



National Extension
Association of Family
& Consumer Sciences



Network

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December 2024 Edition

From the President

Communication is the Key!



Greetings, NEAFCS Members and Supporters!

It was great to connect with so many of you at our recent NEAFCS Annual Session in Tucson! The Arizona Affiliate did an amazing job planning and hosting the session. It will be a memorable meeting for many years to come!

Planning for the 2025 Annual session is underway as the Central region will host the conference in Grand Rapids, MI, October 20-23. There will be many opportunities to connect with others, gain new ideas and add SPARK to your professional life. The call for annual session proposals is now open and will close on January 31. Visit the NEAFCS website for more information.

One of my goals for the year relates to communication. In an effort not to overwhelm you with information, we have reduced the number of newsletters from monthly to four times per year. The newsletters, under the creation of Cindy Thompson, NEAFCS Secretary, will contain more in-depth information from committees as well as other members of the board.

To keep you informed of timely information, the national office is now sending a "What You Need to Know" email each month. Even the busiest professional can quickly scan the information and be informed.

My request to you is to *read and respond*. There are many opportunities for you to be involved in your association. Your voice is important to us, and we read your emails, evaluation inputs and survey responses. Working together we are a stronger association!

During this busy time of the year, remember to take time for you.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and many blessings in 2025!

Jennifer Bridge



Check out your Board's recommended books about leadership and watch for more recommendations with each newsletter!

NATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

Read and RESPOND

Jennifer Bridge (KY) | *President*

In each quarterly newsletter there will be a word hidden related to my goal of communication. Members will have one week from the release of the newsletter to email me the hidden word. Those who email will be entered into a drawing for free registration to the 2025 Annual Session in Grand Rapids.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Husband Tom• "Favorite" Aunt and Uncle to many nieces and nephews  Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food Preservation & Science• Volunteer & Leadership Development• Community Extension Representative  Work
 Hobbies/ Favorites <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading, including after dark on e-reader• Travel, especially to national parks (so far, 20!)	 NEAFCS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect, learn, collaborate• Grow professionally• Serve on the National Board for a totally new perspective 

Jennifer Bridge
President - KENTUCKY

Get to Know the Board

Cindy Thompson (IA) | *Secretary*

Get to know your current board members! Sprinkled throughout this edition are graphics for each board member. What do YOU have in common with those serving you at the National level?

Interested in Running for the National Board?

Rick Griffiths (NM) | *Immediate Past President*

The time is here to start deciding if you will be one of NEAFCS next National Board Members. In 2025 we will be electing the following positions:

- President-Elect
- Treasurer
- Vice-President of Awards and Recognition
- Vice-President of Public Affairs
- Central Region Director
- Southern Region Director

We encourage you to contact current board members with specific questions or if you would like more information regarding a specific office. You may also contact me with questions regarding the election process or serving on the national board at rickgrif@nmsu.edu.

Applications for National Board candidates are due May 1, 2025.

Special Thanks to the **2025 Nominating Committee** for their work in recruiting and election process.

Central Region

Dianne Reinhold (IIL) & Kyleigh Brown (MO)

Eastern Region

Gwen Crum (WV) & Dorothy Nuckols (MD)

Southern Region







Karen Munden (VA) & Michelle Wright (TX)

Western Region

Hope Wilson (AZ) & Abby Weber (CO)

More information about running for national office can be found at:

<https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/national-office-candidater-resources>.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From a small but close family• Single, no kids or pets  Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General FCS County Agent• Food safety, health & wellness, community development  Work
 Hobbies/ Favorites <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Described as a homebody, which is true• Looking forward to exploring some new hobbies soon. 	 NEAFCS <p>Enjoy being with people with similar passions & interest from across the country, & seeing how we work differently.</p> 

Rick Griffiths
Past President - NEW MEXICO

NATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

A Year-End Endowment Committee Update and Thank You!

