



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

PORTAGE COUNTY UW-EXTENSION

February 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

- John Eron and I gave a presentation on Wild Parsnip a dangerous invasive weed: identification and management at the Wisconsin County Highway Association 2019 Winter Road Show. Approximately 150 county highway commissioners and highway committee members were present. Great discussion and Q&A followed. Provided resources such as our 4 x 6 Wild Parsnip identification truck card and link to our Portage County Extension Wild Parsnip resources webpage <https://portage.extension.wisc.edu/> under the Agriculture dropdown menu.
- Just wrapped up the annual UW-Extension /Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association Grower Education Conference February 5-7. Growers attending the conference were given the opportunity to get a head start on the 2019 growing season with expert market outlooks, research reports, information on new technologies and agribusiness advice. The conference is a great place for growers to get the advice, tips and insights that will give them the edge they need in a tough business. 370 growers, crop consultants, and agribusiness professionals were in attendance. I assist with planning, facilitation, and serve as moderator for several sessions.
- The Farmers for Tomorrow River Watershed council held their second successful winter kickoff meeting. Approximately 45 farmers, agribusiness professionals, and interested general public attended. I presented on our 2018 on-farm research trials looking at nitrogen rates on corn planted into green winter rye and a UW-Madison project on inter-seeding alfalfa into corn silage. We introduced the conservation incentives available to farmers in the Watershed from the 2019 DATCP producer-led watershed protection grant. Additionally, they heard from a longtime cover cropper from Pennsylvania.

FOODWISE COORDINATOR – KELLY HAMMOND

- Portage/Wood County FoodWise all-team meeting January 14th.
- Meet with local partners including Portage County CAN Coalition (PCCAN) and Hunger and Poverty Prevention Partnership (HPPP) to build network and plan for 2019.
- Portage County UW-Extension All-Staff retreat January 23rd.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirement.

- Met with FoodWise Coordinator Mentor Christi Gabriliska to help with onboarding.
- Collaborated with Penny Schmitt and Sherry Daniels to write a news release and organize promotion around Healthy Bodies™ program expansion and upcoming leadership training.
- General onboarding, communication with new partners, research on past programming and planning for fiscal year 2019
- Teaching Events/Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) work by Penny Schmitt include:
 - Stevens Point Boys and Girls Club *Snack and Learn* parenting and kids cooking class
 - Promotion and planning for upcoming quarter 2 teaching events
 - Attended Healthy People Portage County - Healthy Weight Action Team planning meeting

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EDUCATOR – CONNIE CREIGHTON

- Follow-up to 2018 State 4-H dog show in Portage County where 33 counties had dog project 4-H youth participating in the educational event. Portage County hosted the 2018 State 4-H Dog Show. Two 4-H Dog Leaders, Paula Kropidlowski and Nadene Seymour, planned, organized, and implemented a successful 4-H state dog show event. There were over 250 participants representing 33 counties and 27 dog breeds including mixed breeds. There were 4 obedience rings and 1 rally ring setup Friday for the 25 obedience classes and 9 rally classes. On Saturday evening, after the state 4-H dog agility show in Amherst, they held the dog quiz bowl which consisted of 21 teams, 5 members per team, totaling about 105 youth. On Sunday 3 rings were left for 10 showmanship classes. Most of these classes had between 10-15 participants. I observed 4-H members, leaders, volunteers, and parents, who participated in the four day event, strengthen and develop friendships, leadership, and team building skills with 4-H'ers around the state.
- 4-H leader mandated charter training and Extension & Review meeting. Ten leaders representing 4-H Clubs and county level committees attended the Annual 4-H Leader Training and the Expansion & Review meeting. The topic of the training was **All Together, Not All the Same** about diversity and cultural differences. I also included my annual Expansion & Review committee meeting at the same time as the topics complemented each other. Nine participants completed the evaluation. 100% of the participants reported that "I understand how issues of culture and inclusion play out in 4-H." Before the training only 55% agreed that they understood this. 78% after attending the training Strongly Agreed that they "are prepared to create a welcoming environment for diverse youth in 4-H," versus 22% Strongly Agreeing with this before the training. 88% of participants reported that they will use the resources referenced in the training to strengthen their 4-H setting. When asked, what if anything, about today's training did you find particularly interesting or useful? Responses included the following: "Not making assumptions based on what is seen;" "Remember to be open minded & include everyone no matter what;" "Diverse group of people have the same common goals;" "Everyone can improve on how to approach diversity;" "The scenarios – like not being able to afford to go to a camp;" "I appreciate the 4-H inclusiveness."
- In January and February due to inclement weather several programs and meeting were canceled and rescheduled. Winter Teen Leadership Camp is rescheduled to the weekend of February 9th. We are currently hosting a series of meetings to update our fairbook – this is done every four years. The Market Animal Committee just finished with project enrollment and is starting their yearly series of educational meeting and the dog project leaders are starting their youth project meetings/trainings in February.

Community Development Educator – Nathan Sandwick

- Started to work on Portage County's current SolSmart certification effort. Gained some familiarity with the rating system and some of the suggested planning, zoning and permitting provisions that may encourage investment; and agreed to serve as the county's point-of-contact for our SolSmart advisor at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association.
- Assembled educational program materials to support a local community placemaking initiative, and made preparations to also help lead a UW-Extension "Foundations of Community Placemaking" in-service at the end of February.
- Continuing to support discussions about community-based efforts to improve local financial stability and affordability of housing as part of the Community Change Project currently underway to address these and other calls to action from the 2017 LIFE Report for Portage County issued by United Way.

FAMILY LIVING EDUCATOR – SHERRY DANIELS

- It was an extremely busy month for Financial Wellness of Portage County. We had eight client referrals and I trained two new female FWPC coaches. We have had a need for female coaches because female clients have been saying they would prefer to talk to a female financial coach.
- I spent two afternoons doing financial training for Drug Court clients. The first session I trained on budgeting and ways to save and track their money. The second session I had them pull their credit reports and we talked about the importance of having good credit and scores. We also talked about how to repair credit.
- This month I have been leading the StrongBodies classes in Plover and Junction City. That involves teaching two classes every Tuesday and Thursday. Working with Penny and Kelly we created a news release on the StrongBodies Program. The release explains the health benefits, location of classes, the new class starting at the Jensen Center in April, and the need for volunteer trainers to attend the "Train the Trainer" class on February 28, which will be held in Stevens Point.

AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR – JASON HAUSLER

- January has brought about some exciting changes with our transition to UW-Madison. As you can see on the top of this document, we have a new logo to help us distinguish our Division within UW-Madison. Along with our new logo, all of our websites have transitioned to reflect our new "Red" color scheme.
- I have been working with counties in Area 7 to add new staff, whose expertise can be leveraged by Portage County. Wood County has hired a new Horticulture Program Coordinator and Marathon County has hired a new Community Development Educator.
- Participated in a staff retreat on January 23rd, which focused on building internal office relationships (which were not bad of course). The staff had fun painting bowls to donate to the Empty Bowls initiative and going out to lunch and participating in some staff development games. A great time was had by all and we look forward to continuing to build our team dynamics in 2019.