

Springing into Action: Planning Ahead for Next Year's Award Season

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March 19th marked the Vernal Equinox in the Northern Hemisphere – a celestial event where day and night find perfect equilibrium, a balance I find fascinating. It's funny how such a scientific concept can find its way into our everyday lives. Just the other day, my daughter was excited about the arrival of Spring; she was especially eager for the longer play hours in the evenings. Meanwhile, I couldn't shake from my nightmares the impending yardwork that comes with the onset of Arizona's spring weather (so many spikey plants down here). But amidst the transition from winter to spring, there's an underlying lesson – the cyclical nature of life and the importance of readiness for what's to come. Just as nature meticulously readies itself for the eventual return of winter, we too, as members of NEAFCS, should take this time to begin laying the groundwork for the upcoming award season.



As the vernal equinox ushers in the joys of spring, it serves as a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between light and dark, anticipation and reflection. Similarly, preparing for next year's awards calls for a blend of introspection on past achievements and proactive planning for future endeavors.

View Your Work through an Award Lens: Extension professionals already make significant contributions to their communities through projects, programs, and initiatives. Take the time to view your work through the lens of what might make a compelling award submission. Identifying unique approaches, innovative strategies, or impactful outcomes within your existing work can help highlight strengths and showcase expertise in your award narrative.

Prepare Your Materials: Like gathering supplies and fortifying shelters in anticipation of winter's return, start gathering and preparing supporting materials needed for award submissions well in advance. Whether it's compiling a portfolio of work, gathering testimonials, or refining your resume, having these materials ready will streamline the submission process. Strengthen award submissions by quantifying the impact of work through data, testimonials, or success stories. Collect and document evidence of outcomes and results achieved through projects as tangible evidence of contributions to the field.

Stay Resilient: Finally, remember that the award nomination process can be competitive, and not every submission will result in an award. If you've submitted without success, consider it as an opportunity for growth. Take feedback, assess how to enhance your submission, and approach the process with renewed determination. By viewing work through the lens of potential award criteria and taking proactive steps to showcase achievements, you'll be better positioned to stand out. Persistence often pays off, so stay resilient, keep refining your approach, and don't hesitate to try again. Your efforts may lead to the recognition you deserve.

Just as nature meticulously readies itself for the eventual return of winter, we too, as members of NEAFCS, must lay the groundwork for our own season of recognition and achievement. Through introspection, collaboration, and proactive planning, we can transform the work we do every day into compelling narratives worthy of recognition. Here's to a season of growth, collaboration, and the celebration of our collective accomplishments.



If you have questions, concerns, or comments about awards, contact Donna at donna.stangl@okstate.edu