



St. Joseph County

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR



MSU Extension in St. Joseph County continues to contribute to the quality of life of the county residents. With the help of 359 dedicated adult volunteers, the 4-H program, under the coordination of our dynamo Eva Beeker, experienced another successful year! There were 911 youth enrolled in the traditional 4-H program with another 1871 young people engaged in 4-H educational activities. Many of these in partnerships with schools. With the recent addition of Eric Anderson, I now refer to the ag team housed in the St. Joseph MSUE office as the dynamic trio! Lyndon Kelley and Dean Baas continue to provide value to the growers in the county with their outstanding work in irrigation and cover crops, respectively and are helping the rest of the MSUE field crops educators bring Eric up to speed. Already he has made a good impression. Diana Fair continues to provide leadership in District 13 with programs in disease management and prevention. With new emphasis in worksite wellness I anticipate continued demand throughout the county for her programs in diabetes prevention and management. I can't keep up with Linda Kline, her reputation for quality nutrition education is known with our partners in the county. She is creative and dedicated to the job. We appreciate the counties funding of our secretarial team Linda Towles and Tonya Barrington who provide support to educators in the county office as well as assist other educators in bringing programs here. They are also critical in helping connect residents to the programs available to them. I have learned that your local team has a unique comradery among extension offices in my district and it is nice to witness how supportive they are of each other. An MSUE highlight for me to share with you this year is the MSU Extension website. It is providing quality researched based information available to all St Joseph residents at the touch of a button. Topical experts, webinars and bulletins— all readily available on the web. As revealed in this report, you will see that each dollar that St. Joseph County invests in the local office leverages MSUE resources to extend our coverage much farther than just that provided by those housed in the county. Thank you St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners for your continued partnership in fulfilling the mission of Extension in Michigan. I sincerely look forward to working with you to make sure you are getting the most from Michigan State University Extension. *Julie Pioch* District 13 Coordinator

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

Good Governance.....45
 Master Gardeners32
 Ask an Expert Advice.....26
 Self Mailer Soil Tests for Home Gardeners.....26
 Finance & Homeownership18
 Total *reported* non-duplicated program participants..... 2916

DISTRICT 13 DIGITAL REACH

From July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015 approximately 35,301 visitors from our 7 county district viewed more than 60,000 pages of rich, science-based content on the MSU Extension website (msue.msu.edu). Of those, 52.2% were first-time visitors. Since launching in April 2012, the MSUE Extension website has been visited by more than 75,000 people in District 13, more than 1,000,000 people from Michigan and more than 5,000,000 people overall. Search engine rankings make msue.msu.edu one of the most visited Cooperative Extension Systems education sites in the country.

FUNDING

Budget year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
County Assessment	49389	49389	49389	51356	52905
Additional MSUE Staff	54200	54200	28325	38617	68952
General Fund Support	92694	106718	108143	114719	116524
2015 MSU Countywide Economic Impact			4,743,854		

(Source MiSPARTANIMPACT)

DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

911 St. Joseph County youth are currently enrolled in the 4-H program. A total of 1871 St. Joseph County youth participated in MSUE programs in 2015. Providing leadership, guidance and care of the program are 359 St. Joseph County adults.



When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Children learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active. 4-H'ers also demonstrate reduced high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and learn to complete tasks, solve problems and seek any help they might need from peers and adults. 4-H involvement also helps participants avoid or reduce involvement with the court system. This helps ensure more young people succeed in school, attend college and contribute to their communities. More successful young people in communities results in greater tax revenues and consumer spending and increases the likelihood that young people will stay in, or return to, their communities.

» In the 2014-2015 program year, 911 youth and 359 committed and caring adult volunteers were enrolled in the St. Joseph County 4-H program. A total of 1871 St. Joseph youth participated in MSUE 4-H programs in 2015.

Michigan 4-H makes a difference in post-secondary education enrollment

Studies show individuals with college degrees earn more over the course of their lifetimes and enjoy lower unemployment rates than those without post-secondary degrees. With more college graduates, Michigan benefits greatly – through higher taxable earnings, more disposable income and lower rates of unemployment – and produces a more skilled and educated workforce. Helping to prepare the next generation of college graduates in Michigan is Michigan 4-H. Through its wide range of programs, Michigan 4-H promotes personal growth, career exploration and goal-setting. Its designated pre-college programs – including 4-H Exploration Days (48 St. Joseph County Youth attending in 2015), prepare youth for post-secondary education by helping build important life skills, increase college aspirations and improve college readiness. As a result:

- » 61% of 2014 Michigan 4-H seniors enrolled in post-secondary education, compared to 45% of their same-age peers.
- » 4-H alumni are more likely to go to college than their same-age peers in 90% of Michigan counties.
- » College enrollment rates of youth in 4-H pre-college programs is even higher, with 68% of youth who participate in 4-H Exploration Days.

Partnering with schools to provide innovative and economical enhancements to in-school learning, MSU Extension youth educators are working with schools to provide custom solutions to their challenges.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Supporting school and student success

To ensure the future success of the Great Lakes State, Michigan schools are charged with improving educational outcomes for the state's youngest minds. Yet, they must do this with fewer resources than ever. Partnering with schools to provide innovative and economical enhancements to in-school learning, MSU Extension youth educators are working with schools to provide custom solutions to their challenges.

