New initiatives will include a County Director Training Program and a Mentoring/Coaching Program. The County Director Training Program team will be responsible for developing and implementing a training curriculum for County Directors to increase competency and performance, increase job satisfaction, and establish consistent leadership and direction among County Directors. The program could also provide training for those who aspire to be county directors. The team will research peer institutions’ training opportunities for county directors and will work to develop and implement comprehensive educational opportunities.

The Mentoring/Coaching initiative will develop a mentoring program for Extension employees that will increase skill level, reduce turnover, and improve job satisfaction. After conducting a needs assessment and researching successful mentoring programs, the team will develop a mentoring program with expected outcomes and launch the program.

Screening of applications for the team leaders for these initiatives is currently in progress, and each initiative is set to begin on June 1.

**Volunteerism and Competency-Based System**

Extension welcomes Tomi Rogers to the Implementation Team. Tomi will be leading both the Enhancing Volunteerism Initiative and the Establishing a Competency Based System Initiative. These teams will be selected in the near future. These initiative teams will establish core and subject-matter competencies, establish a volunteer certification program, and develop assessment and training materials. The initiatives will launch in June.

**Policies and Procedures**

A committee led by David Perrin will identify and compile Extension policies and procedures. The committee is currently being selected and will launch in June.
More Upcoming Initiatives >>>

Office Standards
This new initiative will address developing standards for Extension facilities and customer service. Shirley Hastings and Robert Burns will be leading the committee, which includes the following members: Kaye Avrit, Linda Carey, Janet Cluck, Joseph Donaldson, Tim Fawver, Ranson Goodman, Connie Heiskell, Mary Beth Henley, Martha Keel, Walter Malone, Tyrone Miller, Cam Philbeck, and Justin Stefanski. The team will hold its first meeting in May.

Enhancing Relations with Elected Officials
A committee led by Ben West will address Extension’s communication with elected officials and policy makers. The committee is currently being selected and will launch in June.

New Website
The new Strategic Plan website to establish a central location for information on the strategic plan for both employees and the public will launch in May. The new site will feature a Twitter feed, a feedback form, archived reports, and milestones achieved by each team. The site information will be shared when it goes live.

Progress Briefs >>>

BEST
The BEST team is planning a May launch of the first leg (preparation) of the BEST Extension Educator program. Look for more information from this initiative soon. The team has already begun work on the second leg that will address presentation skills.

Increasing Visibility
The Visibility Team is moving forward with two surveys to determine Extension employee marketing needs and Extension users’ perceptions of Extension. Agents and specialists will receive a survey that will address current views of marketing to gain input for what is needed to more effectively market Extension. The user survey will gather data regarding outside perceptions of Extension. Both surveys are expected to be distributed soon.

#AdvancingTN
Follow Strategic Plan Updates on Twitter, and use #AdvancingTN any time you tweet about progress being made!

@utextensionSP

Healthy Lifestyles
The Healthy Lifestyles team has held several distance meetings and is planning their first retreat for the end of April to discuss plans to proceed with developing and implementing a culture of wellness in Extension.

Meet Brandi Berven
Since July 2013, Brandi has been working with Dr. Hastings and providing logistical support to the Strategic Planning Office and Implementation teams. In addition, she is working with the Conference Planning Committee as they plan the Extension Conference for November. Brandi is a 2013 graduate of Carson-Newman University with a BA in English Literature with a minor in Computer Information Systems. While at C-N, she completed the Honors Program, served as an editor for the student newspaper, held officer positions in Alpha Chi, Mortar Board, and Sigma Tau Delta Honors Societies, and served as Communications Chair for Baptist Collegiate Ministries. She is a newlywed who enjoys collecting antique books and cooking.