



Iron County 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



3 Extension professionals based in the county, 50+ providing educational opportunities



\$1,102,285 total economic impact in Iron County



311 youth involved in 4-H, early childhood or after school enrichment



\$15,543 spending with local business



110 alumni (bachelor and graduate degree)



MSU disbursed \$250,983 in financial aid to county students

100+

MSU Extension serving Iron County over 100 years

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Once again I am delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Iron County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses, and communities.



MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational services to County residents. Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health, and much more. Our staff live and work alongside County residents, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

Again this year, we've welcomed Iron County residents into our online community: we've offered online educational courses, answered questions on topics ranging from gardening to food safety, raised program awareness through social media, and provided a library of research-based resources they've browsed on our website.

Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Iron County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you'll be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.

Paul Putnam, District Director



IRON COUNTY

Additional MSU Extension Reach

- Michigan State University Extension staff have been actively serving the residents of Iron County.
- Services from across all reaches of Extension are accessible because of the Gold Standard commitment Iron County has made with Michigan State University Extension.
- Iron County residents are able to access services in the areas of Agriculture & Agribusiness; Children and Youth; Community, Food and Environment; and Health and Nutrition.

195

Iron County Residents Served

66

of Programs Iron County Residents Attended



IRON COUNTY

MSU Extension Reach Breakdown

66

Programs Iron County Residents
Attended

92

Agriculture &
Agribusiness
Programs

46

Community, Food &
Environment
Programs

7

Children &
Youth
Programs

50

Health &
Nutrition
Programs

Program Highlights

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS TRAINING

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) members are regularly confronted with difficult decisions regarding the physical development of the community. Faced with ordinance interpretation, appeals of previous decisions, and requests for variances, information on which to base decisions can seem vague, pressures can be great, and the threat of lawsuits can weigh heavily. Fortunately, the job of the ZBA member can be made easier when roles and responsibilities are known, best practices are used, and information is complete.

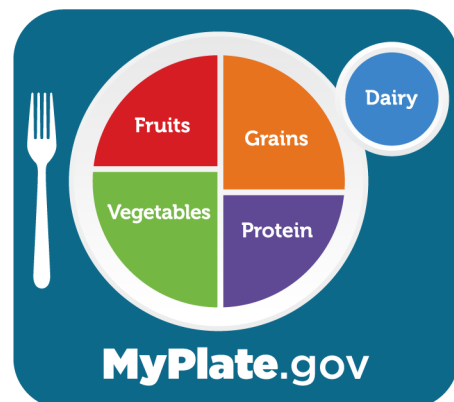
Experience helps, but training is paramount for a community to manage risk associated with ZBA decisions. The MSU Extension Zoning Board of Appeals training covers many aspects of ZBA administration, including:

- ZBA Responsibilities and Composition
- Rules of Procedure and Effective Decisions
- Ordinance Interpretation
- Appeals of Administrative Decisions
- Variance Decisions, and Decisions related to Nonconformities.

The training is tailored for ZBA members and staff responsible for administering the zoning ordinance.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Jessica Coron, Community Nutrition Instructor, from Dickinson County, was able to provide nutrition education lessons to students at Forest Park Elementary School in grades 1, 3 and 5.



Program Highlights

CONSUMER HORTICULTURE

Rebecca Krans, Consumer Horticulture Educator, held a seed starting activity in addition to having a Smart Gardening information booth at the West Iron District Library in Iron River. This event was held March 10 and reached 76 participants.

An Extension Master Gardener class was offered virtually. Two Iron County residents along with 22 other Upper Peninsula and downstate residents participated. This fourteen-week volunteer training course was held September 3 through December 10 on Thursday evenings from 4:30 – 9 p.m. Each week featured a different horticultural related topic with expert instructors. Topics included: plant and soil science, integrated pest management, water quality, annuals and perennials, lawns, woody ornamentals, vegetables, small and tree fruit, household pests, indoor plants, diagnostics, composting, and volunteer orientation. Participants learned gardening practices that are research-based and environmentally sound. The virtual class format consists of various interactive learning components along with the online instruction. These consists of: readings, quizzes, videos, online discussions, demonstrations, and group work interaction using online breakout rooms. Optional virtual fieldtrips were also offered. These included tours of The North Farm/Upper Peninsula Research & Extension Center, Upper Peninsula Forestry Innovation Center, Northern Sun Winery, Marquette Conservation District, and others.

After completion of this class (the program's educational component), participants (trainees) are now working on completing the 40-hour volunteer component to gain Extension Master Gardener certification. This consists of the trainee providing gardening education to others in a non-profit environment. In a typical year, Upper Peninsula Extension Master Gardeners will volunteer over 3,000 hours educating over 7,000 people about proper gardening techniques. The economic value of these volunteers' contributions amount to more than \$84,600 annually. For more information on this program, go to: https://www.canr.msu.edu/master_gardener_volunteer_program/.