From once-a-month workshops and in-school science lessons to after-school technology and work preparation training and classroom gardening, MSU Extension supplies Michigan schools and the families they serve with the support they need to be successful.

Because of these unique partnerships, Michigan youth benefit.

- » 69 seniors at Centreville High school received "Interview for Success" training
- » Each year, St. Joseph County MSUE 4-H partners with the county Conservation District, county Parks and Recreation Department and the city of Sturgis to offer the 5th Grade Conservation Tour to all of the schools in the county. In 2015, over 670 students learned conservation practices taught by professionals in their fields.
- » Eight Students at the St. Joseph County Juvenile Detention Treatment Center are enrolled in the nine session "Building Your Future" 4-H program designed to develop employability skills in young people such as making career choices and connections, building portfolios, writing a resume, interviewing and setting career goals.

Building local and global leaders through youth 4-H programming

A democracy is only as strong as the citizens that make it up and strength comes from having the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation and opportunity to work for a common good. More than one-third of United States high school students do not have a basic understanding of democratic citizenship and government; therefore, lack the skills to competently participate as an informed citizen. Sixty-seven percent of Michigan residents surveyed indicate "helping youth develop leadership, citizenship and other life skills" is a high priority. Fifty-five percent indicate "involving youth and adults as active partners in decisions that affect the community" is a high priority. Civically engaged youth are more likely to register to vote, write to a public official, and investigate compelling political issues.

- » Two St. Joseph County youth accompanied 43 other 4-Hers to Washington D.C, for the annual Citizen Washington Focus trip at our nation's capital. Teens engage in

28 young people completed the 4-H Tractor Operator and Farm Safety Program held in partnership with St. Joseph County FFA. This 12 week program included 24 classroom hours and 3 hours of tractor driving experience. 4 adult volunteers donated their time and talents to help certify the students.



12 4-H Youth Volunteers provided leadership to the Commodity Carnival project at the St. Joseph County Fair in 2015. The hands-on educational activity is a fun way to help young people understand the economics of agriculture— from balancing the costs of feed, labor and transportation to preparing for the weather. 504 youth participated in the game.

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

citizenship and leadership programs while visiting sites around the city. Michigan youth have the opportunity to meet other teens from around the nation with whom they share experiences and programs.

MSU Extension programs such as Capital Experience allow Michigan's youth to get involved and become community leaders, but also show them how to be engaged in the legislative process.

- » St. Joseph County was represented by one of 13 Michigan 4-H youth who participated in the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute. They traveled to MSU to interact with state leaders and peers, while exploring the topics of global food security, food systems, hunger, and poverty. Through participation in panels, presentations, round table discussions, a virtual keynote, and open-space luncheon, participants gained a first hand look at how students and experts in Michigan are working to solve real global food security problems every day. Participants honed their communications and writing skills while developing a research paper outlining their own solutions to global food security problems.
- » 4-H Capitol Experience is an annual 4-day conference that helps prepare youth for active citizenship by focusing on civic engagement and public policy. 100 teens (2 from St. Joseph County in 2015) from around the state converge on Lansing, to experience state government in action and learn how they can influence policy issues. Participants interact with legislators, state agency staff, lobbyists and other resource people to learn how policy is made. Youth are placed in issue groups to brainstorm and prioritize issues in such as Agriculture, Jobs, Energy, Technology, Health and Education and then write a bill related to the issue. They are assigned roles and run their bill through a mock house or senate to try to pass it. Youth work through development of their bill by meeting with businesses, lobbyists and legislature. In addition, youth meet with their Representatives, Senators and their staff during a breakfast to discuss issues they are concerned about. Youth tour the Capitol, the Hall of Justice and sit in on a House session. Surveys reveal that 95% of participants feel prepared to work toward change in their communities; 95% learned things that will help them make a difference in their community.
- » Knowing parliamentary procedure to run meetings is a skill 4-H clubs use on a monthly basis and also provides a base of knowledge for youth to provide leadership to community groups as they get older. 20 youth and 9 adult volunteers participated in a parliamentary procedure workshop brought to the County in 2015. After the workshop, 67% agreed they could run a meeting; 78% agreed that they could set goals when leading a group; 89% said it was important to listen to all group members before making a decision and 100% recognized the importance of listening to different viewpoints when making a decision.

4-Her's attending leadership programs learn things that will help them make a difference in their community.



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

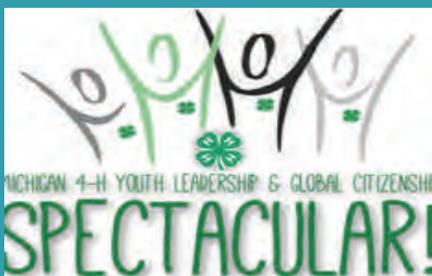
Youth influencing community decisions with support from adults

More than 20 percent of the U.S. population is between the ages of 5 and 19. These youth look to adults for guidance in various situations. As youth become more involved, whether in academic or community settings, they search for ways in which their voices can be heard. Youth voice is a resource that often goes untapped in communities. MSU Extension provides training through Michigan 4-H for internal and external groups to consider the value of youth-adult partnerships in the decision-making process.