Theresa Mayhew (NY) | *Endowment Committee Chair*

As 2024 winds down, I'd like to thank everyone that contributed to our Be NEAFCS Strong Endowment Fund campaign. We raised \$26,506 between January 2023 and November 30, 2024. During that time, the endowment committee awarded six programming grants and 10 Annual Session scholarships totaling \$23,254.82. It was very gratifying to award these funds to members who are doing important, timely work in their communities. To me, it epitomizes what it means to "give back!"

To get a notion of what that means to our members, here's some excerpted comments from several of this year's Annual Session scholarship attendees. For a full accounting of all of their experiences, visit <https://www.neafcs.org/endowment-for-the-future>.

From Dana Stanley, Purdue Extension Steuben County: "What an inspiring week in Tucson. Quite literally, I will be requesting curriculum from each concurrent session attended. Thanks for an educational and reinvigorating week. Makes me excited to be an Extension Educator."

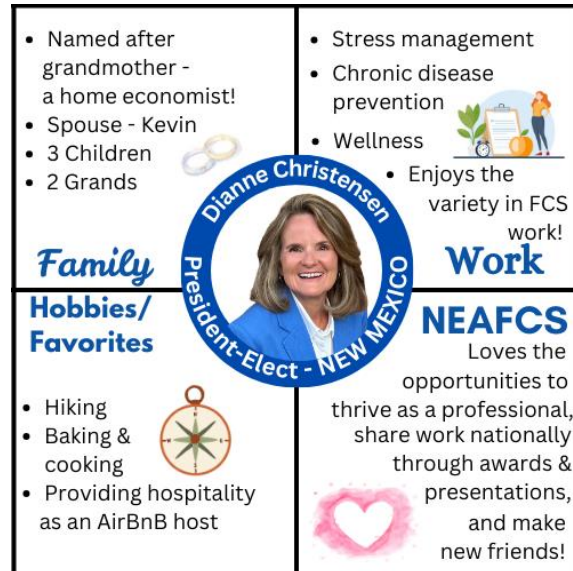
Shannon Adcock, North Carolina State University, shares: "I want to express my sincere thanks to the {endowment} committee for awarding me a scholarship. {It} was a key component in making it possible for me to attend my first {Annual Session}. {It} afforded me numerous opportunities for connection and camaraderie, for learning and for professional growth. I look forward to attending more in the future."

Melissa Bates, Clemson Extension, SC writes: "As someone who is new to the organization and Annual Session, I had so much fun learning more about the association, how it is run, and how everyone can support each other. I had several individuals express how excited they were to have the SC affiliate back in the organization and share their insightful knowledge about how their affiliates run, tips for leadership roles and general advice...about how to make the most of the opportunity."

Lastly, from Esther Hernandez, FCS Agent, NM: "A huge thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend Annual Session. I met new colleagues that gave me the opportunity to learn from their work experiences, giving me hope and a desire to continue doing great things. I appreciate all the {concurrent session} handouts with resources that

have allowed me to continue researching topics pertaining to my community's needs. I look forward to attending next year's Annual Session."

In closing, I'd also like to acknowledge my hard-working committee members for being so engaging, inspiring and dedicated as we advance the work of our profession and our members. Wishing you all a happy, healthy holidays and every good thing in the New Year!



Food Loss and Waste Liaison Moves to NIFA

Margaret Lawrence | *Writer/Editor, Office of Communications, NIFA, USDA*

The Food Loss and Waste (FLW) program, formerly with the USDA Office of the Chief Economist, joins NIFA's Institute of Food Safety and Nutrition's program portfolio. USDA is in a unique position to help address the problems of FLW across the nation, including harmful impacts on climate heating and resources wasted throughout the food supply, from farm to fork. Dr. Jean Buzby serves as USDA's Food Loss and Waste Liaison, a position which coordinates federal, state, local and nongovernmental programs to measure and reduce the



NATIONAL NEWS & UPDATES

incidence of food loss and waste in the U.S.

