



2024

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE IRON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



*We teach, learn, lead and serve,
connecting people with the
University of Wisconsin,
and engaging with them
in transforming
lives and communities.*



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY



WELCOME LETTER

January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

Dear Iron County Board of Supervisors, Community Partners & Interested Readers,

In this 2024 Annual Report, you'll find that at the UW-Madison Division of Extension Iron County, our resourceful and resilient educators and staff are focused on helping the community members of Iron County to meet community challenges, protect natural resources, strengthen families and support young people. Despite county budget challenges, we had another year of great Extension programming in Iron County and all of Wisconsin! We worked to continue connecting local people with the knowledge and research of the University of Wisconsin. We utilized our local, regional, and statewide networks to support communities in responding to emerging issues and we brought new ideas and great resources to Iron County.

2024 was the last year that we had funding for a Horticulture Educator position. Iron County Extension will no longer offer educational workshops in this topic area. We will not be able to identify plants or pests, or give advice on soil sample results. These important services, however, are available statewide through online portals. Please see page 7 for more information on the *Ask a Gardening Question* and the *Ask an Agriculture Question* websites, where real Extension educators from around Wisconsin can help you with your questions. In addition, our statewide Extension Horticulture webpage offers information and videos on many topics and are accessible to all.

In these pages, we highlight outcomes from our major educational programs in 2024: 4-H Youth Development, Nutrition Education, Community Development, and Horticulture. Our staff strives to address high priority local needs through our educational programming and valuable collaborations with community groups, volunteers, and program partners. Strong partnerships are at the heart of our programs—we can achieve more together!

THANK YOU to the Iron County Board of Supervisors and the Agriculture-Extension-Education Committee for your continued support of Extension Iron County throughout 2024. We appreciate the opportunity to serve Iron County residents and local efforts to strengthen our people, our communities, and our economy.

On behalf of the Extension Iron County staff,

Mary Pardee
Area Extension Director
Area 1 (Iron, Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas Counties)

2024 Agriculture- Extension-Education Committee Members

Roxanne Lutgen—Chair
William Thomas—Vice Chair
Jamey Frances
Paul Mullard
Doug Swartz
Larry Youngs - *County Board Chair*

2024 Administration and Staff

Mary Pardee
Area Extension Director, Area 1
Neil Klemme
4-H Youth Development Educator
Joseph Miller
Community Development Educator
Deborah Leonard
FoodWise Nutrition Educator
Stephanie Bakker
FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator
Bruce Spangenberg
Horticulture Educator
Rebecca Holm
Office Manager
Gavin Ransanici
Summer Assistant

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Neil Klemme (middle) served as 4-H Youth Development Educator in 2024. Also pictured are Neil's children, Kasey and Braeden, who served as camp staff members in 2024.

IRON COUNTY SUMMER YOUTH CAMP

Iron County Summer Youth Camp once again provided area youth, grades 3-5, the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors with friends while providing the opportunity for youth, grades 8-12, to practice valuable leadership skills and serve as role models in their position as camp staff. Iron County 4-H Youth Development Educator, Neil Klemme worked with his Summer Assistant, Gavin Ransanici to develop a positive learning environment for all youth who attended.

Campers participated in sessions that allowed them to explore things they love to do in the summer, like swim and play Gaga Ball, but also discover things that they don't always get the chance to do, like shoot archery, play unique camp recreation games, and work with their hands during arts and crafts. All of these sessions are designed to allow campers to explore their sparks. Sparks are a component of the Thrive Model of Positive Youth Development, and serve as part of the groundwork for creating a program that develops thriving young people into adults. Summer camp is a setting ripe with opportunities to lay the groundwork for building the developmental context for positive thriving outcomes.

Camp staff are trained in how to create an environment where youth feel they belong by developing a cabin environment where campers feel welcomed and included, for example. The staff are also trained to make sure campers are engaged in activities throughout the day. When they see a camper sitting out to the side they are taught how to get them to engage and oftentimes that is through role modeling. This meets the last component of Thriving Youth Development programming, relationships. Camp staff and campers build a bond that lasts a lifetime.

IRON COUNTY OUTPOST CAMP

Outpost Camp was designed in 2015 to fill the gap after Iron County Summer Youth Camp ended and to begin to develop the skills middle school youth need to become great camp counselors.

Outpost Camp once again provided the opportunity for youth, grades 6-8, to discover their strengths and explore their leadership styles. These are skills that they will use throughout their lives and will make them more confident and successful camp staff when they are old enough to apply to be counselors.