Youth are gaining life skills such as leadership, planning and teamwork, while adults are learning about the information about the needs, concerns and issues that pertain to youth. Local 4-H councils and committees are encouraged to seek out, listen to and enact youth ideas in their program planning. As a result of youth-adult partnerships communities learn about resources and creativity youth have to solve critical problems.

- » Trainings offered by MSUE educators designed to promote the importance of youth inclusion in leadership roles and councils were held in 9 Michigan counties including **one in St Joseph. 86 St. Joseph County volunteers**
- » 75 youth including **one from St. Joseph County** and 19 adult volunteers from across the state attended the 4-H Teen Leadership and Community Change Conference and the 4-H Volunteer Forum. The conference is designed to give youth and adults the tools to start a citizenship, leadership and service program in their community, discover ways to be an effective club member, leader and officer, develop a county plan of action for using their new knowledge and skills back home and build skills for exploring and appreciating diversity and multiculturalism.
- » St. Joseph County MSUE provides leadership and direction to the 4-H Youth Council, and 4-H Horse Council which are made up of adult and youth volunteers.
- » The St. Joseph 4-H Endowment fund drive raised over \$33,000 to enrich the 4-H program for years to come. The “Make the Match” campaign was launched in March and surpassed its goal of \$20,000. The endowment will be matched 1:1 by the Michigan 4-H Foundation. The funds will be used to support current program delivery, future program enhancements and other areas of greatest need that will serve to advance 4-H in the county.
- » Grants from the United Way help to fund 4-H summer camp and MSU Exploration Days scholarships.

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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.

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

When individuals and families in Michigan are financially healthy, it creates an environment for sustained community prosperity. 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. These courses help reduce mortgage defaults through counseling new homebuyers as well as homeowners going through the foreclosure process.

Money Smart Week (MSW) is a public awareness campaign created by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and designed to help consumers better manage their personal finances. This is achieved through the collaboration and coordinated effort of hundreds of organizations across the state and Midwest including businesses, financial institutions, schools, libraries, not-for-profits, government agencies and the media. These groups come together once a year to stress the importance of financial literacy, inform consumers where they can get help and provide free educational seminars and activities throughout the week. Programming is offered to all demographics and income levels and covers all facets of personal finance from establishing a budget, to first time home buying and estate planning. As a MSW partner, MSU Extension financial and home ownership education organized 24 MSW events reaching over 675 people participated in these events. In St. Joseph County, MSUE partnered with the St. Joseph County Senior Center to bring Estate Planning to the county during Money Smart Week. Eighteen participants attended the program.

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.



Ensuring Strong Communities, continued

Attracting talent through placemaking

Placemaking, a strategy led by local governments and planning commissions, can be a cornerstone of Michigan's economic recovery. As the state moves to be more competitive in the New Economy, it focuses on attracting and retaining educated people by making communities rich in physical and cultural amenities, and making it easier to forge partnerships between businesses, governments and nonprofits.

The Michigan Placemaking Curriculum is a comprehensive training program covering the latest research on the economics of placemaking, the role of urban form in creating a sense of place, and tools and techniques for engaging the public in placemaking.

The Michigan Placemaking Curriculum was prepared as part of the MIplace Partnership and was written under contract with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) through a grant to the MSU Land Policy Institute.

- » As of July 2014, more than 10,000 people have received the Michigan Placemaking Curriculum—many from St. Joseph County.
- » In 2015, Placemaking Strategy Development workshops were held to take the training to the next level of implementation. 27 workshops across the state offered 3 hours of instruction followed by 3 hours of hands-on exercises for communities to work on local strategies. Seven St. Joseph County community leaders participated in this program.

Best Practices In Good Governance

City of Three Rivers and MSU Extension partnered in October to provide a workshop on Michigan's Open Meetings Act and Parliamentary Procedure for 30 elected and appointed officials. Evaluations from the workshop showed participants gained in their knowledge of how to apply the OMA to their meetings and improved their understanding of effective meeting practices.

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KEEPING BUSINESSES STRONG

MSU Extension and the MSU Product Center help Michigan entrepreneurs develop and commercialize high-value, consumer-responsive products and businesses in the food, agriculture, natural resources and bioeconomy sectors. When you support MSU Extension, you help participants understand the economic, environmental and social benefits of purchasing local and regional foods. You also help young people develop business skills that will help them succeed as adults and help communities capitalize on their ecological, social and cultural assets. This fuels the economy by creating and retaining jobs, and helps ensure a healthy tax base.

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference

Michigan State University Extension believes that fostering entrepreneurship and community support are key strategies for creating jobs and transforming the state's economy and global presence. Michigan State University Extension has been involved in helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses for many years. The CEC program was created in Michigan 9 years ago. It was launched in an effort to educate communities on the various tools and resources available to help them support and grow entrepreneurs in their communities.

To strengthen communities' support of entrepreneurs, MSUE organizes a statewide conference focusing on Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC). The 2015 Conference went border to border by holding events in both of Michigan's Peninsula's-Houghton/Hancock on Oct. 7-8 and Sturgis on Oct 21-22. 195 participants from 79 communities in 38 counties and three states attended the two conferences.

