The Learning Center of the Extension Office was packed as Youth Leadership Board President, Alexis Garbo, called the workshop to order. The Board members planned and facilitated the entire workshop with the support of the council executive board.

Each officer position was discussed, so that the assembled members understood the roles and responsibilities of an officer and serving on an executive board.

By using an opening mixer the large group was broken into six teams to help them better understand leader roles and team work. Towers were constructed using using drink cups and other materials. The object was to build the tallest tower. YLB members were also providing “leadership” to the activity, with one as a dictator, or a democratic leader. We also had a crabby leader, a lazy leader, a leader that didn’t care and a leader that would not allow the kids to help as it was her tower.

The kids evaluated their leaders at the conclusion of the project and talked about what kind of leader they each wanted to be.
WHY SOIL TESTING MAKES SENSE

Row crop, specialty crop producers, and gardeners should adopt nutrient management practices that not only provide the necessary quantities of nutrients to achieve optimum crop yields, but minimize excessive additional nutrients that may increase the risk of polluting surface and ground water. Adding only the quantities of nutrients that meet the needs of crops and avoiding excess amounts achieves three desirable goals:

- It enables you to leverage nutrients supplied from other sources used in crop production.
- It generates economic benefits by decreasing input cost for crop production.
- It affords the opportunity to protect surface and groundwater quality from potential non-point source contamination due to agricultural activities. This can best be accomplished when nutrients are applied at the recommended rate.

Research data collected over many years has demonstrated that Michigan soils are naturally high in phosphorus; most crops grown in the state will only require a small amount of additional phosphorus fertilizer at planting.

A key program that can be implemented by producers to insure good stewardship of surface and ground water quality and sound economic practices is to implement a soil testing program. Soil testing (soil samplings) should be done on your cropland fields at least once every three years; soil tests will identify the nutrients needed and the amount to be applied based on the planned crop. As a producer, you should always be aware of the yield potential of the soils and should never fertilize for higher yields than the soil’s potential.

Recommended times for soil sampling are:

- After summer wheat harvest
- For other crops, after fall harvest but before the ground begins to freeze.

If the contour of the field is uniform (a relatively flat field), three soil samples per 20 acres of field land is recommended. If the contour is irregular (a hilly or sloped field) more samples will be needed in order to obtain a representative test.

WINDBREAKS AND WILDLIFE

Not only do windbreaks break the wind, they can also support wildlife that adds beauty and pleasure to our lives by sustaining birds that eat insect pests, improve hunting opportunities and provide a focal point for family outdoor activities. Windbreaks help wildlife and in some areas are essential to their survival.

Many birds and predatory insects that live in windbreaks consume pest insects within the windbreak and in adjacent crop fields. One report estimates that birds consume about 260 pounds of insects per half-mile of windbreak each year. These insect-eaters are a natural biological control that may reduce crop losses and reliance on pesticides. Windbreaks not only provide food for wildlife but protective
cover as well. Foods potentially available in windbreaks include fruits, nuts, acorns, seeds, foliage, and insects or other invertebrates. Availability of these foods varies seasonally and depends largely on what’s planted or growing in the windbreak. Trees and shrubs produce fruits and some hold them into winter, a time when food is often critical for survival but generally less available.

The best windbreaks consist of multiple rows of trees planted on the north and west sides of your home. Evergreens are commonly used because they retain their foliage throughout the year and are branched out close to the ground, although some deciduous trees can also be planted. Avoid planting a windbreak on the south side of your home if you are planning on the winter sun to help heat your home, as the trees will block the sun when it is lower in the sky during the winter months.

When planting a windbreak, use at least two rows of evergreen trees. Three rows (1 row of shrubs, 2 of evergreens) are better as these shrubs will provide food as well as shelter for the wildlife. If you have more room, a row of deciduous trees in the center, with rows of evergreens or shrubs on either side is also an option. Space the trees in the rows 15 to 20 feet apart and the same distance between the rows of trees, staggering the planting so that a tree in one row lines up with the space between two trees in the adjacent row. If you do not plant a row of shrubs initially, as the evergreen trees mature and the lower branches die, adding a row of shrubs or small trees will help fill in the lower part of the windbreak where the branches have died.

Using a variety of trees and shrubs in your windbreak will reduce the impact and spread of any pest or disease problems affecting all the trees. While evergreens are generally recommended, deciduous trees could be included to provide a greater diversity of species in your windbreak. Some suggested species include: white cedar, balsam fir, red pine (on sandy soils only), white pine, Colorado, Norway or white spruce, highbush cranberry, red osier dogwood, elderberry, lilac, red maple, red oak and serviceberry.

**DON’T FORGET!**

The tree sale deadline will be here before you know it, **Friday, March 22, 2013**.

Due to conditions beyond anyone’s control there have been two species, white cedar seedlings and white birch that didn’t generate as many plants as is typical, therefore quantities are limited but at this point still available.

You can access the order form from our web site at [www.MonroeCD.org](http://www.MonroeCD.org), (go to products), call for a form to be mailed or stop by the office at 1137 South Telegraph Road, Monroe, Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
CONFRONTING STUDENT LOAN DEBT—PART II—LOCATE WHO’S SERVICING YOUR STUDENT LOANS

TAKE STEPS ON CREATING A PLAN OF ACTION TO CONFRONT STUDENT LOAN DEBT.

This article is a continuation of the January piece “Confronting Student Loan Debt—Part 1—Identify the What Student Loans You Owe”. Once a student loan borrower understands what types of loan(s) he or she has, the next step is to locate who actually services the loans.

A great starting point is to visit the National Student Loan Data System’s Student Access (NSLDS). This is the U.S. Department of Education’s central database for federal student loans and grants. A list will be generated of the federal loans received by the borrower. The servicer of each loan will be listed with contact information. Once the borrower identifies the loan servicer, they will provide information about repayment terms and repayment start dates.

If it is a Perkins loan, the loan servicer will most likely be the school the borrower attended when the loan was received, but in some cases, the school will have a separate organization handle the billing and other services for the Perkins Loan.

