

# SCHOOLCRAFT COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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msue.schoolcraft@county.msu.edu

- Brianna Beaulieu, Community Nutrition Instructor
- Jill Connin, 4-H Program Coordinator



**Erin Daines**  
District 2 Director, MSU Extension

## Message from the District Director

MSU Extension continues to make a lasting impact across Alger, Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette and Schoolcraft Counties. In 2024, we provided critical support to farmers, engaged over 1,500 youth in 4-H, and delivered nutrition education to more than 1,000 residents. We expanded leadership training for local officials, helped small businesses thrive, and partnered on conservation efforts to protect our natural resources.

This year, we also secured new office space in Mackinac County, strengthening our ability to serve the region. Our success is made possible through dedicated staff, volunteers and community partnerships. Thank you for your support—we look forward to another year of growth and impact!



1 community coalition within the county that MSU Extension employees are members



3 answered Ask Extension questions



971 participants from the county attending programs.



127 volunteers serving in the county



219 youth enrolled in 4-H

## Overall Impact



1 community coalition within the county that MSU Extension employees are members of



12 client consultations



971 participants from the county attending programs.



43 programs hosted in the county with 1,025 participants attending



128 programs (across the state) attended by participants from the county.



29,264,562 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts. (STATEWIDE), 1,734 e-newsletters and handouts in the county

## Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity



67,320 participants in community, food, and environment programs from across Michigan, 57 participants in community, food, and environment programs from the county



32 soil tests processed, including 4 commercial/farm samples and 28 homeowner samples



470 virtual programs related to Financial Education, Food Systems, Water and Environmental Quality, Government and Businesses.



\$246.5 billion annual impact of food and agriculture on Michigan's economy



27 participants in county agriculture programs.

## Public Health, Nutrition, and Youth Programming



1 community coalition within the county that MSU Extension employees are members of



110 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in-county



150 participants in health and nutrition programs in the county



1 site receiving Nutrition or Physical Activity Policy, System & Environmental education within the county

Brianna Beaulieu, a community nutrition instructor, had a table for MSU Extension at the opening of the Manistique Farmers and Artisan Market, where she provided resources for interested community members. She also took the opportunity to network with the Conservation District to discuss potential collaboration on policy, systems, environmental work, and school programming. Additionally, she connected with the farmers present at the market about such collaborative efforts.



Brianna Beaulieu  
Community Nutrition  
Instructor



*Photos from the Manistique Farmers and Artisan Market*

## Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital Health Fair

Participants engaged with Brianna at the MSU Extension table primarily through utilizing the spinning wheel to answer a trivia question and earning a small Nutrition Education Reinforcement Item (NERI).

There were 93 adults and 36 children who engaged with Brianna during the health fair.

*Examples of NERI that may be used by our Community Nutrition Instructors*



*MSU Extension Table at Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital Health Fair*





110 nutrition and physical activity participants hosted in-county.



150 county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs.



9,808 people participating in Food Safety programs, including ServSafe®

### Supporting participant with low vision

One of the youth participants attending the food preservation workshops on October 29 and November 12 at the Manistique Tribal Health Center had low vision and used a cane to navigate the space. He participated in as many things as he felt comfortable doing, including stirring the corn relish. While stirring the corn relish, he bumped something hot and although he did not burn himself, he was afraid to participate in the kitchen for the rest of the class. At the next class on I invited him into the kitchen again and offered to have him fill the first jar after I demonstrated to the group how to do so. I verbally explained each step for filling the jar while also physically demonstrating how to fill a jar so he could anticipate what he was about to do. When it was his turn to fill a jar, I told him the jar was hot, but the funnel and carrots were not hot. He was excited to fill his jar with carrots and to hold the ladle and funnel while I used a potholder to hold the jar steady for him. **When sharing his feedback for the day, he said, “I loved [the] job today,”** referring to filling the jar, and the youth leader thanked me for making accommodations so he could participate.



Stephanie Ostrenga-Sprague  
Food Safety Educator



219 youth enrolled in 4-H



1,111 total youth participants in the county, 133,306 statewide



109 volunteers serving in the county



\$3,443.31, 4-H volunteer hour value

## 4-H Entrepreneur Expands Business Locations

4-H participant Cheyenne's entrepreneurial journey through the 4-H Learn It, Plan It, Pitch It program is a shining example of success. Over the course of eight weeks, the program offered six learning sessions, six work sessions, and a showcase event designed to help young entrepreneurs bring their ideas to life. Each week, the participants built upon the previous lessons, moving from conceptualizing a product or service to creating marketing materials, developing their business pitch and designing product displays.

Cheyenne entered the program with an existing product line of fishing lures. Throughout the program, she focused on refining and improving her products. Her hard work culminated in a pitch event attended by nearly **60 community leaders and business owners**. Cheyenne's compelling pitch for her fishing lure business won first place and received valuable feedback from the judges.