This unique conference was embedded in each community enabling attendees to explore and experience entrepreneurship throughout the event. Participants were energized after listening to the lessons learned by local entrepreneurs who served as keynote speakers. From there, they were able to see the community as they walked to their breakout sessions held in different venues including art centers, tea rooms, retail shops, restaurants, breweries, libraries, banks, florist shops and chamber offices to name just a few. Each event had over twenty different breakout sessions focusing on one of five tracks: Growing Individual Entrepreneurs; Growing Community Strength; Youth as Entrepreneurs; Arts, Ag, Food and Culture; and the Green and Blue Economy.

After absorbing, acquiring and actively learning about the various entrepreneurship tools, resources and programs from the session breakouts, participants enjoyed special networking events sponsored by local businesses.

Participants were energized after listening to the lessons learned by local entrepreneurs who served as keynote speakers.



Keeping Businesses Strong, continued

Each conference concluded with participants sharing successes and innovative programs with 60 ideas in 60 minutes. These unique ideas shared by each community can be seen on the CEC page of the MSU Extension website.

A total of 110 people attended the event in Sturgis and represented the following sectors 21% Education, 18% Government Services, 16% Economic Development, 14% Non-profit Organization, 13% Entrepreneur or Business Owner, 3% Arts and Culture, and 2% Agriculture. 16 registered participants were from St. Joseph County. There were also 25 or more other Sturgis business owners and volunteers who assisted with the event.

Results from evaluations collected on-site and through an on-line survey for both conferences revealed that:

- » 96% increased knowledge of business concepts, tools, and resources to build entrepreneurship in my community.
- » 92% of participants increased knowledge of youth entrepreneurship resources and programs.
- » 95% increased knowledge of the value of agriculture, arts or cultural development as a useful economic development strategy
- » 91% of participants increased knowledge of the value of tourism and/or the sustainable use of our natural resources as a useful economic development strategy
- » 87% of participants acquired practical skills/strategies they can use to help create a more entrepreneurial community.
- » 82% of the participants plan to create/expand at least one community based entrepreneurial activities and initiatives presented at the conference in the next year.

Some of the participant's community based entrepreneurial plans from the Sturgis conference include:

- » Young adult chamber of commerce through existing chamber of commerce or create a group at the high school level;
- » a crowd funding program to raise money for a park with statewide appeal to increase tourism in my community;
- » Look into renewable energy upgrades/financing availability;
- » Will explore several of the "sixty ideas in 60 minutes" session with our main street

Some feedback from the Sturgis CEC Conference:

"I really liked this conference. I thought that it was planned out well. It's nice to hear what other towns in Michigan are doing and what they struggle with and what they are doing well. It puts things into perspective and it encourages growth."

"This is the 5th one of these events I have attended, and it just seems to get better every year. I already can't wait for next year!!"

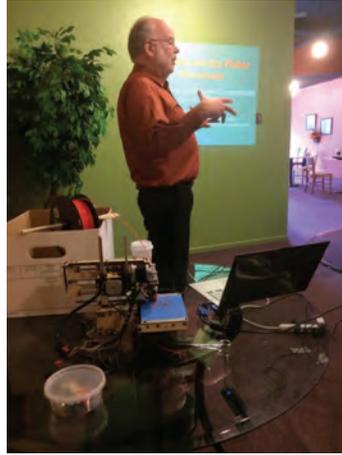
"Really liked having time to check out the downtown stores and the networking opportunities."



Participants were energized after listening to the lessons learned by local entrepreneurs who served as keynote speakers.

Keeping Businesses Strong, continued

\$10,000 in sponsorship support was donated for the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference held in Sturgis in October



committee.;

» Will also explore community based investment as a DDA effort.

Sponsorship support is vital to the continued success of the CEC Conference. Year over year the program has steadily realized increased support by sponsors, both locally and statewide in nature. In 2015, a total of \$10,000 in sponsorship support was graciously provided by the following for the Sturgis Conference:

MSU Product Center, Generation E Institute, Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce, St. Clair County EDA, City of Sturgis, Generate Sturgis, Trine University School of Professional Studies-Centreville Education Center, Southwest Michigan First, Wightman & Associates, Inc., Glen Oaks Community College, Michigan Gas Utilities.

The site for the 2016 CEC Conference will be Port Huron, Michigan.

Helping farmers make business decisions

The 2014 farm bill contained new farm programs that required complex decisions by farmers and landlords in late 2014 and early 2015. In early 2015, 31 St. Joseph County producers took part in MSU Extension Farm Bill programs designed to provide producers and landlords with education, resources and tools to help them be aware of actions that needed to be taken to prepare for making important production and business decisions.

One on one tax consultation, farm succession planning and start-up or expansion plans take expertise and time on the part of highly trained MSU Extension Educators. Farm financial analysis meetings provide a farm analysis to make better management decisions over the long term by looking at cost analysis and trends. Extension educators meet with farm business owners and provide seminars to small groups. 26 St. Joseph County agricultural enterprises received consultation and guidance in farm business management and tax strategies in 2015.



