MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

Hello from Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) District 14, which serves Alpena, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Montmorency, Otsego, and Presque Isle Counties. We want to thank Alpena County for another year of partnership. Together we bring dynamic and diverse educational events and programing to people right here in our communities.

MSUE is the outreach and engagement arm of Michigan State University and brings the latest research from campus directly to you. We believe education and innovative solutions can help address many of today’s complex issues. We look forward to our continued service to Alpena County and the State.

We hope you enjoy reading through the Alpena County MSUE annual report for 2015-2016.

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ISSUE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

In 2015-16, MSUE conducted focus group sessions throughout the state to determine where the people we serve felt our efforts should be focused. In January of this year, District 14 conducted two such focus groups; one in Alpena and one in Gaylord. The top ten issues identified are summarized below. These areas of focus will be combined with our statewide focus group results and will be used to prioritize our future direction and long-term planning. We are currently conducting additional focus groups and surveys to ensure Michigan’s diversity is represented. These results will also be combined with the statewide efforts. Thank you to those who participated in this process—your time is appreciated and your perspectives are important to us.

Top Ten Issues Identified in District 14
Youth Development/Education (4-H)
Agriculture
Community Development
Citizenship
Water Quality Issues
Life Skills
Farm to School
Nutrition
Race Relations
Bovine Tuberculosis Research
4-H offers a wealth of opportunities to youth ages 5 to 19 and to teen and adult volunteers. Seven guiding principles steer our work: 1) Youth develop positive relationships with adults and peers. 2) Youth are physically and emotionally safe. 3) Youth are actively engaged in their own development. 4) Youth are considered participants rather than recipients in the learning process. 5) Youth develop skills that help them succeed. 6) Youth recognize, understand, and appreciate multiculturalism. 7) Youth grow and contribute as active citizens through service and leadership. “Learn by doing” takes on a deeper meaning when considered in the context of these principles.

So just how does this happen? This report will describe the various delivery methods utilized in 4-H programming in Alpena County in 2015 and early 2016.

Camps Help Youth Develop The Skills Needed To Make Good Decisions

4-H Camps are a summer highlight for youth. They look forward to making new friends and participating in fun hands-on learning activities. Camps also provide youth an opportunity to learn the social skills that are needed to interact well with others, participate in groups, work cooperatively to accomplish goals, and more.

- **Camp Fins, Furs and Feathers!** 23 youth ages 9-12 years old and 3 teen counselors from Alpena engaged in our five county 4-H summer camp! This overnight camp at Ocqueoc Outdoor Center included archery, kayaking, going green education, upcycling, and more. Twenty-three youth from Alpena County and three teen counselors joined the over 60 youth from neighboring counties in this three day adventure.

**Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp**, held annually at Camp Chickagami, for seven days, six nights provides hands-on learning, engaging youth ages 13-15 in exploring science, leadership, and careers (and of course, recreation) related to Michigan’s Great Lakes and natural resources. Michigan teens participate in science sessions relating to local woodlands and wildlife, Great Lakes invasive species, wetlands, watersheds, fisheries, and more. Campers learn about Michigan’s outdoors in numerous science-based actives, while exploring potential careers by working with professional experts.

(26) youth from Alpena County attended a four day 4-H summer camp in Presque Isle County in June of 2016
Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Pre-College Programs Offer Youth Career Exploration Opportunities!

Pre-college programs through Michigan 4-H allow youth to learn life skills through gaining real world experience. At pre-college programs youth have the opportunity to work alongside scientists and experts.

4-H Exploration Days — Exploration Days was held June 22-24 on the MSU campus and had over 2,400 participants from 77 Michigan counties. It boasted an “explore the possibilities” theme and had many career related classes and opportunities for youth to participate in. This MSU pre-college program is designed to: increase responsibility, confidence, independence, and accountability; problem-solving, decision-making and time management skills; communication, teamwork, citizenship and leadership skills; foster the ability to meet new people and make new friends from different places and backgrounds; develop and expand career and personal interests; increase college exploration and access to the MSU campus and its resources; and give youth opportunities to try things that aren’t available in their county.

