carry sediment into nearby streams. The students have enjoyed the garden too, and even helped to weed and mulch the garden. Bookman Road Elementary’s rain garden is living proof that stormwater management can be a beautiful thing!

Economic Impact of State Cuts continued

In November 2010 the business operations of the Richland County Extension Office were moved a regional business center located at the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development (CIECD). The regional business center will be serving several counties in the midlands region.

Some agents have picked up additional counties or programmatic duties in an effort to allow us to continue to offer some of our most popular programs.

On a positive note, we continue to be successful in finding outside sources of funding. Programs such as Carolina Clear are funded entirely through a cooperative grant. We are also very fortunate to have three part time Ag Assistants funded by Richland County. This has allowed us to keep our doors open with little interruption in our regular business hours.
Eastover Seniors Learn to Make Healthy Choices

Over 50 senior adults in Eastover recently participated in the CHES research project at the Mamie Hinton Wellness Center. The Cooking Healthy and Eating Smart program consisted of 12 weekly lessons designed to teach rural, older adults who have limited resources about how to make safe and healthy food choices, use healthy and simple food preparation practices, and safely handle food.

Deon S. Legette and Nancy Harrison, County Extension Agents, will use data from the lessons, questionnaires, food demonstrations and measurements to determine community needs through this project sponsored by Clemson University and the Medical University of South Carolina.

Over 98% of participants reported they increased their knowledge and skills related to cooking and eating healthy.