The CEC is a unique conference as it is embedded in each community enabling attendees to explore and experience entrepreneurship throughout the event.



KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY

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.

Working to improve social and emotional health

Many negative factors affect social and emotional health, including ongoing and toxic stress that may result from situations including abusive relationships, bias, damaging coping behaviors and relationship violence. Across the lifespan, people faced with these situations and settings are at risk for a wide range of physical, psychological, social, emotional, cognitive, financial and spiritual health challenges. The United States spends an estimated \$425 billion in direct and indirect costs of violence each year.

RELAX: Alternatives to Anger is designed to actively engage adult learners to increase knowledge and skills around anger management and give them constructive ways to deal with anger. Consistently, more than half of the program participants leave RELAX with improved knowledge or new skills designed to promote social and emotional well-being with others in their lives and immediate social environments.

- » 54% increased effort to talk things through until a solution is reached.
- » 56% increased effort in working hard to be calm and talk through issues.
- » 56% increased effort that if they do get upset, they try to end conflicts on a positive note.
- » In 2015, 10 adults completed a RELAX series offered in partnership with Centro Vida in Sturgis whose staff provided Spanish translation for MSUE Educator Suzanne Pish. Upon completion of the initial series, the Centro Vida requested 3 more sessions, reaching an additional 15 adults.
- » One foster grandparent from the county attended a RELAX series in Berrien County.
- » 20 St. Joseph County youth completed a RELAX series offered at the Calhoun County Juvenile home and the Branch Area Community Center.

Encouraging 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.



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.

Keeping People Healthy, continued

Programs focus on helping participants gain the skills needed to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods; increase their physical activity; breastfeed their babies and stretch their food dollars.

Fighting obesity through education

Michigan has the 11th highest adult obesity rate in the United States, according to the CDC. More than 30 percent of adults are obese, and an additional 35 percent are considered overweight. Nearly 80 percent of both adults and youth do not consume adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables.

MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Topic areas include nutrition, physical activity, food safety and food resource management. Programs focus on helping participants gain the skills needed to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods; increase their physical activity; breastfeed their babies and stretch their food dollars.

MSU Extension reached more than 87,000 adults and young people across the state through programming. Through the program outreach:

- » More than one-third of youth decreased their intake of sugary drinks.
- » Nearly one-third of youth increased their level of physical activity.
- » Nearly half of adults increased their daily vegetable and fruit consumption.
- » More than two-thirds of adults increased time spent being physically active, including three-quarters of older adults.
- » More than two-thirds of adults reported improved ability to make their food dollars go further.

Teaching valuable healthy-eating skills

In 2011, 17.5 percent of people in Michigan were considered to be living below the poverty level. More than 1.7 million Michigan residents receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

MSU Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs teach adults how to make the most of their food dollars, by developing skills such as menu planning, understanding recipes and keeping food safe. MSU Extension nutrition education programs reached 86,701 low-income participants from 82 of Michigan's 83 counties in the in the 2014-2015 fiscal year and upon completion

- » 94% of the adult participants completing a series had a positive change in dietary quality.
- » 74% of adults showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices such as

Through the National Diabetes Prevention Program, MSU Extension helps participants to learn ways to change their lifestyles and improve their health.



Keeping People Healthy, continued

planning meals, making healthy food choices, preparing foods without salt, reading labels and having children eat breakfast.

- » 74% of adult participants showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices such as planning meals, comparing prices, not running out of food and using grocery lists.
- » 73% of teachers in grades K-2 reported that students participating in SNAP-ED programs increase fruit consumption.
- » 85% of seniors (older adults) participating in SNAP-ED programs reporting maintaining or increasing their vegetable consumption.

St. Joseph County SNAP-Ed Statistics for the 2015:

- » Total number of adults completing a nutrition education course series (at least 4 hours of training) = 83 (equates to 377 contacts)
- » Adults in one time presentations = 407 individuals
- » Total Youth in Series (at least 4 hours of nutrition education training) = 298
- » Youth in one time presentation = 656

Helping Michiganders prevent diabetes

Michigan ranks 15th in the nation for prevalence of diabetes, with an estimated 10 percent of Michigan adults aged 18 and older had been diagnosed with diabetes – about 758,300 people. An additional 250,200 Michigan adults are estimated to have diabetes but are currently undiagnosed. Almost 10% of St. Joseph County residents have diabetes and just under 20% are at risk of developing it. Through the National Diabetes Prevention Program, MSU Extension helps participants to learn ways to change their lifestyles and improve their health. A trained lifestyle coach leads 16 core group sessions weekly. Participants learn how to make modest lifestyle changes. Groups then meet monthly for six post-core sessions. The program provides participants with both a lifestyle coach and a valuable support system. A six week program called PATH (Personal Action Toward Health) and Dining with Diabetes classes have been held in the county:

- » Programs offered with Community Mental Health and St. Joseph County served 7 county residents. Continued networking with the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission to promote MSUE disease prevention and nutrition programs will result in additional classes for those living with diabetes and those wanting to prevent it.