There is no central location listing all of a borrower’s private loans. It is the borrower’s responsibility to keep track where they secured these loans. On private student loans, payments are made to the lender, the organization that made the loan initially. The lender could be a bank, credit union, or other lending institution. The lender provides the borrower with information about repayment terms and repayment start date.

The next step is to learn the terms of each student loan and understanding the consequences if the borrower has defaulted on the loan. This will be covered in next month’s article “Confronting Student Loan Debt—Part III—Understanding Terms of Student Loans and Repayment Options.”

For additional information and resources on student loans go to:
www.finaid.org
http://studentaid.ed.gov
www.ed.gov
www.nslds.ed.gov/nsdls_SA

To contact an expert in your area, visit people.msue.msu.edu or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

DEBT COLLECTIONS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

UNDERSTAND THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT

The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) protects consumers from unfair practices by debt collectors. The Act gives rules for how and when a debt collector can contact individuals.

A debt collector collects debts for other people or businesses. For example, XYZ Collection Agency may collect payments for hospitals, department stores and car dealers. An employee, who works for a company with a collection department, and whose job it is to collect debts, is NOT a debt collector. For example, an employee who works for ABC Department Store and who collects credit card payments is not a debt collector.

The Act requires debt collectors to:
Keep your debt private. This means not telling anyone but you anything about your debt.
Send you written notice of the debt. The note must include how much you owe, to whom it is owed, and what you should do if you do not believe you owe the debt. This notice cannot be a postcard. The envelope must not show that the letter is from a debt collection company. The envelope cannot show that the letter is about the collection of a debt.
Verify the debt. The collector must provide proof if you write them within 30 days stating you do not believe you owe the debt.

Not harass you. The collector cannot:
- call you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m.
- call you at work if your employer forbids personal calls
- use abusive or obscene language
- call you repeatedly
- threaten to use violence or criminal means against you, your family or property

Not engage in unfair practices. The debt collector cannot:
- collect more than the actual debt
- require you to send, deposit or cash a postdated check
- order you to accept a collect call

Not use false or deceptive means to collect a debt. That includes:
- threatening you with arrest if you do not pay
- threatening to take actions they cannot legally take or do not intend to take
- using a false name or failing to identify themselves when they call
- falsely accusing you of committing a crime

You can stop debt collectors from contacting you by writing and telling them not to contact you. Then, the debt collector cannot contact you except to tell you they will not call or write again, or they are taking legal action against you. If a debt collector breaks the law, you can file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission or your State Attorney General’s office.

For more information on fair debt collection go to: http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre18.shtm

To contact an expert in your area, visit people.msue.msu.edu, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

HELPING TEENS MANAGE STRESS

TEENS USUALLY LEARN STRATEGIES TO EFFECTIVELY COPE WITH STRESS WITH EVERY DAY SMALL HASSLES BUT ADULTS CAN

The adult world is full of situations and events that cause stress. For teens, stressful events might include parents’ divorce, abuse or neglect, poverty, school failure, illness or situations with relationships. Even positive events can create a degree of stress.

The ability to evaluate stress levels and to develop coping skills increases for teens as they grow older and wiser. It’s not the situation that causes all the stress; it is the perception and belief about the situation.

It is important to distinguish daily life hurdles from significant stress. Parents and teens often experience daily challenges that can cause stress. Teens usually learn strategies to effectively cope with these small hassles. It is the significant stressors such as the death of a family member or friend or a serious illness that will cause adolescents unable to cope. These events, when not dealt with, can result in serious consequences for the teen’s physical and emotional wellbeing.

While life’s everyday stressors have less negative impact, the cumulative effect can be as detrimental as any single traumatic event. Also that perception of stress is also related to experience and development—what is stressful for one person may not even amount to a small issue for another.

Typical stressors of twelve to fifteen years olds:

- New, unfamiliar, or unpredictable situations such as moving from middle to high school
- Unclear or vague expectations
- Anticipation of something unpleasant
- Fear of failing
- Major development hurdles- puberty- same age different body types
- Teasing and bullying
Every teen’s response to stress will be different. Some will have mood swings. Others will take part in attention seeking behavior, avoid certain activities, isolate, and refuse to go to school, fail to prepare for class assignments and/or have physical complaints like headaches and stomach aches.

So what can parents or caregivers of teens do? **Don’t place unnecessary expectations on your teen.** We all want our teens to be successful and there should be expectations for behavior and performance. If stress starts showing itself, it may be time to question if your expectations are unreasonable.

**Listen to your teen** when they start describing events and situations. Good listening skills will allow you to have better understanding on how you can help. Often good listening skills provide a safe opportunity for your teen to vent and receive validation. Remember what may seem trivial to you is not trivial to the teen.

**Teach your teen problem solving skills.** Stress can cause the feeling of being overwhelmed. Help your teen learn to break down a situation into smaller ones that they can deal with one at a time. Share how you have dealt in similar situations. You may have to practice problem solving with your adolescent. By taking the time to do this, you are giving them a powerful life skill that is often neglected.

**Practice** stressful situations such as speaking in front of a group or making a call to someone you don’t know. Sometimes discussing how the teen wants the event to take place and doing a trial run will decrease the stress of the situation. It will also give the opportunity to troubleshoot possible difficulties that may occur.

**Be aware of “irrational thinking” patterns.** Sometimes we can overhear teens think aloud with sentences like “If I don’t do this extra assignment, I’ll never get into college.” Or we only hear the first part of the sentence such as “I have to do what the other kids are doing...” These “if...then” statements frequently hide core beliefs that young people accept as true, even if they are not logical. Help teens to look at life events more realistically and more positive.

**Teach relaxation techniques to your teens.** Parents and caregivers often forget to give teens ideas on how to relax during stressful situations. Talk about imagery, deep breathing, counting to ten etc.