4-H Members Serve Our Community!

Through 4-H youth volunteer and serve in our community. Whether it is assisting a fellow 4-H member, neighbor, volunteering at the Alpena County Fair, or cleaning up at our annual Adopt-A-Highway, 4-H youth in Alpena County strive to make a difference and better their club, community and world.

Adopt-A-Highway — Alpena County 4-H members served their community in April of 2016 at our annual Adopt-A-Highway clean-up. In 2016 we had nineteen youth and ten adult volunteers.

2016 Adopt-A-Highway Participation

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4-H CHILDREN & YOUTH INSTITUTE

4-H: Being a Trustworthy Financial Steward

In her role as a supervising educator for MSU Extension, Sienna Suszek works on development of Extension resources for 4-H staff and the delivery of professional development trainings for 4-H staff.

In the past year she has worked closely with colleagues, State 4-H Leadership and University administrative personnel to write three manuals outlining policies and procedures for managing 4-H financials. As a public entity, MSU Extension and 4-H Youth Development programs have a strong accountability to Michigan citizens for the monies donated to 4-H programming. The manuals she co-authored with three of her colleagues provide staff, volunteers and youth or adult treasurers with the information they need to educate youth members and operate their 4-H groups in accordance with University policies and State and Federal laws.

Once the manuals were written, reviewed and approved; she and her fellow authors trained more than 140 4-H staff and support staff on best financial practices so they could carry that training forward to the hundreds of volunteers and youth in their communities.

NSO Gives 4-H Staff A Good Start

At the request of 4-H State Leader, Dr. Julie Chapin, last summer Sienna Suszek and colleague, Dee Miller, convened a committee of three other Extension staff to develop a New Staff Orientation specific to the role of 4-H Program Coordinator. Extension offers orientation on a general scope to all of its employees yet the role of a 4-H PC is a large one and very specific. New staff across the state struggled because their positions were intensely busy almost from the moment they began their career. This left them with little time to learn the particulars of their job or their county program or to understand the day to day requirements of their position.

The 4-H NSO (New Staff Orientation) committee developed a two-day training that walks recent hires through important components of their position. Hands-on learning is a large part of what participants experience so they leave having physically walked through some of the key components to managing their positions and the volunteers who are a part of their county program. In addition the new staff are able to meet colleagues from across the state and form connections that will enable them to be linked to resources in the future which will help them to be successful.

With the State 4-H office at Michigan State University supporting two of these trainings per year the group now delivers critical professional development to new staff so they are supported and almost immediately connected to 4-H resources throughout the state.
ENSURING STRONG COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension, participants learn how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills that help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. All of these outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services and lead to personal and community stability, strong neighborhoods and safe communities.

Strengthening Michigan’s financial capacity

Financial Literacy: According to the FINRA National Financial Capability Study (2012), 60% of Michigan residents lack a rainy day emergency fund, 35% of residents with credit cards paid only the minimum on their credit cards during the last year, and 20% of Michigan homeowners owe more on their homes than its current market value.

In response, MSU Extension’s Financial and Homeownership Education team assists individuals, households, organizations, and communities to become more sustainable through education focused on financial capability, homeownership, and foreclosure prevention.

Extension Educator, Scott Matteson, assists Alpena County residents in achieving financial success. As a result, 38 county residents completed Financial Capability Education and are now knowledgeable in writing spending plans, smart goals, keeping track of income, and saving money regularly with an average of 88% of participants stating the education was helpful and effective. In addition, 11 area social workers were trained in becoming aware of underlying financial issues their clients may be facing and are now able to provide helpful tools and information to assist their clients.

