

PORTAGE COUNTY UW-EXTENSION

January 2019 Update

A report generated for the Portage County Ag & Extension Committee, highlighting programs or initiatives engaged in or executed by UW-Extension Colleagues

AGRICULTURE EXTENSION EDUCATOR – KEN SCHROEDER

- Organized and hosted the 3rd annual December field day and tours for the Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed project. Hosted about 125 farmers, interested public, and agricultural students. We sponsored 40 Auburndale, 12 Lincoln, and 12 MSTC students to attend our meeting this year to bring them into the discussion on conservation agriculture and what is happening in the Mill Creek watershed. The day included reports from Auburndale High School students on their ongoing Mill Creek water testing project, Petenwell Castle Rock Stewards, and an update on 2018 Farmers of Mill Creek project accomplishments. We also toured several area farm fields to see rye inter-seeded this fall into growing soybeans and cover crops inter-seeded into 14-inch-tall corn silage in June.
- You are all invited to the Farmers for Tomorrow Watershed Council second annual winter meeting February 5th at the Jensen Center in Amherst from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Featured speaker will be Steve Groff, a veteran cover cropper from Pennsylvania. We will also have a report on the 2018 alfalfa inter-seeding into corn silage project on the Edelburg farm, 2018 conservation accomplishments, and 2019 opportunities.
- Working on the final prep for the February 5-7 Grower Education Potato Conference to be held at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn.
- Organizing the March 6th Central Wisconsin Processing Crops Conference to be held at the UW Hancock Agricultural Research Station.

FOODWISE COORDINATOR – KELLY HAMMOND

- Kelly Hammond started January 1st, as the new FoodWise Coordinator for Portage and Wood Counties.
- Offered a 3-part nutrition series to senior adults at Cedar Rails Apartments in Marshfield, and also at St. Vincent de Paul Stevens Point. Preparing for FMLA in January. (Mary Higley)
- Finished up 2 Strong Bodies classes (Plover and YMCA), with Plover site continuing with Sherry Daniels as leader of 26 participants. Finished up 6th grade nutrition lessons at McKinley School. (Penny Schmitt)

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EDUCATOR – CONNIE CREIGHTON

- 4-H Club Officer Training: Fourteen 2019 Club Officers and five teens from the Portage County 4-H Teen Leader's Board helped plan, organize, and/or teach the December training.

Of the thirteen youth who completed the evaluation only two had been an officer before. When the officers were asked to state something they learned, participants replied: How to do an amendment” (2); “Parliamentary procedure” (2); “Structure of a meeting”; “Responsibilities of officers” (5); “That there are people in other clubs that can be very courteous & nice”; *It is I move that not I make a motion*”; “How to write a check”.

When asked will you do something differently in your 4-H Club because of this training? participants replied: “Greet people better” (3); “I used to just listen to the meetings, but now I know to take notes”; “Welcoming games” (4); “Speak up”.

Youth who participated in the class increased their knowledge about parliamentary procedure, learned about how to run an effective meeting, and how putting fun into meetings enhances the members’ experience and aids in providing a welcoming environment. Teen leaders also facilitated small group discussion sessions with club officers concentrating on their individual officer responsibilities. Before the training four incoming teen officers felt comfortable and very comfortable with their club officer duties after the training nine youth felt comfortable and very comfortable with their duties. The leadership skills youth gain when they assume an officer role in their club are a valuable part of positive youth development.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EDUCATOR – NATHAN SANDWICK

- Contributed to a collection of information and studies on the topic of affordable housing as part of a team collaborating to address corresponding research and educational needs. This informs county-based work on calls to action issued in the 2017 LIFE Report for Portage County, and related work with municipal leaders.
- Facilitated an initial public dialogue about hopes for community revitalization with people in Junction City and investigated some applicable resources and approaches.
- Accessed and gained familiarity with useful models and tools for community-based scenario planning, renovation and redevelopment, and promoting energy efficiency in buildings.

FAMILY LIVING EDUCATOR – SHERRY DANIELS

- Completed or have scheduled all three StrongBodies locations pre/post-tests. Set up transition to take over as the trainer of the Plover location, from Penny, in January. I will also be leading the Junction City class in January and February.
- In meetings this month with the other Area 7 Family Living Educators we discussed ways we could share the work we do with other counties. This has led to teaching a Raising a Thinking Child course in Portage County, via technology, starting in April. This was done in Wood County the last quarter of 2018 and will start in Clark County in February.

AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR – JASON HAUSLER

- Finalized county contracts in all of Area 7! With contracts being approved, Area 7 will be adding two new positions in 2019. Thank you for the continued support
- Began recruiting for positions in Clark, Wood and Marathon County. These positions include a part time dairy educator, a split community development position in Marathon (shared with Lincoln County) and a part time horticulture educator in Wood County.
- Met with Chair Al Haga to discuss UW-Extension transition to UW-Madison and provided a status update on timelines

- Visited with UW-Stevens Point Director of Regional Outreach and Engagement - Jenny Resch - regarding opportunities to collaborate moving forward. Very positive conversation and some efforts have already been undertaken by current staff.