One key to the impact of the Outpost Camp program is the level of independence that campers are given to "choose their adventure" during the week of camp. Neil and his staff set a schedule that allows the campers to select from a few options of activities during each session. This creates an environment where the youth have a say in their experience, which allows them to engage in activities they have an interest in and explore new sparks that they may have never tried before. The camp works together to build belonging through daily challenges and meal preparation. The 2024 challenge activity was a hike from Copper Peak to Black River Harbor. The camp staff are there to offer guidance and support through the challenges and build relationships as mentors.



Pictured above: Summer assistant, Gavin Ransanici offered 4-H program support during two overnight camp programs, one day camp program, and provided additional support during the Iron County 4-H festivities at the Iron County Fair. One of those activities included building bird feeders with youth who visited the fair.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

DAY CAMPS ADD VARIETY TO SUMMER PROGRAMMING

In an attempt to promote the Iron County 4-H foods and nutrition program and to address the need of teaching youth the skill of cooking, 4-H Youth Development Educator Neil Klemme, Community Development Educator, Joseph Miller and FoodWise Educator, Deborah Leonard joined forces to create *Chopped! 4-H Day Camp*.

This 4-day program encouraged youth participants to learn important life skills, such as finding recipes, creating a menu, budgeting, grocery shopping, and preparing a meal. Each day participants prepared their own lunches and snacks. They also participated in a tour of the local Super One Foods grocery store to learn how to spot deals, select fresh produce, and identify quality meats. Later in the week, participants visited Papa Dave's Pizza where they baked fresh bread, made homemade pizzas, and learned about the restaurant business and food industry.

At the end of the week the participants prepared a meal as a team and presented the meal to judges. Due to the program's success, Klemme plans to permanently include it in his summer day camp offerings.

Week two of day camp offerings included a unique partnership with Saint Maud's, a makerspace in Pence, WI. Owner Karl Zinsmaster, who currently leads the Iron County 4-H woodworking project, created *Fixer Upper Boat Edition*, a unique day camp where area youth gained insight and hands-on practice in boat building and restoration (pictured right).

Saint Maud's has become a great partner and continues to provide youth opportunities to learn new skills.



SISU ENDURANCE TEAM (SET)

The SISU Endurance Team XC Ski Club held three sessions in early 2024 but the program was cut short due to the limited amount of snow received. However, the SET XC Ski Club Race Team continued to gain momentum, as members started early season workouts with new rollerski equipment, thanks to funding received from a SISU Ski Fest grant. Race team members also participated in a handful of races during the short season.

Summer SET programming was a bit more successful with area youth signing up for the 8-week SET Running Club program. A huge thank you to the SISU Endurance Team XC Ski and Running Club leaders who helped make these programs successful.

IRON COUNTY YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

In 2024, Klemme began recruiting a new group of youth leaders to serve on the Iron County Youth Leadership Council. He visited the Hurley and Mercer School Districts in the spring and fall and was able to find 18 youth who wanted to be more active in their communities. With so much interest, Klemme contacted other committees, groups and organizations in the area who would be interested in incorporating youth voice in their planning. Local groups such as NICER (Northern Iron County Engaged Residents), Historic Ironwood Theatre and the Gogebic Range Health Foundation have taken steps to include youth on their boards and make them part of how they do business.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

DAY CAMP PROGRAMS

Chopped! Day Camp—June 18-21, 2024

- 8 youth participants

Fixer Upper Day Camp—June 25-28, 2024

- 9 youth participants

Babysitter Training—August 27-29, 2024

- 6 youth participants

CAMP PROGRAMS

Iron County Summer Youth Camp—July 23-26, 2024

- 49 youth campers, grades 3-5
- 31 youth camp staff, grades 8-12
- 6 enrolled adult leaders, 5 adult volunteers

Outpost Camp—July 9-12, 2024

- 17 youth campers, grades 6-8
- 2 adult volunteers, 1 Summer Assistant

PROJECT MEETINGS

The following specialized project meetings were offered to Iron County 4-H'ers in 2024:

Pyrography

Foods & Nutrition

Sewing

Shooting Sports

Woodworking

*Iron County 4-H project meetings included **25** youth participants.