MSU Extension conducted targeted outreach to residents, small businesses and farm owners to increase knowledge, understanding and confidence in the ability to purchase health insurance.
Homeownership/Foreclosure: Across the state MSU Extension reached 210 households having foreclosure issues. In Alpena seven households were assisted with four of those households becoming successful in keeping their home, two households choosing to leave the home, and 1 household still in counseling service. MSU Extension has provided over 200+ first time homebuyer classes across the state and has reached 875 adults. In Alpena County, four first time homebuyer education classes were offered with four adults attending. Attendees stated the program was effective, highly informational, and they would likely recommend the program to others. In addition, Scott has adapted an online version of the Homebuyer Education series and through the Alpena County office is assisting residents statewide with monthly offerings in which the average attendance is four to six state residents.

Alpena County Planning Commission
Mary Dunckel continues to facilitate the activities of the Alpena County Planning Commission. The commission meets as needed to conduct official business such as reviewing zoning ordinance changes, Master Plans and Recreation Plans. The Commission has 11 officially appointed members and 2 ex-officio members.

Citizen Planner
Working with Kurt Schindler, MSU Extension land use educator, an eight session Citizen Planner program was planned, organized and implemented in Alpena. The program had 25 attendees who came from 3 northeast Michigan counties. Sessions included: Introduction to Planning and Zoning; Legal Foundations of Planning and Zoning; Roles and Responsibilities (2 sessions); Plan Implementation and Development Controls; Best Practices for Innovative Planning and The Art of Community Planning. A special session on downtowns and retail areas was added to the line-up. All attendees received a certificate of completion and several are going on to become Master Citizen Planners.

Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

MSU Extension’s financial literacy and housing education programs help families and individuals at any stage of their lives make smart money decisions and work through the homeownership process.
When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person’s life span.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed) provides nutrition education to adults and children. This program focuses on increasing physical activity and improving dietary quality.

**Working to improve social and emotional health**

Reducing anger, bullying and stress through social and emotional health programs

Through MSU Extension’s Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments initiative, young people and adults learn ways to reduce and prevent bullying and harassment behaviors. As a result of the education:

- 98% gained understanding about different types of bullying behaviors and how they can affect those involved.
- 98% developed new skills for interrupting behavior.

In an effort to promote prevention of child abuse and neglect, MSU Extension Educators have offered Nurturing Parenting series throughout the state. As a result of the 10 workshops involved in this program:

- 53% improved their adaptive skills and strategies to use in times of crisis.
- 41% of Nurturing Parenting participants improved their perceived informal support that helps provide for emotional needs.

MSU Extension’s RELAX: Alternatives to Anger program offers techniques for calming down and de-stressing, problem solving, communicating and letting go of the past. The program reaches low-income and racially/ethnically diverse audiences. As a result of the program:

- 70% now work hard to be calm and talk things through and 66% try to end on a positive note when they get upset.
- 68% reduced their frequency in yelling and screaming which is an indicator of improved strategies to address aggression and violence.
- 66% now take time to understand how others feel.

MSU Extension reached more than 87,000 adults and young people across the state through programming. Nearly one-third of youth increased their level of physical activity and more than two-thirds of adults increased time spent being physically active, including three-quarters of older adults.
Stress Less with Mindfulness introduces participants to the experience and practice of mindfulness to reduce stress. Mindfulness can be defined as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. As a result of the training, participants showed improvement on these key outcomes:

- 78% can describe how a mindfulness perspective changes reactions to daily stressors.
- 75% use mindful awareness when eating.
- 74% know three mindfulness tools to help them manage stress.

Programs in Alpena have included presenting a session at the GreatStart Early Childhood conference in May held at the Alpena Community College for 16 childcare providers from Alpena and surrounding areas. MSU Extension also had a table at the Family Health event in June put on by the GreatStart Parent group reaching more than 50 families.

Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

In Alpena County 173 youth received nutrition education in a variety of venues through partnerships with schools and youth clubs.

As with all Health and Nutrition Institute education programs, success is determined not only by the number of individuals staff worked with, but more importantly, how their knowledge or behavior was changed as a result of attending the classes.

A success story that only took an incentive as small as a little star.