Buzby said that the position is also responsible for providing guidance and resources on FLW reduction for internal and external stakeholders.

"Everyone has a role to play in reducing food loss and waste," Buzby said. "Wasting less food can keep money in consumers' pockets. Food loss and waste can be an opportunity for businesses to save or make money, such as by transforming the food into other valuable products."

NIFA plays a critical part of USDA's work on objectives in the National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics.

- Prevent food loss.
- Prevent food waste.
- Increase recycling rate for all organic waste.
- Support policies that incentivize and encourage the prevention of food loss and waste and organics recycling.

[Learn more](#) about the USDA Food Loss and Waste program.

Are You Registered for JCEP ELC?

Barb Wollan (IA) | *Central Region Director*

The Joint Council of Extension Professionals Extension Leadership Conference will be held Feb. 19-20, 2025 in Savannah, GA. Take advantage of the Early Bird registration rate until Jan. 24, 2025. Be sure to book your room early in the historic DeSoto Hotel.

Conference and Speaker Highlights


- Karl Bradley has developed two all-new engaging and thought-provoking sessions for JCEP-ELC attendees, including "All-time Super Best." Karl is the Leadership and Team Development Specialist at the Extension Foundation.
- Dr. J. Scott Angle, Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, will present "Trends in Leadership Amid Changing Times: Looking to the Future."
- Hear Former Georgia Governor Nathan Deal discuss "Making a Stand on Shifting Sands."

- Learn from our partners at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in a panel discussion.
- Meet Extension colleagues from around the U.S. in their concurrent and poster sessions, including a presentation by the JCEP award winner.
- Attend a unique, preconference networking opportunity during the "Dark History Tour."

Visit www.jcep.org for more details.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wife Kimberly• Twin girls• 3 dogs and some chickens  <p>Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Associate Ext. Professor• Family Finance focus• Enjoys youth financial literacy classes• Helping others & doing a wide range of things is great!  <p>Work</p>
<p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time with family doing projects, watching movies & trying new things.• Fishing, wakeboarding, & surfing behind the boat. 	<p>NEAFCS</p> <p>So many great opportunities for networking & professional development!</p> 

Lance Hansen
Treasurer - IDAHO



Year-Round JCEP LEADERSHIP
Rooted in Tradition, Growing with Innovation

2025 Extension Leadership Conference
February 19-20 | Savannah, GA

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Make the Cut: Know Your Affiliate Deadline for Award Applications

Diane Reinhold (IL) | *Awards & Recognition Training Committee*

Much work goes into writing a successful award application, and you want your hard work to matter. After you have decided to write an award, your next step should be contacting your affiliate VP of Awards and Recognition to learn about your state's award application process and deadline.

Many state affiliates have systems to help ensure award applications are thoroughly reviewed by their affiliate award committee before uploading their applications to the national awards portal. The affiliate award committees judge, score, and, in many cases, provide feedback to those submitting the award applications. Thus, affiliates must have a



much earlier date for submitting award applications than the national deadline.

The earlier date allows not only time for committees to review the applications but also for applicants to make

any revisions based on the committee's feedback to their award application before submitting it to the national portal. Therefore, knowing your affiliate's process and deadline is essential.

If you do not know the process for submitting awards for your state, now is the time to reach out to your affiliate VP of Awards and Recognition so you can Make the Cut!

For more information and resources on writing successful award applications, check out the [awards tab](#) on the website.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Married to Adam for 20 years 2 daughters in high school, Zoe & Bella 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCS Extension Agent Enjoys teaching cooking classes Licensed Registered Dietitian
<p>Family</p>	<p>Work</p>
<p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooking Baking Watching Movies Time with family 	<p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEAFCS member for 22 years. Make plans to attend the NEAFCS Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan

Donna Jung
VP of Awards - OKLAHOMA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Married to Danny 35 yrs 3 30-something sons who don't live close 20 yr homesteader Granddog who I like better than my kids some days! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food nutrition, food safety/preservation Work with ME Extension Homemakers: 22 groups since 2001 29 yrs with Extension
<p>Family</p>	<p>Work</p>
<p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel, especially national parks, to get away from winter & snow Flower gardens 	<p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions! You will make friends quickly Get affiliate together in person Yes, you should _____ (fill in the blank)

Lisa Fishman
Eastern Region Director - MAINE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed Cat Lady Cat mom to 3 boys: Phineas, Henry, and Emmett 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Extension Director Health & wellness, mental health, community development
<p>Family</p>	<p>Work</p>
<p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journaling Reading, especially history, British mysteries, & historical fiction Visiting MLB Ballparks (24 & counting!) 	<p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning from others & a supportive environment of FCS professionals are two of my favorite things.

Samantha Kennedy
Southern Region Director - FLORIDA

MEMBER RESOURCES

Greetings from New VP of Member Resources

Troy Anderson (MD) | *VP Member Resources*

As we find ourselves midway between the school year and the upcoming winter break, I wanted to reach out with some updates from NEAFCS Member Resources (MR) and express my solidarity with those of you affected by the recent natural disasters. First and foremost, my heart goes out to each of you who have been impacted. The stories of resilience, dedication, and community support that have emerged from these challenging times are nothing short of inspiring. Your commitment to Extension under such circumstances is a testament to the strength of our community. While this gesture feels inadequate in the face of such immense challenges, please know that you are not alone. Your struggles and triumphs are shared by all of us at NEAFCS, and you remain in our thoughts and prayers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small immediate family but extended family lives within an hour Son who lives with me 2 dogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Junior faculty Ext. agent Chair of Financial Wellness Team Creates, executes, & assesses Ext. initiatives Consumer ed. & personal finance focus
<p>Family</p> <p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending travel baseball games Catching up on AMC Stubs benefits Taking the metro to DC Rewatching favorite movies and TV shows. 	<p>Work</p> <p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentoring & Leadership Committee Served in affiliate roles Presented concurrents NEAFCS has been a game changer in my career!

Troy Anderson
VP of Member Resources - MARYLAND

Resources to Member Recruitment

Troy Anderson (MD) | *VP Member Resources*

Preserving the tradition of NEAFCS is a shared responsibility, and its significance to our work remains unchanged from the past to the present. We encourage you to sustain this routine by helping us grow our membership in 2025. With that being said, you can access flyers on the website and linked [here](#) to help kickstart discussions about attracting new members (Active, Associate, Life, Partner, or Student Members).

Join a Member Resources Committee!

Troy Anderson (MD) | *VP Member Resources*

The start of a new year and quarter provides a great opportunity to renew our dedication to the common goal of Extension, education, and service. Starting this new year, I am thrilled to begin my role as your National MR Vice President. As we head towards a new direction, I encourage you to join a national committee and benefit from various career resources, training, and networking opportunities! Among our members are exceptional leaders and committees such as:

- **Mentor & Leadership** | Carrie Elsen (MO)
- **Diversity** | Laura Stanton (OH)
- **Membership & Life Members** | Kelly Bland (KY)
- **Journal Editorial** | Rebecca Hardeman (GA) & Ashley Dixon-Kleiber (AZ)

As a community, we are a driving force for professional change and mobility in the realm of Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS). With a history spanning 90 years, NEAFCS has attracted motivated and imaginative Extension faculty and staff. By actively participating on national committees, members have not only changed their own lives but also made significant advancements in their careers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 generations of strong & compassionate women living together: sister, daughter, niece, 96 yr old mother & me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum creator Writer/editor of weekly blog and monthly newsletter Food safety trainer
<p>Family</p> <p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making holiday ornaments for family Watching movies & TV shows in foreign languages with subtitles 	<p>Work</p> <p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates flexible opportunities to get involved Privileged to serve & learn in National role Loves Annual Sessions for travel & program ideas

Sheila Gains
Western Region Director - COLORADO

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Share Your Spark!