SISU ENDURANCE TEAM

SET XC Ski Club—January 15-March 5, 2024

- 43 youth participants, grades K-12
- 4 enrolled adult leaders
- 3 youth leaders
- 20 parent skiers

SET Running Club—June 12-31, 2024

- 9 youth participants
- 1 enrolled adult leader, 3 adult volunteers



CHARTERED CLUBS

Iron County 4-H Green Team—Year-round

- 19 youth participants, 5 adult leaders

Penokee Range Livestock Club—Year-round

- 23 youth participants, 20 adult leaders

Adventurers of the North 4-H Club—Year-round

- 15 youth participants, 4 adult leaders

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Approximately **\$48,800*** was raised for youth programming in 2024

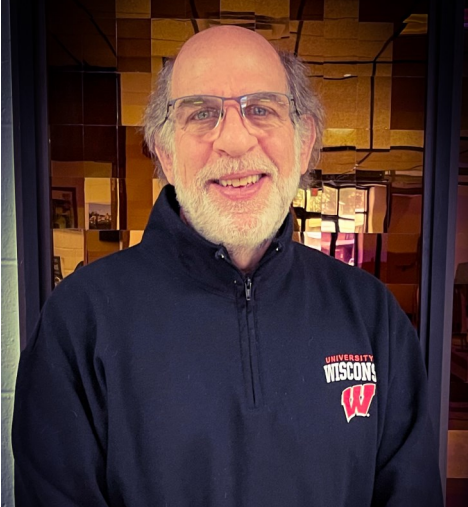
The total above includes funds donated to the Iron County 4-H program by generous individuals, businesses and organizations in our community! This also includes registrations fees, grants, and fundraising efforts by our camp staff and SET XC Ski Club Race Team.

These programs would not be possible without community support. THANK YOU to our amazing donors for supporting the Iron County 4-H program.

**Total doesn't include funds raised by 4-H Leaders Association.*



HORTICULTURE



Bruce Spangenberg served as Horticulture Educator through November 2024.

The Iron County Horticulture program provided educational and technical programming throughout Iron County in 2024. Bruce Spangenberg served as the 50% part-time Horticulture Educator through November 2024, when his position was eliminated due to county budget cuts.

During 2024, some of Bruce's programming included:

- Northwoods Yard & Garden Weekly Column
- Spring Horticulture Seminars, Planning a Successful Vegetable Garden, Ornamental Grasses for Northwoods Landscapes, Keeping your Trees Healthy.
- Silver Street planters in Hurley with Hurley School 3rd grade students.
- Montreal Historic District planting with Hurley School 4th grade students.
- Participated in Bayfield in Bloom Garden Talk on Wisconsin Public Radio and made two other visits to WPR's Garden Talk with Larry Meiller.
- Answered walk-in gardening and soil test questions.

SPRING 2024 HORTICULTURE SEMINARS

A total of 54 area residents attended the Spring Horticulture Seminars held in Hurley and Mercer in April. *Planning a Successful Vegetable Garden* discussed how to plan and prepare for growing your own vegetable crops, including choosing the best cultivars, improving soils, planting, and early care. *Ornamental Grasses for Northwoods* focused on how grasses grow, basic care, landscape characteristics, and choosing species and cultivars best suited for northern Wisconsin. *Keeping Trees Healthy* included basic biology of trees, proper planting and pruning, and ways to protect trees from common problems.

Evaluation surveys supported the very positive response from attendees. For the vegetable garden seminar, 100 percent (20/20) of attendees indicated they felt they had improved their knowledge to help grow vegetables with 95 percent saying they were very likely to use the information presented in their garden in 2024.

One hundred percent (18/18) of the ornamental grasses audience felt because of attending they had improved their knowledge in properly selecting grasses and 89 percent said they were very likely to apply information presented to their landscape. In addition, 89 percent also felt they had increased their knowledge of invasive species after attending the program.

Finally, for the tree seminar 100 percent (14/14) of those returning surveys felt they had increased their knowledge of ways to keep trees healthy and avoid potential problems as a result of attending the program. 100 percent were very likely or likely to apply

information presented on planting trees and 86 percent were very likely or likely to apply information presented on pruning.

NORTHWOODS YARD & GARDEN COLUMN

Each week throughout 2024, Northwoods Yard & Garden column appeared in area newspapers and the Iron County Extension web page. Topics focused on selection, general care, and managing pests and problems occurring in the area. Newspapers running the column included *Iron County Miner*, *Lakeland Times*, *Superior Telegram*, and *Forest Republican*. Additionally, in the second half of 2024 the column was also featured on the statewide University of Wisconsin Extension Horticulture Program website.

In November, readers were invited to provide feedback through a short evaluation survey presented in the column. 75 percent of respondents ranked the quality of information presented as excellent with the other 25 percent ranking it very good. As a result of reading the column, 100 percent felt they had increased their knowledge related to the care of yard and garden plantings and 81 percent said they have applied information presented in the column to their plantings.

When asked what specific types of subjects they were most interested in, flowers were the most popular, followed by trees and shrubs, lawns, vegetables, fruit crops, and houseplants.

