LISTENING SESSIONS REPORTED AT TOWN HALL MEETING

On Thursday, July 13th, nearly 20 Firth community residents gathered at the Firth Community Building to hear the report from the Listening Sessions.

During the Listening Sessions held in April and May, 139 community residents attended to offer their opinions about the future of Firth. The three questions that were asked during the Listening Sessions included:
(1) What are the major problems and challenges in your community?
(2) What are the major strengths and assets of Firth?
(3) What is your vision of Firth in 10-15 years?

The Town Hall meeting and Listening Session facilitators include UN-L Extension Educators Dennis Kahl, Yelena Mitrofanova and Phyllis Schoenholz.

Looking ahead in planning for the future of the Firth community, and from all of the comments and opinions extended during the Listening Sessions, the facilitators found that five major “themes” can incorporate what residents think are important. UN-L Extension Educator Yelena Mitrofanova presented those themes at the meeting.

1. Small town atmosphere with sense of community.
2. Diverse people get involved in future planning.
3. Controlled/planned growth.
4. Business development
5. Opportunities for recreation and social/community engagement.

Following the report, Extension Educator Dennis Kahl divided the group into three small discussion groups. Considering criteria such as cost and availability of funds, time, resident interest etc, Dennis asked the small groups to prioritize and rank the “themes” to those most important.

Small Group One Priorities:
1. Controlled/Planned growth
2. Business development
3. Diverse people get involved in future planning
4. Opportunities for recreation and social/community engagement
5. Small town atmosphere
Small Group Two Priorities:

Small Group Three Priorities were written into a Mission Statement: “Firths Future Mission” – Controlled growth and business development, while maintaining a “small town atmosphere”, thus, creating opportunities for recreation and social comfort by allowing all to become involved in “our” planning.

As the groups came back together for reporting and came to the consensus that. The foundation or spirit of future planning should be centered around the “Small town atmosphere” of friendly neighbors, and clean neat town.

The entire Listening Session process and reports were handed out at the Town Hall meeting and a summary of the report was translated into Spanish. The entire report can be found on the UN-L extension website for Lancaster County. The Web address is [http://lancaster.unl.edu/community/community_Firth.shtml](http://lancaster.unl.edu/community/community_Firth.shtml)
At the end of the evening, participants were able to sign up for a Citizen Advisory Committee to help in the future with plans for Firth. For information or questions contact Yelena Mitrofanova at 402.441.6753 or Jill 402.791-5013