Susan Moore (GA) | *VP Professional Development*

I hope you are all planning to join us in beautiful Grand Rapids, Michigan for the [2025 NEAFCS Annual Session](#)! I had the opportunity to do a preliminary visit in November, and the conference hotel (The Amway Grand) is absolutely beautiful! It is located close to restaurants, museums and other wonderful attractions. I would like to invite you to share your spark with other members by letting them know about the programs you are passionate about delivering in your state! Now is the time to start coming up with ideas – the portal to submit proposals for concurrent sessions and poster presentations closes on January 31st 2025.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad, Mom, older sister, younger brother, my sister-in-law, two beautiful nieces 2 fur-baby cats Live close to family <p>Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Ext. Coordinator Food safety & wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervise several staff Passion for emergency preparedness <p>Work</p>
<p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel Reading Writing Jewelry making Time with family Proud crazy cat lady! 	<p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Annual Ses. in 18 yr. Ext. career 8 concurrent sessions & 5 poster sessions 25 National & 31 regional awards Many other roles meeting awesome people!

Susan Moore
VP of Prof. Development - GEORGIA

We are also looking for volunteers to peer review submissions in February. A training webinar will be held on Tuesday, February 4th 2025 at 1 p.m. EST to



assist members with understanding the review process and to allow time for questions. Thank you in advance to all those planning to submit proposals designed to ignite a spark in your fellow members at our 2025 Annual Session. Don't miss the opportunity to share your spark while enjoying the beautiful Fall foliage that Grand Rapids offers this time of year!

Find your Spark in Michigan in 2025

Lisa Peterson (IL) | *2025 Annual Session Promotion Subcommittee Chair*

Get ready to reignite your passion as NEAFCS heads to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the 2025 Annual Session. Over the next four newsletters, discover how this exciting event will:

- ✚ **Spark Connection**
- ✚ **Spark Innovation**
- ✚ **Spark Communities**
- ✚ **Spark Growth**

Although October 2025 may feel distant, now is the perfect time to prepare and fuel your anticipation. Here's how to start:

Mark Your Calendars. Reserve October 20-23, 2025. Be sure to include extra travel days so you don't miss a moment of inspiration and exploration!

Join the Conversation. Connect with over 1,700 members in the NEAFCS Facebook group to stay informed on Michigan's attractions and conference updates to keep the spark alive! Join at facebook.com/groups/NEAFCS. Turn on notifications to stay informed.

Meet the Keynote Speaker. Ignite your curiosity by learning about 2025 keynote speaker Joseph V. Sowmick, Ph.D., a Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Elder and award-winning photojournalist. His insights and stories are sure to set your inspiration ablaze.

Start now, and by October 2025, you'll be ready not just to attend, but to truly *spark* your journey in Grand Rapids!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 delightful, thoughtful, caring daughters Amazing 90 yr. old mother 2 brothers with great families Church family <p>Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Retirement Ed. Basic financial literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health insurance literacy. VITA And more! <p>Work</p>
<p>Hobbies/Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Baking bread Church choir Community theater Music, including 7-piece Polka band 	<p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affiliate offices National Committees including Endowment Committee appointment National Treasurer

Barb Wollan
Central Region Director - IOWA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Wellness Advocate: Empowering Healthier Lifestyles in March & Beyond

Chris Zellers (NJ) | VP Public Affairs

The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) sponsors an annual "Living Well Month" in March, a national public service campaign that promotes overall health and wellness. This campaign focuses on the eight dimensions of wellness - emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual - which all contribute to one's overall health and wellbeing.

Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart



As a NEAFCS member, your role is crucial in providing your county with the educational resources needed to improve the lives of individuals and families. We encourage you to use the "Living Well Month" as an opportunity to help your community evaluate their wellness and take small steps towards better health - not just in March, but all year long.