Although Bruce's position was cut from Iron County, valuable statewide resources are available through the Wisconsin Extension Horticulture Program's website and via the Ask a Gardening Question and Ask an Agriculture Question portals. For more information, visit: hort.extension.wisc.edu

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Joseph Miller served as Community Development Educator starting in 2024.

2024 felt at times like a *Groundhog Day* simulator, other times like the Millennium Falcon in a hyperspace jump. Community Development Educator Joseph Miller gave his first presentation as an Extension educator to Hurley middle and high school students on the topic of Entrepreneurship in March. In May, he worked with the Hurley Public Library to offer Tech Tips and Talk (or 3T), a 4-session hands-on basic computer skills training designed using survey data collected in the fall of 2023. Throughout the year, Joseph also worked with the Town of Mercer to facilitate public input meetings and gather survey data in support of their 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan. He also joined Extension teams to plan two conferences, facilitating sessions in Platteville and Milwaukee as well as joining a panel discussion at Extension's All Colleague Conference in Madison. Joseph closed out 2024 with a series of informal Coffee Connections events, culminating in a hands-on pour over workshop featuring Late Run Coffee at Little Finland.

As a learning experience, 2024 served as a crash course in what Extension is, does, and provides to Wisconsin communities. Based on available resources, community needs, and work interest, Joseph has identified digital equity, placemaking, and entrepreneurship as focus areas for his work.

DIGITAL EQUITY

TECH TIPS AND TALK (3T)

- Partnered with Hurley Public Library to bring 4-session basic computer skills workshop series to 20 participants.
- Lessons included password security, browsing the web, PC storage management, downloading and installing programs, using various web-based services, email basics, identifying scam emails, social media safety, and using digital library services.
- All participants said the pace of the course was "just right." Most were interested in additional training and information on web browsers, using different email clients, and additional help using social media services (especially YouTube and Facebook).

BE NICE TO YOUR ROBOT

- Introduction to artificial intelligence presentation at Hurley and Mercer Public Libraries. There were 4 attendees, two at each presentation, and content included an overview of AI history, ethical concerns, how generative pre-trained transformers work, concluding with a practical hands-on demonstration of Microsoft Copilot.

PLACEMAKING

MERCER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY & PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

- Working with the Town of Mercer Planning Commission, modified previous plan's community development survey to solicit public opinion related to the 9 elements of a 2025-2045 comprehensive plan. In conjunction with the survey, a public input meeting was held to discuss the Housing, Transportation, and Utilities & Community Facilities elements.
- The public input meeting drew 14 Mercer residents and 308 respondents completed the community development survey. Feedback from the public input meeting was included in the Comprehensive Plan and a report of the survey results has been included in the plan.

RESOURCE FAIRS

- In partnership with USDA Rural Partners Network, coordinated resource fairs in Hurley and Mercer featuring personal health and home repair resources. The Hurley resource fair, hosted at the Iron County Memorial Building, drew 6 attendees. The Mercer event, held at the Mercer Community Center, drew 18 attendees.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMMING

CHOPPED! 4-H DAY CAMP

- Worked with Iron County Extension Educators to bring new 4-H day camp to 8 youth participants. Curriculum included healthy eating/cooking tips, developing effective grocery shopping habits, finding and modifying recipes, and the fundamentals of cooking. Campers were provided ingredients, cookbooks, and best practices before applying concepts in a team-based cooking competition.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

COFFEE CONNECTIONS FOR ENTREPRENEURS AT ANY STAGE

- Between October 12 and December 30, engaged in five informal coffee connections events with 18 Iron County stakeholders.
- Topics were loosely defined, covering various aspects of entrepreneurship. The most successful event in the series was the final installment, which included a hands-on coffee pour over workshop presented by Late Run Coffee at Little Finland.
- Each session featured coffee from a different outlet in Gogebic and Iron counties.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: MORE THAN JUST A FANCY FIVE SYLLABLE WORD!

Presented to 329 students at Hurley School in grades 6-12 as part of Student Information Day. Presentation introduced basic concepts of entrepreneurship, highlighted new Wisconsin startups, and included advice from local entrepreneurs.

Additionally, Joseph supported various Iron County-based programming efforts such as Wisconsin School Garden Day, Silver Street Planting, monthly Mobile Food Pantry distributions, Earth Day events at the Mercer School and Mercer Public Library, and a screening of the documentary film *Join or Die* in partnership with NorthLakes Community Clinics. Near the end of 2024, Joseph began working with the Iron County Board of Supervisors to establish a new Economic Development Committee as part of the county's budget reconciliation process. He continues to support the committee by coordinating meetings and administrative documentation.