In a preschool class, one child was very hesitant in trying new foods. In fact, on the first day he made a point to say, “I don’t like vegetables and I cannot try them.” In the upcoming vegetable lesson a gold “I Tried It” medal made of paper was an incentive. Each child that tried a vegetable would receive a star sticker to attach to their medal. The children were very excited to try all the foods presented so they could get a star sticker. The hesitant child tried a rainbow of fresh vegetables. He received a star. At the end of the session, the hesitant child’s parent approached the instructor to ask what she may have done to make her son try veggies.
MSU Extension helps strengthen communities through programs that teach community leaders how to implement best practices that keep communities solvent, productive and engaged.

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS

Michigan Sea Grant Extension promotes research, education, and outreach to enhance responsible and sustainable use of our diverse Great Lakes resources. Through MSU Extension, Michigan Sea Grant works with Michigan citizens, industries, and coastal communities to encourage their use, benefits, and enjoyment of Great Lakes resources that positively influences our state’s economy, environment and quality of life. Here we highlight our investments with Great Lakes fisheries stakeholders and engaging youth in Great Lakes stewardship opportunities.

Revitalizing community values in our Lake Huron fishery

Three Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops hosted in 2015 brought together more than 250 interested anglers, charter captains, and others—including nearly 20 Alpena County stakeholders—with fisheries researchers and managers from across Michigan. Updates continue to offer good news regarding the resilience of the Lake Huron fishery—despite negative impacts of aquatic invasive species. Workshops have helped fishing-dependent businesses adapt to ecological changes, and communities foster more positive attitudes toward an improving Lake Huron Fishery.

Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail offers coastal tourism promise, bringing to life today’s Great Lakes fisheries through exploration of the historic fisheries of our past. This statewide trail markets northern Lake Huron communities—museums, events, and experiences—to those interested in learning more about our Great Lakes fisheries. In Alpena County, Michigan Sea Grant supports the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan, serving the Katherine V (commercial fish tug) exhibit development committee and a new opportunity in 2015, we have aided Besser Museum efforts in acquiring the retired Lake Huron DNR Fisheries Research vessel (R/V Chinook), center of a future “Great Lakes fisheries science” exhibit planned for Museum. This Fall, Michigan Sea Grant partners with Besser Museum and NOAA Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary to host the annual, statewide 2016 Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail networking conference locally in Northeast Michigan and here in Alpena.
Making the Most of Our Natural Assets, continued

Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiatives: Engaging Youth in Coastal Community Development through Place-based Education (PBSE)

The Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (NEMIGLSI) network and partnership engages youth in Great Lakes and natural resource stewardship projects, provides support for schools and educators, and facilitates school-community partnerships. In 2015, more than 2,700 Alpena County youth were engaged in hands-on learning through variety of Great Lakes and natural resource stewardship projects supported through this NEMIGLSI partnership. Nearly 70 educators from Alpena Public Schools and All Saints Catholic schools were supported in professional development or fielding place-based stewardship education projects with their students.

This PBSE strategy also fosters Great Lakes literacy learning and environmental science, technology, engineering, and math (E-STEM) opportunities applied by youth in their stewardship service. Recently this network was honored with an international Environmental-STEM Innovative Education award from the North American Association for Environmental Education and UL Innovation for empowering youth through E-STEM experiences applied to accomplish place-based education stewardship projects. This award includes $25,000 contributed to the NEMIGLSI network, through the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan, which will be reinvested in supporting Environmental-STEM learning and place-based stewardship education opportunities among area schools and youth.

Regionally the NEMIGLSI is facilitated by Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Sea Grant, 4-H Youth Programs, Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan, and several other area partners. Funding for this partnership provided through the statewide Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative and Great Lakes Fishery Trust, NOAA B-WET, and Sea Grant Center for Great Lakes Literacy. In the most recent 2015-2016 school year, the NEMIGLSI regionally supported 94 educators in 32 schools across eight northern Lake Huron counties, involving more than 4,100 youth (more than 20% of the region’s total student population) in stewardship projects. Since 2009, more than 19,000 students have engaged as Great Lakes stewards, E-STEM learners and valued community leaders through the NEMIGLSI.

