



Iosco County

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS



\$3,242,586 total economic impact in Iosco County



\$6,373 spending with local businesses in Iosco County



359 MSU alumni living in Iosco County



MSU disbursed \$714,547 in financial aid to Iosco County students



1,229 youth involved in 4-H and other youth development programs



14 soil test kits processed for residents of Iosco County



604 Iosco County residents participated in MSU Extension programs

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

As I reflect on 2020, it is difficult not to mention what is evident, that it was a year unlike any in recent memory where ordinary life changed in so many ways which prompted us to adjust in both small and large ways. In mid-March when MSU Extension staff were asked to work remotely, we did not foresee that in many Michigan communities, the impact of this global pandemic would be so great and the losses so devastating. We know that while our staff was busy with remote work, many were laboring to care for those affected, to serve people in need, and to keep our communities safe. We are deeply grateful that our programs are relevant and highly regarded by our community partners across the state.

In April, I was approached by Extension Associate Director Patrick Cudney with what was described to me as “an exciting leadership opportunity” to become the Interim District Director for the counties of MSUE’s District 4 – Alcona, Arenac, Crawford, Iosco, Ogemaw, Oscoda, and Roscommon. Although it has been challenging to begin this new role at a distance, I am deeply gratified by the warm welcome I have received from the staff, county leaders, and communities in this beautiful region of Michigan.

As we resume our face-to-face engagement this summer and fall, our experience developing on-line programs will allow us to meet more people where they are and offer convenience and expand our ability to bring relevant, research-based information that will help communities address critical needs, issues, and opportunities. I look forward to working more closely with all of you in the coming months.

Julia Darnton
Interim District Director

MSU Extension responds to COVID-19 Impacts

Extension has worked to maintain relationships with Michigan communities for over 100 years and most of that has been done through in-person meetings and programs. In the last year, we have expanded our engagement through our website at extension.msu.edu, a website that now averages 1.25 million visitors per month.

Within six days of the first Stay Home, Stay Safe order, MSU Extension launched the [Remote Learning and Resources](#) website, and our teams immediately began to modify programs to continue to reach our audiences and to create programs to engage families, communities, business owners, and leaders to get the best information to keep moving forward under these new conditions.

The website has evolved to a one-stop-shop for educational resources that we offer online. Our educators and program staff were also able to reach farmers through the growing season, elected officials and decision makers, parents, families, and youth by meeting with them on virtual platforms through webinars and meetings, through phone conferences and by kits through the mail or picked up at a convenient location. We have learned that we can connect with friends and neighbors in our communities at the local level through programs designed to reach residents across the state and attract the notice of people across the country and around the world. We have also transitioned many of our programmatic offerings to virtual learning options and on-demand educational courses.

For older youth who are preparing to live independently, a series called **Adulting 101** covers topics like budgeting, understanding credit and student loans, being an informed renter, household tasks, mindfulness, interviewing, resume building, goal setting, conflict resolution, and more. These interactive sessions attracted more than 3,000 participants in 2020 and were promoted by school districts.

Cabin Fever Conversations capitalized on the desire in the spring for people who were cooped up inside to re-engage with gardening. As people spent more time at home, their energies were drawn to cultivating their home gardens, indoor plants and landscapes. Each session attracted audiences of more than 500 people and the program was continued this winter with new topics. Programs have been archived and add to information that MSUE has for those with a desire to flex or grow a green thumb.

Our staff expanded upon the **Rapid Response for Agriculture** resources which created a single place for emerging issues in agricultural production. This information infrastructure, created in 2019 to respond to extreme weather events, helped producers address employee health and safety in farming and processing and to maintain a safe and fresh food supply during the emergency conditions early in the COVID-19 pandemic. The site still maintains resources for farms affected by flooding (and dam failures) in the late spring of 2020 as well. Another key tool for operators and managers is the **COVID-19 Hazard Assessment and Mitigation Program**, or CHAMP Tool was designed to help agriculture operations reduce the risk of worker exposure to COVID-19 and mitigate the potential for disease spread.

Many in-person programs pivoted to create virtual versions, thereby reducing the potential of exposure for the participants. Examples included:

- **From the Field** – a series of virtual field days on a variety of topics ranging from wheat to manure management to precision livestock farming and industrial hemp production. Each of these events allowed producers from across the state to attend without travel time and impacts. Events were also recorded and archived in shorter segments to allow attendees to catch sessions they missed, review past sessions, or share with fellow producers. Our agriculture educators continue to use more methods of communication including podcasts, videos, and more.
- **Preserving Your Harvest** – a free Zoom-based instructional series offered by Food Safety Educators and focused on safe, home food preservation methods like canning, freezing, pickling, fermenting and more. Preserving food safely is important because food borne illness is a serious health hazard and the practice also reduces waste, encourages healthy practices, and can help with food budgeting too!