Joseph's programming plans for 2025 include an entrepreneur boot camp, a zine-making workshop series, and a video game development workshop.

Pictured right Chopped! 4-H Day Camp participants, Bruce and Roarke Tjjan receive instruction from Community Development Educator, Joseph Miller, and Summer Assistant Gavin Rancinici. Joseph partnered with the Iron County 4-H Youth Development Educator, Neil Klemme, to offer this fun, all-hands-on-deck, multidisciplinary program to youth in our community.



FOODWISE



HEALTHY CHOICES, HEALTHY LIVES

FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed). With local strengths, FoodWise supports healthy eating habits, active lifestyles, and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community, and system levels.

Our FoodWise team includes Stephanie Bakker, Coordinator for Ashland, Bayfield, and Iron Counties, Educators Deborah Leonard and Lindsay Larson; and Healthy Communities Coordinator Marisa Dyer. The team provided many educational opportunities to the Iron, Ashland and Bayfield County communities in 2024.

The 2024 Ashland, Bayfield, Iron County FoodWise team consists of (L-R) Coordinator, Stephanie Bakker, Educator, Deborah Leonard, Healthy Communities Coordinator, Marisa Dyer, and Educator, Lindsay Larson.

HURLEY SCHOOL GARDEN

In 2024, FoodWise partnered with the Iron County Health Department to provide programming in the Hurley School Garden, which included working with the Hurley School Summer Kids Club program.

Other garden activities include:

- The FoodWise Team worked with Hurley School 4th graders in the spring, teaching them how to plant potatoes, which were then harvested in the fall as the students started their 5th grade year.
- Educator Deborah Leonard entered produce grown and harvested in the Hurley School Garden on behalf of the Hurley Kids Club in the Iron County Fair and received 1st and 2nd place ribbons.
- Students were able to take home harvested vegetables to their families. Deborah also brought carrots to the Hurley School open house, which were offered to families who visited the FoodWise table.



OTHER 2024 UPDATES

- Continues to distribute the monthly FoodWise newsletter to a large number of partners and participants in a 3-county area.
- Continues to offer a virtual StrongBodies strength training series throughout the year in collaboration with other FoodWise teams.
- Coordinator Stephanie Bakker and Educator Lindsay Larson helped out at the September 2024 Iron County Mobile Food Pantry.
- Marisa Dyer started a new Healthy Communities Coordinator position and Lindsay Larson joined the team, filling Marisa's vacant educator role.



FOODWISE

PARTNERS & PARTICIPANTS

Partners for 2024 included Mercer and Hurley Schools, five senior dining sites, Hurley Head Start, Iron County Health Department, Aging and Disability Resource Center of the North-Iron County, Bad River Boys & Girls Club, and the Iron County Mobile Food Pantry.

FoodWise Educator Deborah Leonard continues to provide impactful nutrition education lessons to local schools and the Hurley Head Start program. Her unique teaching style often includes costumes, wigs, props, and games, which makes trying new foods seem exciting and fun! Pictured at right is Deborah's costume for Hurley Head Start's Wacky Day, which took place in March 2024.



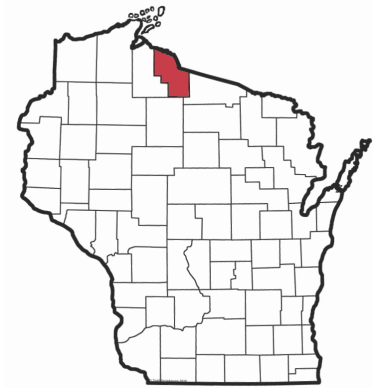
Pictured above left: FoodWise Educator, Deborah Leonard joined in on the fun during the July 3, 2024 Walk with Ease program, which was held at Emberlight Festival's Art in the Park event. Participants checked out the artist installations while enjoying a beautiful morning walk followed by a nutrition lesson provided by Deborah.

INSPIRING COLLABORATIONS

During the summer of 2024, Nutrition Educator Deborah Leonard partnered with the Aging and Disability Resource Center of the North—Iron County and their "Walk with Ease" program to offer nutrition education as part of their class.

This series took place once a week at the Quartz Health Solutions, Inc. Outdoor Fitness Court and walking trail at Cary Park in Hurley, WI.

For many years, Deborah has provided different nutrition education experiences at the senior meal sites in Iron County and is always looking for new ways to engage with these participants.