Engaging youth as community leaders through place-based education and Great Lakes Stewardship projects in Northeast Michigan
Michigan agriculture continues to be a growing segment of the state’s economy. The production of commercial food and nonfood agricultural operations is growing rapidly. The number of households raising a portion of their own food and raising livestock or gardening for pleasure or relaxation continues to increase. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices. Participants also learn how to optimize and reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and how to conserve and protect water resources. This education leads to better use of time, money and human capital, and helps retain and create agricultural jobs. These measures strengthen Michigan’s economy while connecting farmers to local food opportunities and global markets. In this way you help MSU Extension encourage growth in a sustainable and prosperous Michigan food and agriculture system.

**Bridging the gap between farm to fork**

**Michigan Fresh**  
Mary Dunckel and Val Golding worked with The Alpena News to provide Michigan Fresh articles in the paper weekly during the growing season. Fifteen articles appeared in the newspaper which has a readership of 9,000 people. Coordinating factsheets were distributed to shoppers at the Farmer’s Market in Alpena on Saturdays and Wednesdays.

**Breakfast on the Farm**  
Mary Dunckel continues to provide leadership for this statewide, on-farm educational program that has reached 75,000 individuals since 2009 (13,481 visitors and volunteers in 2015). The event includes a free, farm-cooked breakfast and a self-guided tour of the host farm. Thirty five farms including dairy, beef, crop and apple enterprises, have hosted events. Survey results from 2015 show that Breakfast on the Farm is leading to consumers having more trust in farmers, more confidence in food and more knowledge of modern agriculture. Data also shows that consumers are changing purchasing behaviors as a result of attending a Breakfast on the Farm event.
Don’t Guess, Soil Test!
Our office provides soil testing services for home gardens and lawns, field crops and wildlife food plots. For home owners, a postage paid self-mailer is available for purchase that makes soil testing a breeze. After collecting the soil sample, customers simply put the envelope in the mail and then expect results from the lab in approximately 10-14 days. For field crops and food plots the customer is responsible for mailing the samples to the lab and again, they can expect results within two weeks. Soil testing ensures that the appropriate amount of fertilizer and lime is applied, which is good for the pocketbook and the environment!

Residents with garden or yard questions have three options for assistance. They can visit the Gardening in Michigan website at www.migarden.msu.edu to view tip sheets on many gardening topics. To talk to someone directly, they can call the MSU Extension toll-free hotline at 888-678-3463 with their question and Michigan Master Gardener will offer advice. The final option we offer is “Ask an Expert” at www.extension.org. This is a national website where residents can submit a question and supporting digital photos and they will receive a research based answer from an expert within a few days.

Let’s Get Growing Garden Show
The 13th annual MSU Extension sponsored garden show was held at the Alpena Mall on April 30th. An estimated 900 people attended the show. Thirty four businesses, organizations and farmers market vendors had exhibits and displays throughout the mall. Home Depot offered a children’s workshop and 300 birdhouse and bug catcher kits were given to youth attending the show. Dr. Sarah Rautio, MSU Extension horticulture educator, offered a special educational session on attracting pollinators to the garden. This show has become a spring staple in northeast Michigan.

Learning on the farm
The best classroom for farmers is often a farm, and farmers can provide a good example and model for other producers. MSU Extension organized a tour of three dairy farms in the area this summer. Twenty-five dairy people (producers, employees and industry) met and visited the farms to better understand how their peers manage, solve problems and achieve results. It is also an opportunity for the MSU Extension Educator to talk about research findings in the context of what they were seeing during the farm tours.
This program gave us an opportunity to use a technology that we were interested in, but could not previously justify given our small acreage.