Another UP virtual Extension Master Gardener class is now open for registration. Check it out at: https://www.canr.msu.edu/master_gardener_volunteer_program/join-us/upcoming-extension-master-gardener-trainings



Program Highlights

OPERATION: HUGS

Many older adults in the Iron County area who live in our assisted living and nursing home facilities were confined due to Covid-19. Their families and other visitors were unable to visit. These adults felt the dread of isolation and there wasn't much that anyone could do. This isolation was also felt by many of our youth who couldn't visit their grandparents or relatives. OPERATION: HUGS could help both young and old—even if just a little bit.

What is OPERATION: HUGS? This program was sponsored by Iron County 4-H to involve youth in their individual school districts, and the Home Schooled children via materials at our two libraries. All of the necessary monthly supplies were provided by the Iron County 4-H program. Both the Crystal Falls Library and the West Iron County Library were drop-off and pick-up location for Home Schoolers and any adults or organizations within Iron County that wanted to participate. Each library had a drop-off and pick-up schedule.

Deb Divoky was able to deliver 154 notes and/or pieces of artwork to the Iron County Medical Center, Victorian Heights, and the Iron River Care Center. Both youth and older adults receiving these notes had a very emotional and meaningful experience through this program. The recipients were excited to hear from our county youth and to know that someone was thinking about them, other than their families and friends.

4-H SUMMER CURRICULUM

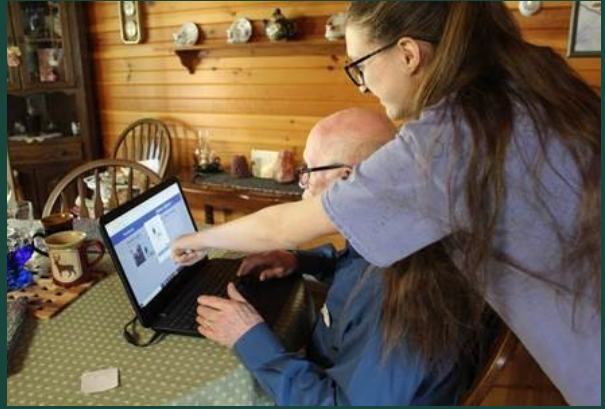
As part of the Summer Curriculum activity, Deb Divoky was able to distribute 84 different wood kits available to all youth within Iron County via both county libraries. These kits included all necessary materials for youth to complete a number of different projects. Examples of these projects include key holder, checkerboard and checkers, coat hanger with hooks, or a bird house. These kits were available for pick-up at both Iron County Libraries or at the courthouse. Both libraries reported back that the youth enjoyed the activity and it was successful.

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Investing in Iron County Youth with 4-H

*According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, 4-H'ers are **4X** more likely to make contributions to their communities, **2X** more likely to be civically active, and **2X** more likely to make healthier choices.*



4-H teen digital ambassador, Aubrey uses communication skills learned in 4-H to teach computer skills.

4-H TECH CHANGEMAKERS

4-H DIGITAL AMBASSADORS

This year, Michigan is one of 15 states receiving National 4-H Council grants from Microsoft to implement the 4-H Digital Ambassadors Project in Michigan.

This project involves teens taking their digital and technology skills to their communities in the Upper Peninsula counties of **Dickinson, Gogebic, Iron and Menominee.**

“There are over 20 million people who lack knowledge of the internet access and over 380,000 households in Michigan lack access to fixed broadband internet,” said Anne Kretschmann, MSU Extension 4-H program coordinator. “However, access to broadband infrastructure is only one piece of the equation. Potential users must be comfortable with and educated on how to use the technology in order to improve their quality of life and the health of their community.”

“Our proposal empowers 4-H youth to help close the rural broadband internet gap and make a positive impact in their communities through education. During community workshops, youth will teach technology skills such as using a word processor and accessing the internet and social media safely.”

Kretschmann continued, “4-H has a strong tradition in rural communities spanning over 100 years which makes 4-H youth well poised to help bridge the gap as Digital Ambassadors. In this capacity, youth can engage people with the latest technology, so that they can use this new connectivity to improve education, health care and agriculture, as well as transform businesses.”

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities, and businesses. For more than 100 years, MSU Extension has helped grow Michigan’s economy by equipping Michigan residents with the information they need to do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities, and empower their children to dream of successful futures. For more information about the programs we offer please refer to the contact information below.

IRON COUNTY MSU EXTENSION STAFF

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MSU Extension Upper Peninsula



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