Program Highlights

Nutrition Education

MSU Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program Education (SNAP-Ed) instructors deliver evidence-based, hands on nutrition and physical activity learning opportunities that empower limited income youth and adults with information and strategies to make healthy behavior and lifestyle choices.

In 2020, SNAP-Ed reached **148 Iosco County residents** through one time presentations and program series such Healthy Eating Adds Up, Show Me Nutrition, and more!

Due to the Michigan executive orders of stay home, stay safe, MSU Extension increased virtual outreach through indirect intervention channels by 45% and reached **428,419** adults and youths statewide through articles, fact sheets, radio podcasts, social media postings, web presence and educational videos.



ADULT Dietary Improvements

21% consumed less soda

41% ate more fruits/day

38% ate more vegetables per day



ADULT Physical Activity Improvements



41% increased moderate physical activity participation



37% increased strength training activities

YOUTH Health & Nutrition Impact		3rd-5th Grade	6th-12th Grade
	increased vegetable consumption	31%	38%
	decreased soda consumption	29%	31%
	increased physical activity	26%	31%
	washed their hands more often	25%	23%
	decreased screen time	27%	28%

Supporting Local Youth

In 2020, **1,129 Iosco County youths** were engaged in 4-H and other youth development programing, including **435 from the Cardinal Kids Club** through a partnership with Whittemore-Prescott Area Schools. Program Instructor Karen Collins assisted teachers with learning and enrichment events and provided activity kits for students. Supplies and materials were given directly to teachers. Afterschool programs included Cooking Class, Science Blast, Art, Escape Room, Sewing Enrichment, Employment Readiness and more! As we plan to return to in-person activities in the new school year, Karen is working on new creative ways to engage kids!



2019-2020 was Karen's first school year in this newly-created role!



Bare trees were delivered to the school so students could "decorate" them with leaves that noted things they were grateful for.



Karen prepared kits with activities and instructions for teachers to complete with their students.

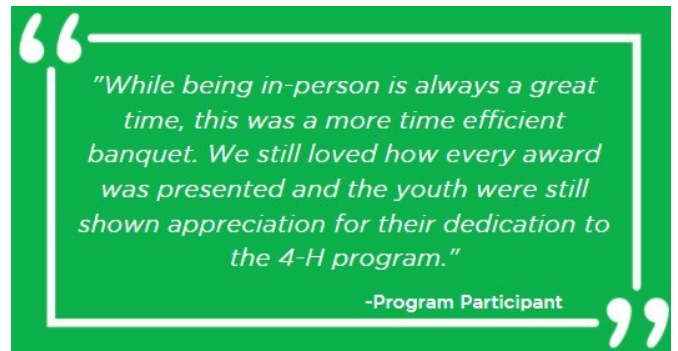
Iosco County, MSU Extension & Continuing Traditions Virtually

Pictured, Brody
Ruckle receiving
the Iosco County
2020 4-H'er of the
Year Award



Iosco continues annual Awards Banquet tradition

Each year, Iosco County 4-H holds an in-person banquet to acknowledge all the accomplishments of the prior year. Iosco County 4-H has been presenting an awards banquet for the last 72 years. There was a strong desire to continue the tradition even during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Iosco County 4-H Leaders' Council recognizes local businesses and/or organizations who support the 4-H program over the year and 4-H youth who have demonstrated the values of the 4-H motto—"To Make The Best Better." This year, the banquet was presented online with a slideshow featuring the youth and their achievements. Winners received their awards via mail and shared pictures with their awards and proud family members. It was important to have this connection and acknowledgement during a challenging year and to continue this proud tradition.



Achievement Day showcases skills for 4-H

Each year before the Iosco County Fair, youth can offer a presentation on a topic related to their livestock animal. Youth can explore a variety of topics and share that information for an opportunity to compete. This year, because of COVID-19, youth each created a video explaining how they came up with the topic, what they learned and how it will help them in future years. Their videos were then organized into categories and awards for "best of show" were recognized during the annual Iosco County 4-H Banquet. This year, instead of being asked questions by judges, youth were able to perfect their video presentations and learned the value of practicing to improve their video.



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