Aerial Cover Crop Interseeding

MSU Extension, in partnership with three Michigan Conservation Districts, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and local field crop producers received $29,810 in grant funds from the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Partnership Grant Program to investigate and demonstrate cooperative aerial seeding as a method of timely cover crop establishment on Northeast MI corn and soybean acres.

Cover crops contribute to cash crop production through improvement of soil health and fertility, pest management and water availability. Keeping the soil covered can also reduce erosion and increase nutrient cycling on farmlands, thereby decreasing the soil and nutrient loads entering our waterways. However, timely cover crop establishment on local farms is frequently precluded by harvest operations that carry-on into November and poor late-season field conditions.

Alternative seeding technologies (aerial and high clearance ground equipment) are available to address this barrier by overseeding a cover crop prior to fall harvest of corn or soybeans. Our Northeast Michigan Aerial Cover Crop Seeding Demonstrations project used aerial overseeding to establish cereal rye, an oat-radish blend and winter wheat in 662 acres of corn and soybeans across Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alpena and Otsego Counties prior to harvest in 2015. 400 acres were managed as research and demonstration sites highlighted by a comprehensive outreach campaign and series of four extension events designed to educate producers on the potential benefits and challenges of aerial cover crop overseeding.

46% (13 responses) of those responding to our evaluation survey reported that they increased their use of cover crops by an average of 22 acres each as a result of participating in our Aerial Seeding project.
SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Learning on the Farm cont’d.

Western Bean Cutworm Monitoring

Western bean cutworm (WBC) is a pest of dry beans and corn that first migrated into Michigan from the Western United States in 2006. Adult WBC moths emerge from the soil in July and lay their eggs on the leaves of dry bean and corn plants. Once hatched, developing larvae feed on the blossoms, pods and immature seeds of dry beans ultimately reducing crop yield and quality.

In 2015, MSU Extension recruited five local dry bean producers to participate in the Western Bean Cutworm Trap Network managed by MSU Field Crop Entomologist Dr. Chris DiFonzo. Last year Western Bean Cutworm catch numbers did not reach the economic threshold for treatment, allowing participating growers to avoid insecticide applications on 928 of 1775 dry bean acres assessed. This information was also available to non-participating growers with the potential to impact as many as 6,700 dry bean acres in the region.

On August 11th, 2015 MSU Extension partnered with the Michigan Bean Commission, ADM Edible Bean, and Freeland Bean & Grain to offer a Dry Bean Field Day at Smolinski Green Acres Farm in Lachine, MI. Thirty-six producers and partners attended the event to hear presentations by MSU and dry bean industry experts. Following these presentations, participants had an opportunity to view an on-farm dry bean variety trial including several classes of edible beans.

Working to prevent bovine TB

Even after all these years of dealing with TB, it is still claiming 2 – 4 cattle herds in the area every year. So what must be done to prevent new infections? This past year, MSU Extension, working with the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) and the USDA has been visiting individually with farmers in high-risk areas to help them identify risks to their herds. This project has been called an Enhanced TB Risk Assessment.

Risks are considered as the potential threats from infected wildlife at any hour of the day or night, all times of the year and in years and times when situations may cause deer to change their habits. Owners are encouraged to consider what those risks may be and to take greater responsibility for protecting their cattle.

In addition, we are also focusing efforts around communities of farms because what one landowner does may impact deer movement to other farms. Working in concert with one another can help to reduce risks throughout the community. This effort is considered by MDARD as the primary means to change the course of disease incidence.
MSU Product Center Business Counseling
The MSU Product Center assists both budding entrepreneurs and existing businesses in the food, agriculture and natural resource sectors. Within the Center is a network of eleven innovation counselors who work one-on-one with entrepreneurs helping them navigate the steps necessary to launch a business. Statewide in 2015, 687 Product Center clients were served through nearly 6,000 counseling sessions. There were 300 start-up businesses and 61 venture launches. Mary Dunckel is a member of the Product Center’s team and is providing counseling assistance in northeast Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.
## Extension Educators Serving Alpena County

### Staff Located in Alpena County Office:

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