The parent of two daughters attending Head Start shared that the girls would come home from school and report to her what they learned in nutrition class. They told her what was and wasn't a healthy snack. They would say "mom, that has too much sugar" and would tell her that their meals should have all 5 food groups in them. She also shared that as a result of Linda Kline's classes their family is eating healthier and have added more fruits and vegetables to their diet.



Nutrition Education programs are held in partnership with Community Health Agency WIC, Child Care Resources, Community Mental Health, Head Start, Sturgis Senior Center & St. Joseph County Public Schools

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR NATURAL ASSETS

Better land stewardship benefits communities by protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resource assets.

When you support MSU Extension's natural resources education programs, participants learn about income-generating opportunities, ecological principles, natural resource issues and the role of natural resource professionals and explore public policy issues related to environmental stewardship. Our programs can lead to increased income for families that retain their natural resource assets, help landowners become better stewards of their land, and protect land management opportunities for future generations.

Helping Michigan residents become better stewards of our inland lakes

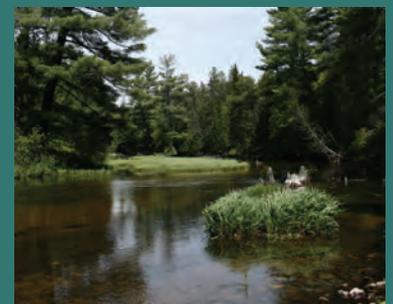
Michigan is blessed with more than 11,000 inland lakes, each providing unique recreational, scenic and environmental benefits. These lakes are complex ecosystems, often negatively impacted by both the people that live near them as well as the water that drains into them. Frequently, local communities struggle to protect and manage inland lakes in a way that incorporates the best available knowledge and resources. In response, MSUE developed "Introduction to Lakes," a six-week online course designed for citizens and professionals alike. Topics included lake ecology, lakes and their watershed shorelines, Michigan water law, aquatic plant management and citizen involvement in lake stewardship.

The course, taught on a week-by-week basis, incorporated live chat sessions with instructors, outside experts and each other. After a couple years in development, the inaugural course took place in October, 2015. It replaced a resource intensive face to face program that reached only a few communities. Ninety-seven people enrolled in the course from 39 counties (2 from St Joseph); 88 earned a completion certificate. Two-thirds were lakefront property owners while others were government officials, consultants, fisheries biologists, students, teachers, pesticide applicators, state agency staff.

Participants indicated multiple reasons for taking the course such as wanting to bring scientific rigor to the governance decisions made about lakes, learn about lake management and regulation; to understand the environmental and ecological issues within lakes. Pre and post course evaluations revealed that:

- » Before, 33% had educated neighbors and lake community members about lake stewardship. After, 69 % planned to do this as a result of what they learned.

Two St Joseph Homeowners participated in a live statewide webinar focused on septic system use and maintenance in August, 2015. Over 80% of participants indicated they planned to make changes based on what they learned to improve the health of their systems.



Making the Most of Our Natural Assets, continued

Installed at elementary... Page 7

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COMMERCIAL-NEWS

Shoreline program offers ideas for property owners

By Rick Cordes
Staff Writer

FABIUS TOWNSHIP — With natural lakeside shorelines disappearing at an accelerating rate, concerns about the impact on lake and shoreside ecology spurred the Fabius Township Environmental and Wetlands Protection Advisory Committee to provide an educational program to area residents interested in the topic.

More than 50 people, primarily citizens, gathered at the Fabius Township Hall Saturday morning to hear six presentations that covered a wide range of issues related to shorelines.

High levels of development along Michigan's lakes are eliminating natural habitats, and there are water quality consequences, Jane Herbert, Michigan State University water resource educator told the gathering.

The number one issue along lakes, known as "shoreline armoring," meaning the construction of seawalls, is the culprit, Herbert stated.

Those erect concrete structures are barriers that unnecessarily separate the lake from its surroundings, segregating lake creatures and shoreline dwellers from their natural habitats and altering wave patterns in a very destructive manner, Herbert said.

"We have to change the usual mentality," Herbert emphasized.

Without the interaction between lake and shore, water quality deteriorates, naturally occurring weeds and macroalgal plants are eliminated, and water critters including fish, turtles and crustaceans all suffer.

"We are turning these lakes into reservoirs," Herbert told the audience.

MSU SHORELINE, page 3



Commercial-Educ/Rick Cordes

More than 50 people gathered at the Fabius Township Hall on June 29 to hear presentations from MSUE on issues related to shorelines and lake quality.

- » Before, 43% had volunteered time to a lake association, local conservation district, watershed council or other lake-related organization. After, 68% planned to engage in this stewardship practice in the future.
- » Before, 33% had participated in a lake or stream water quality monitoring effort. After, 54% plan to take this stewardship action.
- » Before, 14% had installed a natural shoreline buffer strip along the water's edge. After, 41% had plans to conduct this lake stewardship practice.