**Teach tools to deal with bullying.** Start by instilling pride in them. Help adolescents develop positive self-esteem by talking about, and encouraging pride in their unique abilities, skills and qualities.

**Teach teens to listen to the tone, not the words.** The teaser’s tone of voice is a good indicator of motive. When teasing is meant to be funny, your adolescent can try to laugh along, take the teasing in stride, and offer appropriate responses. If it is a hostile, the intent is mean-spirited. Teach the teen to walk away or to seek help from an adult.

**Teach assertiveness, not aggression.** A good approach to bullying is to teach firm but nonviolent responses, such as “I don’t appreciate the way you are treating me.”

**Model appropriate behavior** when you are dealing with teasing and bullying. Teens who witness adults handling conflict appropriately and successfully are more likely to copy this behavior.

If you find that nothing you do is helping your teen with their stress, seek help. Contact your family doctor, local health department, school social worker, counselor or psychologist, which are all good resources for assistance.

Michigan State University Extension will be offering training in 2013 for adults and teens called Be Safe—Safe, Affirming and Fair Environment. For more information on bullying, go to [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/bullying](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/bullying).

URL for more information (optional):
- [http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/youthdevelopment/da3083.html](http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/youthdevelopment/da3083.html)
SPORTSMANSHIP – MAKE IT A MEASUREMENT OF CHARACTER

SPORTS ARE MAJOR SOCIAL FORCES THAT SHAPE THE QUALITY AND CHARACTER OF AMERICAN CULTURE

We usually think of sports as a way to teach kids various physical skills, but youth sports can offer many more learning experiences. Though there is a lot of research and writing concerning performance, there is a very little on the impact of participants on the social, emotional, intellectual, moral impact of participants according to the Josephson Institute of Ethics. Our children learn behavior from the adults most important to them. Those important people could be the parent, a teacher, coaches or a good friend. Either way, it is important that we model appropriate ways of being a good competitor as well as a spectator.

- Sports are major social forces that shape the quality and character of American culture. So here are examples of how one can teach a child (and maybe some adults) to be a generous competitor, a good loser, and a graceful winner.

- Teach sportsmanship-Require participants to demonstrate sportsmanship before, during and after a competitive event. This can be accomplished by following rules, be honest and fair, show respect, be well mannered, and accept outcomes gracefully.

- Applaud your children-Be sure to express your appreciation to the children, other clubs or groups and others you wish to express respect. Examples of this are to accept the ruling of the officials, congratulate all participants, remain positive at all times, and be cheerful and friendly.

- Show respect to others-Don’t heckle, boo, make rude comments or insult other spectators, competitors, coaches or the officials. Try to keep emotions under control and give others the benefit of the doubt. Again show respect and PLEASE refrain from public arguments.

- Be a polite participant – Listen, act interested, and remains quiet when participants are introduced or when announcements are made. Stay till the end of the event, even if your child is finished competing. By doing this you are being a positive role model and showing integrity. Be objective and accept the nature of competition.

- Show Courtesy to others- Do not block the view of others when taking pictures or videos, standing in aisles, or by jumping and standing up in moments of excitement. Always leave the viewing area clean by throwing away any litter.

By practicing the above examples, any event can be a pleasurable activity for all involved. Other excellent resources in the area of sportsmanship/competition are South Dakota State University Extension, and KidsHeath.

To contact an expert in your area, visit people.msue.msu.edu, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).
NURTURING PARENTING ONGOING CLASS
Every Monday
Mini Classes
10:30 am — 11:00 am
Hurd Road Childcare Center
1960 E. Hurd Road
Monroe, MI 48162

Every Tuesday
11:30 am — 12:30 pm
Arthur Lesow Community Center
120 Eastchester
Monroe, MI 48161

Cost: FREE
Pre-register required
734-240-3179

EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE
Tuesdays
March 12 and 19, 2013
5:30 pm — 7:00 pm
Monroe — CDI Headstart
15488 Eastwood Drive
Monroe, MI 48162

Cost: FREE
Pre-register by March 11, 2013
734-240-3179

RELAX: ALTERNATIVE TO ANGER
Mondays
April 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2013
6:30 pm — 8:00 pm
MSU Extension Office
963 S. Raisinville Road
Monroe, MI 48161

Cost: $20.00 per person / couple
Pre-register by March 29, 2013
734-240-3179
How to Start a Successful Cottage Food Business in Michigan

MSU Extension Food Safety Team
and MSU Product Center
Workshop for Michigan Entrepreneurs

Wednesday, May 9, 2013
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
MSU Extension - Monroe Co.
963 South Raisinville Rd., Monroe, MI 48161
MSUE Instructors: Micah Loucks & Jeannie Nichols

Training focuses on:
The Michigan Cottage Food Law guidelines
Making your business profitable
Foods permitted to sell
Food safety procedures for a safe product
Production • Labeling • Packaging
Storing & transporting your products

Cost is $20.00 and includes a certificate of participation available upon completion of training for display at your booth

Register online at: http://events.anr.msu.edu/cflmonroemay2013/

For more information contact Jeannie at 517-439-9301 or e-mail her at nicho115@msu.edu

Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by calling Jeannie Nichols at 517-439-9301 by May 1 to ensure sufficient time to make arrangements. Requests received after this date will be met when possible.

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BREASTFEEDING INITIATIVE
THE MOTHER TO MOTHER PROGRAM

Breastfeeding is recognized as the gold standard in infant feeding. It is universally endorsed by both the world’s health and scientific communities as well as the optimal choice in infant feeding. Research based evidence has proven that breastfeeding has immediate as well as lifelong nutrition and health benefits to families and communities.

This free program began 20 years ago in 1993 to provide breastfeeding support, information and encouragement to WIC and SNAP/BRIDGE card participants through BFI peers. The program combines the strengths of MSUE and WIC in an effort to reverse declining breastfeeding rates among low income women.

The Mother to Mother Program offers pre and post natal care to low income mothers through phone calls and home visits as well as a series of education classes taught at the Monroe County Health Department WIC office.