NEAFCS, Public Affairs Advocacy Committee, is here to support you in promoting Extension's health and wellness initiatives during this national campaign and beyond. Together, we can respond by creating spaces for our communities that prioritize their holistic wellbeing.

Watch for updated resources on our [website](#) soon!

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Steve - Travel companion & husband 33 years• 3 sons, 2 Daughter-in-laws & 2 Grandsons who are my world!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• County Agent/Assistant Prof. for Rutgers Coop. Extension<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wellness, nutrition, and physical activity focus
Family	Work
Hobbies/Favorites	NEAFCS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer weekends at the beach• The outdoors, gardening & exercise• Playing games, sharing meals	<p>NEAFCS feels like home, very comfy and friendly!</p>

Make an Impact with Your Data Submission!

Chris Zellers (NJ) | VP Public Affairs

Help showcase the power of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) by contributing to the [NEAFCS Impact Statements](#)! Each year, these statements highlight the significant difference FCS programs make, from supporting family well-being to promoting community resilience and economic growth. Impact Statements are shared widely, reaching policymakers and stakeholders at all levels—from state officials to national representatives on Capitol Hill.

Your data is critical to this effort. By submitting information on your programs and their outcomes, you help craft a compelling narrative that demonstrates the real, measurable benefits of FCS work. These statements become advocacy tools used at key events, such as the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference, to bolster FCS awareness and support. **Submitting your data by February 1, 2025**, ensures your program's achievements are recognized and adds to a collective voice advocating for FCS resources and funding.

ELEVATE FCS! Celebrate by Sharing Our Professional Story

Marie Economos & Margaret Jenkins (OH)
Public Affairs Advocacy Committee

We live in a complex world. Our profession drives the science and art of living and working well in multifaceted community systems, comprised of individuals and families. The *Public Affairs Advocacy Committee* strives to highlight the significance of our profession and programs for both internal and external audiences.

New this year, AAFCS offers co-brandable resources as NEAFCS joins with AAFCS to empower and advocate for Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) profession during December and beyond. Advocating for this essential profession and its scientific value will increase awareness and provide guidance to practitioners who affect change that positively impacts individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan. Join in to **ELEVATE FCS!** by [accessing the resources](#).

Access to the co-branded promotional PowerPoint can be found here: <https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/pptx>.

The “BACK PAGE”

Newsletter Feedback

Cindy Thompson (IA) | *Secretary*

Many thanks to Newsletter Ad Hoc Committee, led by previous national secretary Lisa Peterson, for their time and creativity this past year to rethink the distribution schedule of our national newsletter. Moving to a quarterly newsletter allowed time for Justin Mischler and me to think creatively about how to format your newsletter around the things we heard you wanted: an easy to access, visually appealing, action drive newsletter.



Let us know what you think about the new newsletter format! Share your feedback on this short survey using the following link or QR code below.
https://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cShFyvIKXe7QLki



<ul style="list-style-type: none">Married to Kent 33 yrs5 children with plus 1's2 Grandchildren & 1 on the way1 very old grump old dog <p><i>Family</i></p> <p>Hobbies/ Favorites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">QuiltingNeedleworkReading, especially non-fictionHouseplants & gardening	<p>Cindy Thompson Secretary - IOWA</p> <p>Work</p> <p>NEAFCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Member since 2012First Annual Session - The GreenbrierPast Central Region Dir.
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The December 2024 Edition of NEAFCS Network Newsletter is brought to you by Cindy Thompson, National Secretary, with support from the National Office.



Mark Your Calendars!

DECEMBER

12/31/2024 | NEAFCS Membership Renewal Deadline

JANUARY

1/28/2025 | Webinar: Reviewing Proposals: What you Need to Know

1/31/2025 | 2025 NEAFCS Annual Session Call for Proposals Closes

FEBRUARY

2/1/2025 | NEAFCS Impact Statements Close

2/19/25 | JCEP ELC – Savannah, GA

MARCH

3/15/2025 | NEAFCS National Awards Application Portal Closes

