

Background on the E-Extension Initiative

May 2004

“E-Extension is a collaborative approach whereby expert teams from the 74 land-Grant Universities develop and determine the “best of the best” information to be accessible to every county office and from multiple electronic devices with the ultimate goal that e-Extension will be the preferred, trusted source of information for people as they solve their life issues” (taken from “FAQs – e-Extension: A New Tool for Today and Tomorrow”). For the past two years, Extension and NASULGC (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges) leaders have solicited input from a variety of stakeholder groups to determine the viability of developing the E-Extension system. They also received preliminary funding from CSREES (Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service) which was used to develop a business plan. At the February National Extension Directors meeting, E-Extension proponents made an impassioned plea for an across-the-board appropriation, to be drawn from each states' Smith-Lever funds, to provide \$5 million in start up funds, then expanding to \$25 million per year by year five, to implement E-Extension. The Extension Directors reached verbal consensus, first, and then voted in May to fund the initiative for one year by a five to one majority.

The E-Extension vision is accomplished by:

Developing community of interest (COI) teams of experts to aggregate the "best" information focused on a particular user's situation.

Organizing content in databases separate from the delivery platform so that it can be adapted for multiple electronic delivery modes (cell phone, fax, PDA, desktops, and future digital technology), multiple formats (print, CD ,WWW, FAQs, fact sheets, Interactive decision tools, Ask the Experts, modules, courses) and multiple applications (national, state, & local).

Developing a national intranet for the organization of information and collaboration tools for staff to access the knowledge of the 74 LGUs.

The E-Extension Model - *Customer “To Be” Environment*