The Mother to Mother Program collaborates with several local health and social agencies that support breastfeeding families. For more information please contact Winnie Webb, Breastfeeding Peer at 734 240-3178 or webbw@anr.msu.edu

WHAT’S COOK’N WITH FNP?

The Food and Nutrition Program (FNP) is in full swing with a youth program “Show Me Nutrition” and an adult program, “Cooking Matters for Adults”.

“Show Me Nutrition” developed for school aged children Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade. The curriculum covers age appropriate nutrition information based primarily on the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) MyPyramid and MyPlate.

It is focused on eating healthy well balanced meals from all of the food groups; grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat & beans and oils. With seven lessons covering everything from food safety (why and how you wash your hands) to taste testing new and different foods, this new program has been received very well by the teaching staff in Monroe as well as the students themselves.

“Cooking Matters for Adults” is a collaboration of Michigan State University Extension, Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan and Share Our Strength’s. “Cooking Matters for Adults” has six weekly lessons so they may best facilitate lasting improvements to the participant’s ability to select and purchase foods wisely, and prepare meals that are healthy, delicious and low cost. These classes have been well received by the participants, with these economical times. New classes will be forming soon.

For availability and eligibility requirements please contact: Heather Hampel, Family Nutrition Program Instructor, 734 240-3171, hample@anr.msu.edu, Denise Kohler, Family Nutrition Program Instructor, 734 240-3176, kohlerd@anr.msu.edu, or Allen Russell Family Nutrition Program Associate, 734 240-3175, russe414@anr.msu.edu.
**SPRING LIVESTOCK WORKSHOPS**

We are offering a variety of educational activities this spring. Please read carefully and make reservations when required so that you can be a part of the experience.

**Beef Quality Assurance** - Members who are showing beef for the first time in 2013 and members who did not attend the Beef Workshop in 2012 are **REQUIRED** to attend the meeting on March 12th. This workshop will focus on how to raise a good quality beef carcass for the 2013 Fair. Feeding, care and showmanship tips will all be a part of the evening activities. All members attending will be given a BQA Card. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will be held in the Activity Center on the fairgrounds.

**Sheep Quality Assurance** – April 11th. The Junior Livestock Association is offering a Sheep Quality Assurance Program to help 4-H Families, understand how to raise a lamb for competition at the 2013 Fair. Feeding, care, selection and showmanship tips will be a part of the meeting. The Junior Livestock Association is making a commitment to our youth and to your buyers to raise and sell a quality animal. Any new members must attend this workshop, if you exhibited but did not attend in 2012 it is required that you attend in 2013. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the 4-H Activity Center.

**Swine Quality Assurance** - Our longest ongoing workshop is our Pork Quality Assurance Workshop, which has guaranteed the quality of our 4-H Pork for many years. This year the workshop will be held on March 21st beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Activity Center. **All members, or a member of the family, who will be showing pigs this year MUST attend.** There are some Ecoli issues that families must be aware of for this year.

**Sheep and Swine Tagging** - We have already had many calls as to when the board will be tagging sheep and swine for the 2013 Fair. The tagging date will be May 4th from 8:00 till 12:00 at the fairgrounds. From that date on all animals must be in the possession of the member till the fair. Swine members who cannot provide proof of vaccination of the H2N3 virus will be provided the shot and will have to return on May 18th for the second shot. If you need the shot it will be the members responsibility to pay for the two injections.

**JOIN 4-H TODAY!**

All clubs must submit all new member and leader enrolment forms by May 1st. The spring enrollment Packet may be turned in at the pre-fair meeting on May 1st at the Activity Center.

For families that have not already identified a club, you may contact the Extension 4-H Office and we will help you find the perfect match for your interests. All new members must meet the May 1st deadline to be eligible to show at the 2013 Monroe County Fair. Please call the Extension 4-H Office immediately for help.

Leaders who are requesting a fair pass for this year must have a complete set of Volunteer forms on file in the 4-H Office. They must also have taught members who are exhibiting in that project area at the fair.
COMMUNICATIONS DAY

REAACT sponsored their 5th Annual Communications Day on February 9th. 4-H members enjoyed the day competing in divisions from Extemporaneous Speaking to Recyclable Art. All of the categories were focused on the environment.

Seventy-five different projects were presented and judged by a crew of 4-H judges who gave up four hours on a Saturday to evaluate the members and provide them with feedback on their various projects.

Categories included:

- Demonstrations
- Drawing
- Painting
- Public Speaking
- Recyclable Art
- Photography
- Extemporaneous Speaking

Congratulations to the winners and to the REACT Team that organized and staged the event.

PRE-FAIR MEETING

Fair is coming really fast! Are you ready? It’s time for the leaders to come to the Pre-fair Meeting and gather all of the information to allow your members to exhibit at the 2010 Monroe County Fair. This year’s meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 1st, 7:00 p.m. at the 4-H Activity Center on the Fairgrounds. It is more important than ever to have someone from your club attend.

All registration material for the fair will be provided to each club. The General Superintendents and members of the 4-H Tech Committee will be on hand to bring you up to speed on the new classes and new schedules.

The Premium Catalog — Although it will be printed by the Monroe Evening News, it will not be distributed in the paper. The Middle Managers will be calling each club to determine how many catalogs your club will want. These will be distributed on the 1st along with the other important paper work for exhibiting at fair.

Many handouts will be available to allow you to explain to your members, how these programs and others will operate. ALL CLUBS MUST BE REPRESENTED and all members and leaders must have completed enrollments and volunteer agreements on file for the May 1st deadline to be eligible.

In addition to the announcements on Fair, information will be provided on how to purchase a brick in the “Walk of Support”, the fair theme and perhaps building a float for the parade, and what will be exciting for the 2013 fair.

The community leaders or their designated person must submit completed fair forms on June 17th. It is extremely important that members get all of the information to their leaders in time for them to submit the forms. Registrations for fair will only be accepted on June 17th, between 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. at the 4-H Activity Center.

