



Roadside Reflection: Keeping Extension's Impact in the Headlights During Tough Times

1. Know Who Your Stakeholders Are

Start by identifying all your key groups:

- Internal: supervisors, teammates, advisory boards
- External: community leaders, elected officials, funders, partner organizations, clientele

Tip: Create a stakeholder map with names, interests, influence, and preferred communication styles.

2. Engage Early, Not Just When You Need Something

Strong stakeholder relationships are built over time.

- ✓ Invite them to events, listening sessions, or program planning meetings
- ✓ Ask for their input before decisions are made
- ✓ Share small wins regularly—not just end-of-year reports

“People support what they help create.”

3. Tell the Story, Not Just the Stats

Yes, numbers matter. But what sticks with stakeholders are the stories that show real-world impact.

- Use testimonials, photos, or short videos
- Highlight before/after or problem/solution narratives
- Focus on how lives, farms, families, or communities improved

Tip: Keep a running “impact story bank” throughout the year in PEARS under Success Stories.

4. Make Reporting Useful and User-Friendly

Whether it's a report, presentation, or visit, make your communication clear, brief, and focused on value.

Good reporting is:

- Timely (shared when it matters—like during budget season)
- Visual (infographics, charts, pull quotes)
- Action-oriented (what's next, what's needed, what to celebrate)

Tools you can use:

- 1-pagers or success story templates
- Annual impact highlights brochure
- Personalized updates to key partners (email or note)

5. Focus on Shared Goals

Frame your message around what matters to them:

- Economic development?
- Youth readiness?
- Community health?
- Land and resource sustainability?

Speak their language. Tie your work directly to the issues they care about.

6. Follow Up and Say Thank You

After a meeting, report, or project:

- Follow up with a short recap or thank-you note
- Share how their support or input made a difference
- Keep the door open for future conversations

“Gratitude builds goodwill”