Jill Connin  
4-H Program  
Coordinator

Following the pitch event, a local campground store owner approached Cheyenne about carrying her fishing lures. Encouraged by the judges' feedback, she expanded her product line to include lure-themed earrings. This creative addition caught the attention of a downtown women's boutique owner, who expressed interest in selling Cheyenne's products in her store.

Cheyenne's achievements through the 4-H program illustrate the program's goals and potential. Her story is an inspiration, showcasing the impact of dedication, creativity and the support provided by 4-H Learn It, Plan It, Pitch It.



Elliot Nelson  
Michigan Sea Grant  
Educator (MSU  
Extension)

## U.P. 4-H Camp

U.P. 4-H Camp is a great opportunity for youth to grow in their confidence as individuals and learn how to participate as a member of a team. And includes place-based learning about ecosystems. One activity performed at camp this year was a lake ecosystem investigation where students learned about Macroinvertebrates, the small aquatic insects and other creatures that make up the lower part of a lake food web. Students had to enter the water to collect these critters for study.

Many were reluctant to enter the water. However, by the end of the session, nearly every student was in the water collecting, and then on the shore, were fascinated with the hidden world they were beginning to understand. One parent sent a quote to highlight the impact on her daughter.

***"Elizabeth loved your class at camp so much that she is doing it on her own in Lake Gogebic!  
Thanks!"***



## Community and Government Vitality Programming

When Schoolcraft Tourism and Commerce reached out to MSU Extension for resources to help local elected and appointed officials in Schoolcraft County learn more about roles, responsibilities and best practices, Extension educators responded with a proposal. The program that Senior Extension Educator Brad Neumann and Extension Specialist Eric Walcott proposed was something entirely new - a program that partially relied on existing governance training materials, educational resources and organized content and discussions in a format to leverage the real-world experiences of participants.

The Schoolcraft County 'I Do Solemnly Swear' Governance Training included 20 community members, consisting of elected and appointed officials, nonprofit organization staff and community volunteers.

The resulting program equips local officials with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to govern effectively, promote public welfare, and foster a participatory and transparent democracy. The program consists of four sessions, each 2.5 hours long and complete with presentations, plus readings and individual and group activities to enhance applied and peer learning. Session topics include:

- Introduction to Good Governance
- From Good Governance to Extraordinary Governance
- Local Government Planning, Spending, and Regulation
- Building Community: People and Prosperity.

Participants who completed all four units earned a certificate of completion from MSU Extension.



Brad Neumann,  
Senior Extension  
Educator

*"The Michigan Constitution includes only one requirement for local government officials, and that's to uphold an oath of office," says Senior Extension Educator Brad Neumann. "The purpose of our program is to provide fundamental training that gives local officials the knowledge, skills, and confidence to govern in a highly effective way. Individuals learned about the power of forming partnerships with other organizations and engaging the community in collaborative efforts to benefit the community. Also, local officials learned strategies to empower people, staff, and other organizations to do good work, and they are also expanding their skills and confidence across a broad area of building trust in local government and throughout the community."*

***"We work for the people. As elected officials in our community, they put us in office for a reason-to represent their best interest and quality of life-and they want to know we're doing a good job for them."***

*- From participant  
Paul Walker, Chair of the Schoolcraft  
County Board of Commissioners.*

*"We hope participants will come away with a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities," Neumann says, "but also best practices to advance the work of their organization, of their government, and the approach of seeking opportunities for collaboration and leveraging the assets of an organization to incrementally improve the community over time."*

The MSU Extension 'I Do Solemnly Swear' Governance Training enhances my "ability to grow as an elected person in my community.

## Partnerships

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Our funding partnership with Limestone Financial Credit Union supports staff programming. Jill Connin delivered financial literacy education to youth ages 5-18. The number of youth reached from July 2023-June 2024 was **THIRD** in the nation for credit unions in the "150 Million or Less" asset class.

In addition, Michigan ranked second nationally for students reached and first in the total number of student presentations. This is in part because of our partnership with Limestone Financial Credit Union.

### Empowering Schoolcraft County Youth through Financial Education

*In its second consecutive year, the partnership between Limestone Financial Credit Union and MSU Extension of Schoolcraft County has continued to expand our impact on local youth through consistent financial literacy initiatives. This collaboration is rooted in a shared commitment to empowering students with essential life skills, particularly in the realm of financial education.*

*Throughout 2024, Limestone FCU and MSU Extension **jointly** facilitated a diverse range of classroom-based and independent financial literacy workshops, **reaching over 833 students across Schoolcraft County**. These interactive and age-appropriate sessions introduced key concepts such as budgeting, saving, responsible spending, and future planning—equipping youth with practical tools to make informed financial decisions.*

*By investing in the financial well-being of our next generation, this initiative underscores Limestone's broader mission: to extend support beyond traditional banking services and contribute meaningfully to community development. The partnership has not only expanded access to education, but has also fostered stronger awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities.*

*No stranger to financial literacy and youth entrepreneurial programming, Limestone Financial Credit Union remains dedicated to advancing youth opportunities and the foundation for lifelong financial independence across the communities we serve.*

From Jennifer C. Watson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Limestone Financial Credit Union



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