Spring Enrollments, Exploration Days fees and State Award books will all be accepted at the May 1st meeting.

Mark the date now — It will be important to your club!
MINI EXPO 2013

The popular Workshop is returning on March 16th at the 4-H activity Center. Registration is almost complete, and the members who are registered are looking forward to creating some exciting projects for both Spring Achievement and Fair.

Pre-registration must be made and classes are filled on a first come first serve basis. Money must be paid at the time of registration. A $4.00 registration fee is charged to every participant. This fee covers material costs and lunch. Parents may pay the $4.00 fee and have lunch with the participants.

GARAGE SALE

The fair is again allowing us to “piggy back” on their garage sale on the 30th of March. Our booth will be located in the Activity Center and we are hunting for items that you may be tired of – but would be someone else’s treasure.

Items can be brought to the 4-H Office or to the Activity Center any time during the month of March. Set-up will begin on Thursday, March 28th and the sale will go from 9:00 am on Saturday morning till 4:00 in the afternoon.

Anyone who would want to help with any part of the sale is more than welcome.

PEDAL YOUR WAY OR RIDE THE BUS!

Are you looking forward to the 2013 Exploration Days and the campus of Michigan State University? You can get there one of two ways. You can pedal your way, with the Slow Spokes, or you can take the bus, that the Council provides for the trip.

The Slow Spokes trip gives members the thrill of arriving on campus, fresh from 129-mile bike ride and ready to attend the many classes and workshops that make-up Exploration Days.

Exploration Days will be held on the campus of Michigan State University from June 19th -21st. The bikers will travel from Sunday, June 16th to Tuesday the 18th. The price tag will be $170.00 for Exploration Days and an additional $45.00 for the bike trip. The good news is that many scholarships have been pledged to support our members and enable them to attend. The Junior Livestock and Small Animal Associations, along with the Horse and Pony Board will each be providing scholarships to any of their members who exhibited at the 2012 Fair a $25.00 scholarship. The 4-H Council will provide $55.00 scholarships to members who are attending for the first time. If you took the opportunity before, the Council will offer you $45.00 to encourage you to return. If you do decide to bike an additional $35.00 from the Council will be provided for your trip. The Council requests that members who accept scholarships must have participated in the 2012 Candy Sale or Spaghetti Dinner. In addition to these scholarships several $40.00 Michigan State University Scholarships will be available and some of the districts and local clubs encourage their members with scholarships. There are many opportunities for members to lower their costs to attend this exciting activity.

The organizational meeting for 4-H’ers interested in being a part of the year’s ride is March 18th beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the 4-H Activity Center. Members and parents will talk about the trip, expectations from members, where you will stay, and what needs to be taken. The members will also plan practice rides.

We will also be hearing Elevator Speeches that evening as a recruitment tool. Prizes will be offered so prepare your speech. Speeches can be no longer than 2 minutes and can be about the bike trip, Exploration Days or both.

Option books for Exploration Days will be available after March 8th. Registration must be made by May 1st and all fees must be paid at the time of registration. If you want to get your first choice you must have your choices to us March 18th.

Adults are needed for chaperones and to help fill the many roles on campus. Parents, leaders, alumni, all adults are encouraged to attend and help the youth experience college life.
**SHOOTING SPORTS**

The Shooting Sports Association is planning a Mandatory Safety meeting that all members and parents need to attend. It will be held on May 16th, beginning at 6:30 in the Activity Center at the fairgrounds.

With the re-organization of the Shooting Sports Program, it was decided that we needed to implement a safety program and a question and answer session so that as our youth move forward we are all on the same page.

*At least one member from the family must attend.* Questions should be directed to Denise Williams.

**4-H GRADUATION**

If you are graduating this year from High School, we would like to invite you and your parents to a 4-H Open House on Monday, May 13th at the 4H Extension Office.

Beginning at 6:30 p.m. the guests will enjoy a buffet luncheon; some fun activities and each will receive a small token gift to recognize their accomplishments. Invitations will be mailed. Reservations are required.

Seniors are asked to bring a copy of their senior picture so that it can be displayed on the bulletin board. Seniors who attend will also be asked to complete a simple survey so that a graduation display can be created for fair.

**AG AWARENESS DAY**

On May 3rd, 1300 2nd and 3rd graders will converge on the Monroe County Fairgrounds, to learn more about agriculture.

They will do this as they listen to 4-H, FFA, and other volunteers talk to them about animals, plants, farm equipment, farming in general, crops and a wide variety of safety topics, which can be made interesting for young students.

We are searching for volunteers to teach sessions, to guide groups of students, to help set-up and take down, to pack bags for the youth to take back, scoop ice cream, and even provide drinks.

If you would like to be a part of this activity, call the 4-H office. We’ll give you the complete details and sign you up for a fun day, working with kids.

**SPRING ACHIEVEMENTS PLANNED**

We will be experiencing just three Spring Achievements this year. The Airport Spring Achievement will be the first one to be held on April 13th at the Activity Center. Dundee and Custer will combine to have their Achievement on April 20th and Bedford’s will be held on April 27th.

Each district will still have the opportunity to send five acts and two emcees to the county Share-the-Fun which is scheduled for May 3rd.

We anticipate having the forms and information on the new council website in the very near future. *Forms will not be mailed to the leaders.*

Adults and teens interested in judging at any of these events should contact the District President or the 4-H Office. Many evaluators are needed to give the members a positive experience.
BEEF AND RABBITS TO HOST SHOWS

Mark April 28th and May 19th on your calendar so that you can take part in the Monroe County 4-H Preview Beef Show and Rabbit Show.

BEEF

The Junior Livestock Association is planning a Beef Preview Show to be held on April 28th in the Beef Barn at the Fairgrounds.