SHORELINE

Continued from page 1

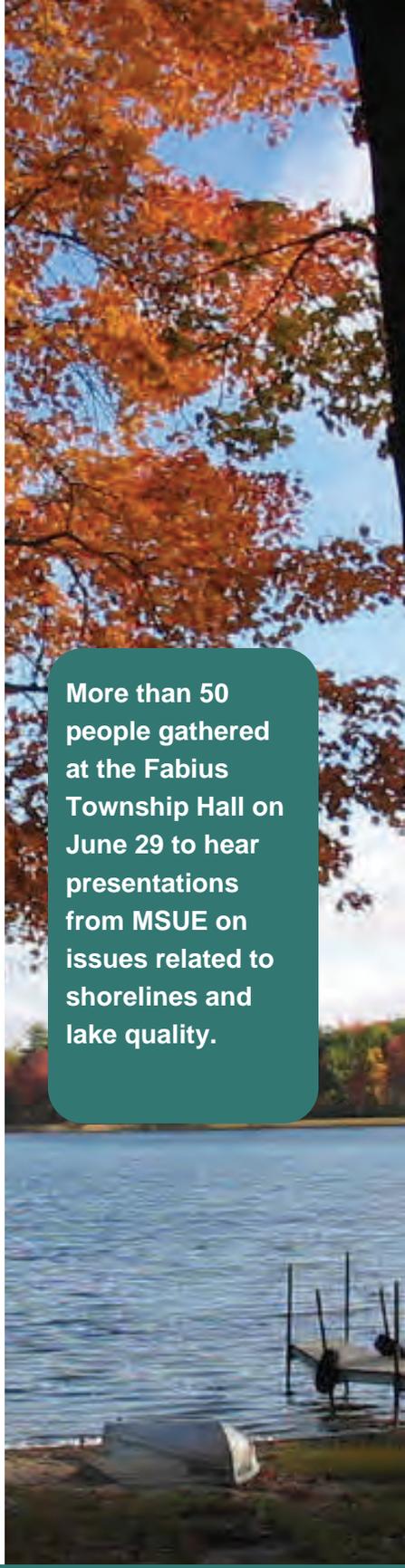
There are alternatives to seawalls and additional presenters gave in depth information that lakeside dwellers can incorporate into their lives along area lakes.

In addition, the rules and regulations that govern lakeside activities were presented by Derek Haroldson of the Michigan DNR.

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Introduction to Lakes was designed to provide a convenient way for Michigan citizens to obtain information on inland lake ecosystems and management practices to keep inland lakes healthy.



SUPPORTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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

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.

Webinars Provide Farmers with On-demand Learning

The Integrated Pest Management Academy Online Webinar Series is an on-demand, online webinar series that allows participants to begin to understand IPM, the tenants on which the concept is based and available resources. Increasing the use of IPM reduces the use of unnecessary pesticides on the farm. The series covers basic entomology, plant pathology, soil science, pesticides and scouting. With more MSU Educators now providing content the program has grown from 8 to 17 webinars from which to choose. Specific commodity classes such as Chestnut IPM, Fruit crops, Hop IPM, Vegetables, Nursery Crops are offered as well as special topics such as Growing Bee-Friendly Plants. In 2015, 22 participants were from St. Joseph County

- » Viewers are able to request up to five recertification credits toward their pesticide applicators license in the State of Michigan. Between 8/23/14 and 10/2/15, there were 1,968 webinar sessions viewed and represented at least 439 unique visitors.
- » 30% identified as growers, .3% as policy makers, 9% as crop consultants, 33% as landscapers, 11% as agriculture educators, 2% pesticide distributors, 7% students, 23% recreational gardeners and 6% were members of the general public.
- » Thirty-seven viewers applied for Michigan pesticide recertification credits (140 commercial applicator credits and 63 private applicator credits).
- » 82% of respondents said they intended to increase the adoption of IPM strategies and tools based on the information presented in the webinar.

Increasing the use of IPM reduces the use of unnecessary pesticides on the farm.



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Field Crops Webinar Series

In order to share key 2015 field crop production points to all parts of Michigan, MSUE Educators offered six, weekly one-hour webinars as part of the Field Crops Webinar Series. This program was designed to compliment traditional winter face to face meetings in a condensed distance learning format. In its third year, the online participation has increased to 132 participants from 44 counties (2 from St. Joseph County), 7 states and Ontario for a total of 319 participant viewings.

Seven MSUE educators and 3 campus specialists brought their expertise to the series which covered topics such as malting barley and hops production, integrated management of white mold, nitrogen management in corn and wheat, dry bean insect and disease Management, weed management challenges, corn stover harvest.

Respondents reported that collectively they manage or directly impact approximately 104,067 acres of corn, 111,441 acres of soybeans and 38,277 acres of wheat.

New Farmer Webinar Series

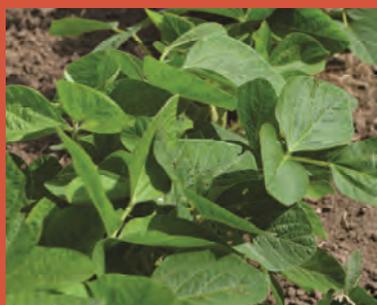
Michigan citizens interested in engaging in new agricultural enterprises sometimes lack knowledge, experience and technical support to get started. Extension educators and specialists receive numerous contacts from such people seeking basic, start-up information. Providing basic, practical information to people interested in, or already engaging in, new farm enterprises helps these small businesses develop sound production and marketing plans.