IRON COUNTY LANDSCAPE

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

50%

of children in schools were eligible for free or reduced price meals.*

13%

of county residents use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.**

*Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

**WI Department of Administration and WI Department of Health Services

OFFICE MANAGER



Rebecca Holm served as Office Manager in 2024

Rebecca Holm provided support to all Extension Iron County Educators and Summer Staff in 2024.

INTERACTION WITH PUBLIC

Serving as the first point of contact with the public, Rebecca provided assistance with requests in person and over the phone for information and resources including:

- Research of UW-based information and response or referral to client.
- Submission of soil samples, plant samples, and insect identification samples to University laboratories.
- Iron County Mobile Food Pantry registration, documentation, and newsletters. Approximately 56,627 pounds of food were distributed to Iron County residents in 2024.
- Maintained and distributed community snowshoe inventory. 78 pairs were checked out by organizations and individuals in 2024.
- Coordinated reservation of the Iron County Action TrackChair.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

- Distributed monthly "Just in Time Parenting" newsletters to 48 parents of new babies born in Iron County in 2024.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

- Coordinated enrollment and documentation of all 4-H

programming in 2024, including the SISU Endurance Team (SET) and summer camp programs.

- Maintained and distributed SET Ski Club equipment. 28 sets of equipment were checked out for the 2024 season.

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

- Maintained financial records and documentation for Extension and 4-H and Youth Club budgets.
- Maintained office accounting including spreadsheets, vouchers, invoices, accounting and record keeping for grant funded programming.
- Served as liaison to Iron County auditors.
- Processed all receipt collections, deposits, invoices and bill paying.
- Created financial reports for Extension Iron County Committee and, as requested, for the Iron County Finance Committee.

OFFICE TECHNOLOGY

- Served as liaison for office to repair services through the county IT department and UW-Technology Services.
- Served as office website and social media coordinator.
- Upgraded skills with trainings related to new software programs to create more efficient management of office functions.
- Secured and maintained contracts for leased equipment, maintenance agreements, repairs and supplies needed to run office equipment.
- Researched methods and means for office equipment upgrades.
- Maintained the Iron County 4-H database, 4HOnline.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

- Maintained and ordered proper level of supplies and resources as needed for office operations and equipment.

- Designed program materials, such as brochures, newsletters, flyers, logos.
- Maintained office documentation to demonstrate compliance with federal civil rights law.
- Maintained postage accounts, equipment records and reports.
- Served as designer and coordinator of the Extension Iron County Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors.
- Coordinated, attended and recorded minutes at Extension Committee meetings.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

- Received a Wisconsin Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi Meritorious Support Staff Service Award.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- Assisted courthouse staff with using the boardroom AQUOS Smart Board.
- Assisted County Clerk with the 2025 election canvass.
- Assisted IT Department in sharing meeting agendas and minutes to County website. Support also included page updates and other requests as needed.
- Led a project meeting through the Iron County 4-H program, teaching youth members about the art of pyrography (woodburning).
- Maintained a Facebook page for the Iron County Courthouse.



In April 2024, Rebecca was presented with the Wisconsin Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi Meritorious Support Staff Service Award by Aerica Bjurstrom, Awards Committee Co-Chair for Wisconsin Alpha Sigma Chapter of ESP.

AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR AREA 1

This Annual Report highlights some of the programming efforts of our educators and staff members. In 2024 we were stable in terms of staffing for most of the year. Unfortunately, our Horticulture position was cut in county budget reductions resulting in one less educator at the end of 2024. *(Good news – The former Iron County horticulture educator, Bruce Spangenberg, is now an Extension State Horticulture Specialist.)* Overall, we had two full-time and two part-time educators, one full-time office manager, and one summer assistant on staff, doing great community outreach education for youth, adults and families.

The success of Iron County Extension programming relies on 4 aspects:

- County funding
- State funding
- Donations, Grants & Fees
- Volunteers

In Extension, most educators are co-funded by the county and state. In 2024, Iron County also supplied funding for a horticulture educator and a seasonal assistant for the extensive summer youth programs. In addition, county funds help to outfit Extension with office supplies, technology, program funds and travel costs, as well as an excellent office manager to provide support.