- Exhibitors will enter the grounds through D Lot.
- Registration will start at 7:00 a.m.
- The show will begin at 11:00 a.m.
- Cost will be $20.00 per animal and will be payable at registration
- Classes will include both Showmanship and market classes – Showmanship will be a jackpot show and will cost each exhibitor $5.00 to enter
- Awards will be given
- Registration information is available by googling Blanchett Beef Preview Show
- Lunch will be available on the grounds

RABBITS, CAVIES, and POCKET PETS

The Small Animal Association will be hosting their third annual show on Sunday May 19th in the Education Building at the Fairgrounds.

- Exhibitors will enter the grounds through C Lot
- Registration will start at 8:00 a.m.
- The show will begin at 10:00 a.m.
- Cost will be $2.00 per animal and will be payable at registration
- Classes will include both showmanship and market
- Awards will be given
- Flyers with complete information will be available at the 4-H Office
- Lunch will be available on the grounds

For further information contact Dean Kreps for Beef or Daniel Henes for info on the Rabbit and Cavy show.

TRACTOR SAFETY

Monroe County 4-H is partnering with the Monroe County Farm Bureau and Leckler’s to again sponsor a Tractor Safety Course for youth 12 and older. It is a federal law that youth between the ages of 14 - 16 must be certified, through a tractor safety course to drive a tractor off of the family farm. This course will earn the member certification if they pass both the written and driving test. Youth may take the course and receive their certification on their 14th birthday, if they pass now.

Taught by Dennis Langland, Gene Brost and Richard Janssen and the five-session program will cover handling, safety, proper use, and many other aspects of tractor safety.

Classes will be held at Lecklers beginning on April 2nd, 4th, 9th 11th and 13th.

All meetings must be attended to earn your certificate. The test and tractor driving will be held at Lecklers All sessions will begin at 7:00 p.m. Registration must be made at the 4-H office prior to the first class. Included will be all materials and refreshments.
4-H SCHOLARSHIPS

The Monroe County 4-H Program will be awarding seven different sets of scholarships again this year to high school seniors, and members and leaders who are currently attending classes. Applications are available in the Extension 4-H Office and are due on April 15th. All interviews for the 4-H scholarships will be conducted on April 16th at the Extension Office.

Larry Kreps Memorial Scholarships - This scholarship was created in 1996 to honor the memory of Larry Kreps, Sr., Memorials that were given in 2009 in the memory of Larry Kreps III has increased the endowed portion of the scholarship and it is now given in memory of the grandfather and grandson. These scholarships are awarded to members who have been active in the areas of beef, sheep and swine.

Mark Schuon, Jr. Memorial Scholarship - Scholarships will be awarded this year in memory of Mark Schuon, Jr. The awards are given to a member who exhibits beef, sheep or swine, and a second scholarship is given to a member exhibiting poultry or rabbits.

Charles Knabusch Memorial Scholarship - Since 1998 this scholarship has been given to 4-H youth who excel in 4-H work, leadership and citizenship. This annual award is present in memory of Charles Knabusch.

Paul McGuire Memorial Scholarship - the Dog Program Committee will again present this scholarship this year. It has been established in the memory of Paul McGuire, and will presented to 4-H members who have excelled in the 4-H program.

4-H Academic Scholarship - This endowed scholarship will be presented for the ninth time this year. These awards will go to 4-H seniors who have provided leadership to the 4-H program, and who have given back to the program.

Robert Manwell Memorial Scholarship – Robert Manwell was a quiet leader who made a big difference to the youth he touched and had a big impact on the entire youth program. Robert believed in volunteering and sharing his skills in any way possible. This scholarship will be given to a 4-H member or leader who has been involved in community service. Any 4-H member or leader who is pursuing higher education may apply for this scholarship.

Marie Siebarth Memorial Scholarship – Mrs. Siebarth was a 4-H leader for over 40 years. Her family had an interest in the dairy project but Marie had exhibited poultry at the fair, and served many years as a foods superintendent. Her memory will live as her scholarship is awarded each year.

Nancy Robbins Memorial Scholarship – Nancy was a big part of the Monroe County 4-H Program, providing leadership to Ag Awareness Day, the Airport Candy Sale, and giving countless hours at the fair, both as a superintendent and as cashier. This scholarship will be presented to members who have enjoyed all aspects of the 4-H program.

All applicants for the scholarships will need to complete a form and meet with the evaluators for a formal interview. Interviews will be scheduled for April 16th, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Extension Learning Center. Recipients will be chosen by the committee and awarded certificates will be presented to the to the scholarship winners at their High School Honors Programs, or at other appropriate programs. Questions may be directed to Judy See.

STATE AWARDS

We had an outstanding group of members who completed their State Award applications by the March 1st deadline. Evaluators are being sought to evaluate and rank the forms from the Southeast Region. Evaluations on the forms that Monroe will be ranking will be done on March 7th beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Extension Office.

The Council again provided 4-H covers for each completed State Award Application.

The Mark of Excellence topic this year is “Because of 4-H I Can....” Two essays will be selected by the committee to represent Monroe. Each State Award delegate and Mark of Excellence Delegate will be provided with a $40.00 scholarship to help him or her cover expenses for their trip to Exploration Days.
THANKS!

The Youth Leadership Board presented the 2013 Officers Training workshop, which taught responsibilities of an officer, traits of leadership and some team building exercises. This well attended workshop will benefit many clubs across the county as their officers now have a better understanding of what it takes to make a good officer, how to run a meeting, and how to get all members involved and feeling good about their roles.

Thanks to the YLB members for helping other members prepare for the roles in 4-H.

For clubs that did not attend, officer-training materials are available at the Extension 4-H Office. Every club should be electing officers and letting youth be a part of the leadership team.
MSU EXTENSION ONLINE CROP AND FORAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Michigan State University Extension Will offer Two online programs highlighting crop and forage production on Thursday, March 14th and Thursday, March 21st, 2013

ON LINE GRAIN CROP HIGHLIGHTS

The evening of Thursday, March 14th, 2013 Michigan State University Extension will offer an online program addressing key grain production and pest management points for 2013. Participants will learn how to enhance their corn and small grain systems in the coming season, and have an opportunity to ask question of MSU grain production experts. The presentations will begin at 7:00 pm and run until 9:00 pm EST, covering corn, small grain, weed and insect pest topics.

