

IMPACT



University of Idaho
Cooperative
Extension System

Gem County Extension System, 2199 South Johns, Emmett ID 83617-9496

Idahoans Find Improved Meetings Bring Results

The Situation

Have you left meetings feeling your time was not well spent because the meeting was unorganized and little was accomplished? Meetings are where boards and committees conduct business and make decisions.

Low attendance and lack of commitment are concerns of those in charge.

Our Response

A one-day workshop titled, "Is This Meeting for Real?" was developed. Goals are to teach people skills that will make meetings run effectively. Specific skills include team building, meeting environments, agenda building, effective committees, delegating, parliamentary procedure, and consensus decision-making.

The workshop provides examples using video clips and mini-lectures -- combined with

worksheets, discussions, case studies, and practice sessions.

Initially the Idaho Family and Community Educators and the Idaho State 4-H Leaders Association joined with the Cooperative Extension System to provide financial support and encourage attendance at workshops.

Workshops were held at four locations -- Idaho Falls, Jerome, Caldwell, and Moscow -- with 102 persons attending. Participants included: church ministers and board members, government agency personnel, volunteer 4-H leaders and members of the family, and Community Educators organizations. Attendees represented 62% of the counties in Idaho.

More recently, the Cooperative Extension System joined with other organizations requesting assistance. Thirty Soil Conservation District Supervisors from throughout

Idaho participated in an all-day workshop. A shorter one-half day session was presented for Payette River Leadership Series.

Vi Rexford, Gem County Extension Home Economist, and Mary Lee Wood, State 4-H Specialist, conducted the training. In each location, they were assisted by agents and volunteers who previously had received training.

Results

Participants were asked to rate how well the workshop met their expectations. High marks were given to developing agendas, staying on track and on time, gaining personal skills to successfully conduct meetings, selecting an appropriate decision-making process, holding committees accountable, maintaining board member interest, and gaining confidence in ability to conduct better meetings.



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Participants contacted several months following the training reported fewer or shorter meetings, more productive meetings and increased management by delegation to committees.

One person brought six church board members to the training. She reported board members learned to plan agendas and delegate to committees and hold them accountable. The results have been more efficient business meetings and they eliminated two meetings from their annual schedule.

One 4-H leader helped her 4-H Leader's council members learn to refer topics to committees for study and begin to use parliamentary procedure. She said, "Thank goodness, I had the training and refresher on parliamentary procedures.... As a result, our meetings now last only one and one-half hours. They used to be three to four hours and go on forever."

The Future

Workshops on this topic are available on request.

For More Information

1. Vi Rexford, Extension Home Economist/4-H Agent, Gem County Extension System, 2199 South Johns, Emmett, ID 83617; 208/365-6363
2. Mary Lee Wood, 4-H Specialist, Caldwell R&E Center, 16952 South 10th Avenue, Caldwell, ID 83605; 208/459-6365

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