

The Editor's Page

We're trying something new with this issue—following through with the decision of the Editorial Committee last winter to devote one issue of the *Journal* to a specific theme. We've selected the current critical concern of problems and crises in urban areas as a starter. Belden Paulson has served as guest editor, lining up the authors of the articles, doing some original research in the area, and "pulling it all together" as you now read it.

Do you like it? Is it something that should be tried again in an issue next year? Let us hear from you, pro and con, so we'll know better whether to repeat the idea another time!

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Guest Editor's Comments

If someone were to tell us that ideas for the future of our cities will come from Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse, not universities and city planners, we would respond with more than a disdainful smile.

At Lake Buena Vista, Florida, 400 men of Walt Disney Enterprises are planning a city that has already brought city planners and architects to their doorstep. Novel architecture, a vast service basement that spreads beneath the area, a garbage system that whisks away refuse through vacuum tubes, a monorail transportation system that even makes a stop in a hotel lobby—these are a few of the ideas that have already been implemented in the pre-eminent recreation park "Disney World." As the Disney think-group is now trying to make clear in planning a new city around the park, our urban future can't merely imitate models of the past. They're asking: What kind of cities *should* we have, what *should* a city be like?

As the position paper of the Division of Community Development of the National University Extension Association in this issue points out, education means change . . . change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and relationships. These in turn become "the basis for changes in the way problems are understood, the way planning is done, the way decisions are made, and the way action is carried out. These become the basis for changes in institutional arrangements, in institutions themselves, and in communities." Are our universities, including University Extension, today providing the change-leadership required to cope with the dramatic new needs of an *urbanized* society?

The metropolitan explosion is here. By 2000, it's conservatively projected that more than 8 of every 10 Americans will live in some 28 "urban regions" that will each have more than a million people. Are we ready, are universities playing their customary role of generating the knowledge through needed research to deal with a nation mainly of cities? Are they prepared to transmit understanding through teaching about a society that has been undergoing peaceful revolution? Are they committed to applying knowledge through community service in ways that deal effectively with today's and tomorrow's real needs?

The *Journal of Extension* has reflected the historical interest of Extension programs in agricultural and rural development. This special issue was recommended by the Editorial Committee as a beginning discussion of urban issues of interest and importance to our readership. It includes:

- A statement on Extension Service policy about urban-directed activity by the federal administrator.
- A commentary about the organization of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for delivering effective services.
- An analysis of salient demographic and social trends likely to influence our policy making and programs in coming years.
- A recently compiled survey of urban-focused University Extension programs in the land-grant universities.
- A statement by one of America's distinguished Extension administrators on the role of rural development in the total national picture.
- An example of one university, located in a rapidly growing southern metropolis, that is planning a complete turn-around toward an urban university.
- A position paper by the Division of Community Development of the National University Extension Association on our urbanizing society.
- One initial effort to conceive a model for Extension organization that takes into account rural, urban, and metropolitan counties.

I believe that rural and urban America can no longer be separated. Their problems are ever more closely linked. Only the health of each will contribute to our national health. This issue is one small beginning to bring some of the critical questions to our attention. This special issue is an experiment—we welcome your comments.

BELDEN PAULSON