MAEAP Phase I and two MDARD Pesticide Recertification Credits will be available for application to one of the following categories: Private Core, Commercial Core, or Field Crops. Participants can view the program independently online or attend a group viewing at one of several sites throughout the state. Viewing sties for the March 14th program will be available in the following communities: Bellaire, Benton Harbor, Escanaba, Grand Rapids, Monroe, Ontonagon, Rogers City, Sault Ste. Marie, St. Johns, Tustin and West Branch.

There is a $10 charge to attend a group viewing of this program, but independent viewing is free. Pre-registration is required for all participants. Visit events.anr.msu.edu/GrainAndForageWebinarSeries to register and access connection information. Contact James DeDecker at (989) 734-2168 or dedecke5@msu.edu for more information, or by March 7th, 2013 to request accommodations for persons with disabilities. Requests received after this date will be fulfilled when possible.

ONLINE FORAGE CROP HIGHLIGHTS

The evening of Thursday, March 21st, 2013 Michigan State University Extension will offer an online program addressing key forage production points for 2013. Participants will learn how to enhance their forage systems in the coming season, and have an opportunity to ask questions of MSUE forage production experts. The presentation will begin at 7:00 pm and run until 9:00 pm EST, covering drought recovery management, corn silage, cost of production and MAEAP verification topics.

MAEAP Phase I and two MDARD Pesticide Recertification Credits will be available for application to one of the following categories: Private Core, Commercial Core, or Field Crops. Participants can view the program independently online or attend a group viewing at one of several sites throughout the state. Viewing sites for the March 21st program will be available in the following communities: Bellaire, Benton Harbor, Escanaba, Grand Rapids, Ionia, L’Anse, Monroe, Rogers City, Sault Ste. Marie, St. Johns, Tustin and West Branch.

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WISE SELECTION OF PERENNIAL FORAGE VARIETIES IS THE INVESTMENT RETURN THAT KEEPS ON GIVING AND GIVING.
BY: JERRY LINDQUIST

Now that the value of hay crops has regained its competitive edge against other agricultural crops, farms are actually thinking of seeding more forage crops in 2013. If we value alfalfa hay at a conservative $160 per ton in 2013, the crop has the potential of profiting over $200 per acre, which brings it in line with the grain crops for profit potentials. However, that profitability can be enhanced even more when the right varieties are planted.

For perennial crops that can produce in a field for four years or longer like alfalfa, proper variety selection becomes much more important than for annual crops. For an annual like corn, if you plant a poor performing variety one year, you simply will not purchase it the following year. With alfalfa the planting costs run above $400 per acre and you want the stand to stay in production as long as it generates more profit than other crops. In reality, how do we really know if an alfalfa stand is yielding above or below other varieties we could have planted? Unless there was another variety planted at the same time on a similar soil type on the farm, you’ll never know if you could have done better.

That’s where unbiased university varietal trials come into play to help farmers see what the potential differences are and then to help them select varieties with better yield potential. Granted yield is not everything. Other factors like disease and insect resistance, feed quality, longevity and other items also factor into picking the optimum forage variety, but in reality, yield over a set number of years is the best measure we currently have to estimate profitability.

The differences are significant when we put economic values to the yield results. Looking at the Michigan State University Forage Varietal Trials for 2012, we can see that in one trial, which was seeded in East Lansing in 2008, the yield difference from the top yielding alfalfa variety and the lowest yielding variety was 7.89 tons of dry matter per acre over a three-year harvest period. This equates out to a 9.4 ton difference when we adjust the hay to typical 16% moisture hay. If we assume a hay value of $160 per ton over the three years, this is a difference of $1,504 per acre, or $501 per acre, per year. Now assuming that we may achieve this same annual difference over five years (the average life of an alfalfa stand in Michigan—dairy and livestock farms included) that equates out to $2,505 per acre over the five years. Taking it one assumption farther, if the average alfalfa field in Michigan is 30 acres in size, over the five year life of the stand the difference between selecting the best variety and the lowest yielding variety—which in this trial example was the public variety of Vernal—the value would be a shopping $75,150! The only difference in this example is the selection of the variety that was planted.

Granted, there will be some additional costs associated with the higher yielding varieties such as cost of seed, more fertilizer used because the yield is greater, more harvesting, hauling and labor expenses, but still these extra costs may only diminish the gross value by 10—20%. We are still looking at over $60,000 more by picking out the best alfalfa variety. Even if in the past you were fairly good at selecting some of the better alfalfa varieties, the difference between some of the good and the best varieties could mean $5,000 to $10,000 more on a 30-acre field over five years.

How do you select the best varieties? The MSU Forage Varietal Trial reports have information on alfalfa variety trials along with the un-biased, Michigan-specific trial data for alfalfa varieties from 37 different seed marketers across the Midwest. Start there and then talk to seed dealers determining your need for disease and insect resistance, and paying particular attention to longevity if your system requires it.

Diary farms typically want alfalfa stands to last for 3—5 years where as livestock and hay cash crop farms want the stand to last for as long as it is profitable, usually 7—10 years or longer. Finally, and most importantly, look at the yield date of local unbiased trials over time to see how they performed.

Granted, the newest varieties will not have yield data available for at lease three years, but unless you like to invest in commodity trading or at a casino, do not invest your entire forage seeding dollar in new varieties. Use some of the highest yielding tried and true varieties that meet farm goals, along with maybe a small portion being a sampling of a new, un-tested variety.
There is no foolproof system to select alfalfa or other forage legume or grass varieties. However, if you do your homework and consider analytical trial data in your selection process, the financial returns can be substantial for perennial forage crops.

For more information, contact Michigan State University Extension educators Kim Cassida at 517-355-0271 or at cassida@msu.edu; Phil Kaaz at 810-667-0341 or at kaatz@anr.msu.edu; or Jerry Lindquist at 231-832-6139 or at lindquis@anr.msu.edu

Jerry Lindquist writes for Michigan State University.