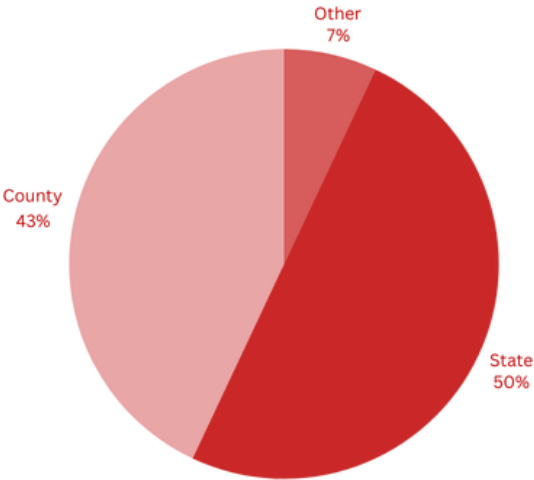
FoodWise, our nutrition education program, is fully funded by federal SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) funds that come through UW-Madison Division of Extension. Iron County FoodWise is part of a three-county project which also includes Ashland and Bayfield Counties. County funds are not involved in the salaries of the FoodWise Coordinator, FoodWise Educator, or Area Extension Director.

The charts show the basics of where our funding comes from.

County	Co-Funded Staff Fee	\$	82,494
	County Funded Staff Fee	\$	34,834
	Support Staff	\$	71,908
	County Educational Staff	\$	8,214
	Office & Technology Educational Program Support	\$	5,484
		\$	7,315
	Committee Expense	\$	720
	TOTAL COUNTY	\$	210,969
State	Co-Funded Staff Salary/Fringe	\$	127,005
	FoodWise Staff & Program Support	\$	75,437
	Office & Technology	\$	1,200
	Professional Development	\$	4,353
	Director Salary/Fringe	\$	37,063
	TOTAL STATE	\$	245,058
Other	Donations, Grants, Fees	\$	32,089
	TOTAL OTHER	\$	32,089
TOTAL EXTENSION BUDGET		\$	488,116



Mary Pardee served as the Area Extension Director for Area 1 in 2024 (Area 1 includes Iron, Ashland, Bayfield and Douglas Counties).



VOLUNTEERS

THANK YOU, EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS! We could not do all this work without you!

Extension’s programming success relies on volunteers! In Iron County, we value our 4-H and other youth program volunteers and those who volunteer their time each month at the Mobile Food Pantry. Hours given by volunteers total about 2600! Using the standard Independent Sector rate* for volunteerism, this equates to \$86,974.

*2024 Independent Sector rate = \$33.49/hr.

Iron County Agriculture-Extension-Education Committee

The 2024 Iron County Agriculture-Extension-Education Committee was comprised of Roxanne Lutgen as Chair, Bill Thomas as Vice Chair and committee members Jamey Francis, Doug Swartz and Paul Mullard.

We would like to thank our committee members and County Board Chair, Larry Youngs, for their continued support of Extension programming.

Both UW-Madison Division of Extension and Wisconsin counties have benefited from the strong partnership to provide an array of educational programs that continue to serve the people of Wisconsin wherever they live and work. Fundamental to Extension's mission to fulfill the promise of the Wisconsin Idea, we extend the boundaries of the university to the boundaries of the state. Together we can achieve more!¹

1. *Division of Extension – County Partnership Guidance*, published by University of Wisconsin Division of Extension, <https://extension.wisc.edu/files/2021/08/CountyPartnership-Guidance.pdf>

	<p>ROXANNE LUTGEN <u>Committee Chair</u></p> <p>Extension Committee Years Served: <i>2024-present</i></p> <p>Supervisory District: <i>Mercer</i></p> <p>Other Committee Appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Finance, IT, Land Conservation, Law Enforcement, Library, Memorial Building</i>	<p>WILLIAM THOMAS <u>Committee Vice-Chair</u></p> <p>Extension Committee Years Served: <i>2005-present</i></p> <p>Supervisory District: <i>Gile</i></p> <p>Other Committee Appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Forestry, Harbors & Parks, Highway, Land Conservation, Law Enforcement</i>	
	<p>JAMEY FRANCIS <u>Committee Member</u></p> <p>Extension Committee Years Served: <i>2018-2022, 2024-present</i></p> <p>Supervisory District: <i>Hurley</i></p> <p>Other Committee Appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Board of Health, Commission on Aging, Harbor Commission, Economic Development, IT, Memorial Building</i>	<p>DOUG SWARTZ <u>Committee Member</u></p> <p>Extension Committee Years Served: <i>2024-present</i></p> <p>Supervisory District: <i>Kimball</i></p> <p>Other Committee Appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Land & Zoning, Fair Board, Human Services, Economic Development, Memorial Building, Railroad Commission</i>	
	<p>PAUL MULLARD <u>Committee Member</u></p> <p>Extension Committee Years Served: <i>2010-2018, 2024-present</i></p> <p>Supervisory District: <i>Hurley</i></p> <p>Other Committee Appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Board of Health, Fair Board, Harbor Commission, Recycling/Solid Waste</i>	<p>LARRY YOUNGS <u>County Board Chair</u></p> <p>Years Served as County Board Chair: <i>2024-present</i></p> <p>Supervisory District: <i>Hurley</i></p> <p>Other Appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Economic Development, Northwest Wisconsin CEP, WITC Board, Hurley TIF District</i>	