New farm businesses provide jobs, income and increased economic and social stability, and increased food security to rural and other communities. The Michigan State University Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series began in 2012 with three webinars and has grown to offering a catalogue of 20.

In 2014, 311 people registered for a total of 455 webinar views; In 2015, the series included twenty webinars offered with 198 people from fifty-four Michigan counties (including St. Joseph) registered for 1,845 webinar views.

Participants included 60% current growers, 37% future growers, 3% consultants. Acreage of farms reported is 0 to 650 acres. Preliminary results of evaluations reveal that 97% found the series valuable and plan to use resources they learned about during the series 11% report job creation because of the series.

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.



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Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Soybean Management and Research Technology

Soybean yield increases have not kept pace with those of corn, wheat and sugar beets. On average, soybean producers are losing 1 to 2 bushels per acre due to harvest losses. Soybean producers that irrigate their beans are not satisfied with their irrigated soybean yields. In some cases, dryland yields are higher than irrigated yields. On-farm research and education may help soybean producers overcome these challenges. Each year Several SMaRT programs are held across the state. Five St. Joseph County producers attended in 2015. Results from the programs revealed:

98% of the respondents gained new knowledge by participating in the program.

83% said that they utilized the information they learned at the programs on their farms.

Twenty three (23) producers indicated that they *actually* earned additional money in 2014 by implementing the new information they learned at the programs.

The average amount of additional income realized by implementing the new information was \$13.40 per acre. Because the new information was implemented on 5,338 acres, the financial impact of the programs was \$71,529 in 2014 alone.

Other programs designed for Soybean producers in St. Joseph County included a multi-state (Indiana and Michigan) program focused on issues related to irrigated soybeans held in March 2015. Lyndon Kelley unveiled an updated Irrigation scheduling spreadsheet - an important cost saving tool used by producers. 270 people were in attendance—22 from St. Joseph County.

The Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus

PQA is a program educational tool to help pork producers learn good production practices when raising pigs. The PQA Plus program highlights areas of animal care and well-being and focuses on teaching owners and employees how to raise a safe, healthy and wholesome product for the consumer. Certification in this program is a requirement for numerous market chains and pork processors. In order to maintain market access, producers need to have a current certification in place. Numerous programs were offered to producers in Cass, Berrien and St. Joseph Counties over the past year. 189,750 pigs were marketed in this tri-county area under producers that were certified by Beth Ferry in the last year. With market pigs averaging \$150 per head at market time this equates to \$28,462,500.00 dollars of value, these pigs had market access because of PQA Plus certification given by MSU Extension.

2842 MSU Extension Master Gardeners from 75 counties completed the annual recertification requirement of 15 volunteer hours in their community and 5 education hours in horticulture in 2015. St. Joseph County has 32 active Master Gardeners who dedicated at least 480 volunteers to service in St. Joseph County.

PQA is a program educational tool to help pork producers learn good production practices when raising pigs



Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Annual Events Continue to Provide Value Opportunities to St. Joseph County Producers

- » A field day held in Cooperation with the Van Buren County Conservation District was held at the Larry Walton Farm in October 2015. The event was attended by 71 participants (19 from St. Joseph County) including farmers, MSU specialists, MSUE Educators, NRCS and Conservation District personnel and Agri-business representatives. This event was supported by members of the Field Crops Workgroup and contributed to work group activities to expand cover crop use and improve soil health. Participants were brought by bus from around the state. The field day was funded through a \$5,000 donation from the Monsanto Corporation.
- » Soil Health and Cover Crops was the topic presented at the 2015 Pioneer Seed Corn Growers meeting in April. Growers for the Constantine, MI plant were present from St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, Branch and Van Buren Counties in Michigan. This event supported the activity of increasing cover crop adoption and improving soil health. 125 growers were in attendance—75 from St. Joseph County.

Energy Audits Reduce Costs

MSU studies have shown, on average, a 46% reduction in energy expenses when energy audit-recommended energy conservation practices have been implemented. Power companies and the Federal government are targeting farmers in an unprecedented way to entice them to implement energy conservation practices. Utilities are offering substantial rebates and the Federal government has grants and low interest loans to implement recommended energy conservation practices. An energy audit is the gateway for farmers to access rebates, grants and loans to implement audit-recommended energy conservation practices.

Michigan State University Extension, Consumers Energy, and DTE Energy sponsored a series of workshops in 2015 designed to help row crop, poultry, swine, livestock and dairy farmers learn how to use an energy audit to develop an energy management strategy that reduces farm energy expenses and leverages rebates and grants.

After the program, 100% of the farmers said they had a better understanding of the need for an energy audit as a result of attending this program. Six months after the program seven farms are actively pursuing completing an audit including **one farm manager** from St. Joseph County who represents one of the largest potato farms in the Midwest, farming over 8,000 acres across the country.



Annual educational events such as Ag Action held in Kalamazoo each year provide farmers with networking opportunities and a chance to get the latest pest and risk management strategies, results from applied research, post season analysis and regulatory updates provided by MSU Extension.



MSU Educators from around the state have provided education and consulting to growers of grass feed beef, Christmas trees and vegetables among other crops grown in St. Joseph County.

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