**MICHIGAN ONLINE LARGE VOLUME WATER USE REPORTS DUE APRIL 1**

**Agriculture Water Use Withdrawals in Michigan of 70 Gallons per Minute or More Need to Be Reported Online by April 1.**

**By: Lyndon Kelly**

Michigan Agricultural Large Volume Water Use Reports are due to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), by April 1. Without permission from MDARD, the only legitimate method of reporting is the new online system. An online tutorial on the use of the new reporting system is available, as well as a video tutorial.

This first year of using the online Water Use Reporting system will be very important, allowing producers to build their database within the reporting system. Previous year’s reports are directly loaded into the new system, making it very important for water users to review their records back to 2004 and load all registered water withdrawals into the online system.

Large volume water use is defined as the capacity to withdraw 100,000 gallons per day (70 gallons per minute). The combined capacity of more that one well at a site—which is 100,000 gallons or greater capacity per day (70 gallons per minute) - also meets the volume water use definition. Large volume water use reporting is required for all agricultural water uses (irrigation, cooling, animal, watering, etc) from both surface and ground water withdrawals. All non-agriculture related water use reports are sent to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Generic forms were sent from MDARD in late December.

The baseline capacity is the reported system capacity used or developed to make a withdrawal on February 28, 2006 or a registered withdrawal established after February 28, 2006. Reporting a baseline capacity greater than 70 gallons per minute from the original reported or registered baseline capacity constitutes a new water withdrawal. The once required static water level is no longer required but may be reported if available.

Large volume water users need to provide the latitude/longitude for the well location; surface water withdrawals are not required but very helpful to the process. Estimating water use can be accomplished by several methods:

- Water application multiplied by number of applications, plus estimate of additional water use
- Pump capacity multiplied by run time or fuel/power use per hour
- Flow meter meters actual flow, note maintenance and calibration concerns
- Industry average numbers (Midwest Plan Service or ASAE) with appropriate adjustments (not appropriate for high variable water uses such as irrigation).
Information is available through Michigan State University Extension on estimating water use for irrigation, livestock, farms or other large volume water use requirements. Follow the irrigation link on the left hand side of the screen. There are several upcoming meetings and open house opportunities in February and March where large volume water users can receive help with reporting and registration requirements also listed at the website. Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) technicians located at many of the county NRCS offices have been trained to assist producers in completing the large volume water use reporting requirements.

If producers have no way of using the new online system contact Abigail Eaton at eatona@michigan.gov, or 517-241-3933 for assistance or other options.

Lyndon Kelly writes for Michigan State University Extension.

**OVERNIGHT BUS TOUR**

A bus tour for farmers, agribusiness representatives and local officials is being organized by the program instructor with Michigan State University Extension’s Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute.

The bus trip will stop at University of Wisconsin crop research stations, various farms, and the village of Plover.

The bus will leave Kalamazoo early Monday morning, March 11, and return late Tuesday evening, March 12. There will be an overnight stay in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

For more information, or to register online, visit [www.events.anr.msu.edu/WisconsinAgTour2013](http://www.events.anr.msu.edu/WisconsinAgTour2013) or contact John Zirkle at 269-467-5511 or by email at zirklejo@anr.msu.edu
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>3/4/13</td>
<td>4-H Council</td>
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<td>4-H Fair Advisory Board</td>
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<td>Horse &amp; Pony Tack Sale</td>
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<td>3/16/13</td>
<td>4-H Mini Expo</td>
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<td>4-H Slow Spokes</td>
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<td>3/20/13</td>
<td>Junior Livestock Association</td>
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<td>3/21/13</td>
<td>Swine Meeting— all families must attend</td>
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<td>3/25/13</td>
<td>Small Animal Association</td>
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<td>CSI</td>
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<td>4/9/13</td>
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<td>Horse &amp; Pony Royalty Contest</td>
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<td>4/11/13</td>
<td>Tractor Safety</td>
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<td>3/5/13</td>
<td>Congressman Walberg</td>
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<td>Prince of Peace Church, Ida</td>
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<td>3/5/13</td>
<td>Meet &amp; Greet</td>
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<td>3/14/13</td>
<td>Washtenaw County Ag Banquet</td>
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<td>3/17-23/13</td>
<td>National Agriculture Week</td>
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<td>3/21/13</td>
<td>Rabbit &amp; Cavey Workshop &amp; Show</td>
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<td>3/22/13</td>
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<td>3/24/13</td>
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<td>3/27/13</td>
<td>Bedford Spring Achievement</td>
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<td>3/28/13</td>
<td>Beef Show</td>
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<td>3/30/13</td>
<td>Monroe County Fair Grounds</td>
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**AGRICULTURE**

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3/19/13</td>
<td>National Ag Day</td>
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The Monroe County MSU Extension office is open to the public on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 am—noon and 1:00—5:00 pm. The office staff may be accessed via the main phone line at 734-240-3170. Service is also available at the lobby counter during these hours. On Wednesday and Friday, staff may only be reached via their direct lines which are noted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TERRY CLARK-JONES</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>PATTI WARTINGER</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:wartin3@anr.msu.edu">wartin3@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>LINA M. RODRIGUEZ SALAMANCA M.S</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:rodri408@msu.edu">rodri408@msu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>WINNIE WEBB</td>
<td>Breastfeeding Peer</td>
<td>240-3178</td>
<td><a href="mailto:webbw@anr.msu.edu">webbw@anr.msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Though Extension has recently reorganized our structure, Extension professionals are still located in communities across the state and are still working to address Michigan’s most pressing needs through four broad-themed areas; greening Michigan, agriculture and agribusiness, children and youth, health and nutrition. If you would like to learn more about these program areas, you can read about them in a document called “Carrying Out the Land-Grant Mission” that can be found at www.msue.msu.edu To locate MSU Extension Staff across the state by name or area of expertise go to: http://people.msue.msu.edu