EXTENSION IRON COUNTY WEB ANALYTICS

2024 YEARLY INSIGHTS FOR IRON.EXTENSION.WISC.EDU & SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Total Users:

3,021 ↓ 15.6% *2023 Users: 3,565

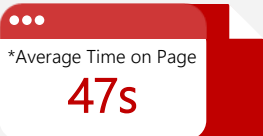
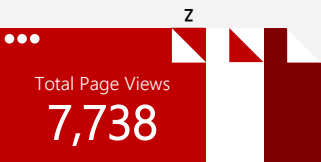


New VS. Returning:

● New visitors Total: 2.9K
● Returning Total: 396



Total Page Views:



**Average amount of time users spent viewing webpage content.*

Sessions:



Sources of Traffic:



How did visitors find the website?

Google	1.6K
m.Facebook.com	598
l.Facebook.com/	360
lm.Facebook.com/referral	181
facebook.com	113
Bing	91
uwprod.sharepoint.com	81

Top 10 Page/Post Views (posts listed in blue):

Extension Iron County Home.....	2,389
Northwoods Yard & Garden Column.....	655
Food Security Resources.....	386
Staff Directory.....	311
4-H Home Page.....	264
4-H Online Enrollment.....	264
Iron County Summer Youth Camp Registration is OPEN.....	240
Horticulture.....	164
4-H/4-H Clubs.....	152
Extension Iron County to Offer Horticulture Seminars.....	145

Extension Iron County's Facebook account continues to be a useful tool in sharing program information and resources to target audiences. Currently there are 1,069 followers.Below are analytics for 2024.



New Page Likes	85	-
Women	77.9%	-
Men	22.1%	-
Reach	14K	↓ 26.5 %
Page Visits	3.5K	↑ 7 %

Extension Iron County's Instagram account was created in March 2021 to expand outreach to a younger target audience. Currently there are 200 followers on Extension's Instagram page. Below are the demographics for 2024.



New Followers	14	-
Women	80.3%	-
Men	19.7%	-
Reach	596	↑ 138.4 %
Profile Visits	79	↑ 79 %



IT'S NOT REALLY WORK IF YOU ARE HAVING FUN

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Extension Iron County
300 Taconite Street, Suite 118
Hurley WI 54534

Phone: 715-561-2695

Toll Free: 1-888-561-2695

Fax: 715-561-2704

<https://linktr.ee/ExtensionIronCounty>

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday
7:30 am - 4:30 pm

Friday
7:30 am - 11:30 am



STAFF EMAIL ADDRESSES:

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

UW-Madison Division of Extension - Iron County
Iron County Courthouse - 300 Taconite Street, Suite 118
Hurley, Wisconsin 54534
715 561-2695
715 561-2704 (fax)
888-561-2695 (Toll free from Mercer and Springstead)

Dear Iron County Residents, Agencies and Local Officials,

UW-Madison Division of Extension - Iron County is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for all Iron County residents. Extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education, programming and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental, arrest or conviction record or veteran status.

In addition, we are committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for persons with disabilities in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. We realize that individuals with disabilities may need accommodations to participate in or benefit from educational programs, activities or services. Reasonable accommodations for a disability will be made to allow individuals to fully participate in our programs by contacting the Extension Iron County office in advance. [(715) 561-2695, toll-free 1-888-561-2695, 711 For Wisconsin Relay (TDD)]

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the Extension Iron County office.

Extension Iron County is interested in reaching Iron County and area residents with information about our upcoming programs. Our intent is to provide programs that target the diverse interests and needs of area residents. We identify interests and needs for programs by exploring specific requests and by examining issues identified in our strategic planning efforts. We want to be effective in our efforts to communicate about our programs.

We release news of upcoming programs to the following news sources: Iron County Miner, Ironwood Daily Globe, Lac du Flambeau News, Lakeland Times, North Country Sun, Park Falls Herald, WJMS/WIMI Radio, and WUPM/WHRY Radio. You can also find our programs on our Facebook and Instagram pages or sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter by visiting our website. Social media and website links are available at: <https://linktr.ee/ExtensionIronCounty>.

Please notify us of other sources you use for getting news about local events.

Thank you for your support of Extension Iron County programs. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns you have about the above information.

Regards,

Mary Pardee
Area Extension Director
Area 1 (Iron Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas Counties)



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY