



# 2025

## 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

*The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities  
in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.*







**Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
IRON COUNTY



## WELCOME LETTER

**January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025**

Dear Iron County Board of Supervisors, Community Partners & Interested Readers, Iron County Extension serves as the local link between Iron County residents and the research, education, and outreach resources of the University of Wisconsin. Through evidence-based programming and strong local partnerships, Extension supports county priorities by investing in people, strengthening leadership capacity, and fostering informed decision-making that contributes to long-term community resilience.

Youth development remains a central component of Extension’s work and a strategic investment in Iron County’s future workforce and civic leadership. Through 4-H programs, camps, leadership initiatives, and the Iron County Fair, youth gain hands-on experience that builds confidence, responsibility, and practical life skills. Programs promote personal growth, problem-solving, teamwork, and positive connections with peers and adult mentors. These experiences are intentionally designed to move youth from participation to skill-building and leadership, reinforcing pathways toward lifelong learning, community involvement, and successful careers.

Community Development efforts focused on entrepreneurship, economic readiness, and civic education strengthen Iron County’s capacity to plan and adapt. Extension facilitated entrepreneurial education, regional networking, and public forums that increased access to trusted information and connected local leaders to state and regional resources.

These initiatives demonstrate Iron County Extension’s return on public investment: leveraging University resources locally, supporting county goals, and developing the skills and leadership necessary for Iron County to remain strong, adaptable, and prepared for the future.

THANK YOU to the Iron County Board of Supervisors and the Agriculture-Extension -Education Committee for your continued support of Extension Iron County throughout 2025. 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)

## 2025 Agriculture-Extension-Education Committee Members

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

## 2025 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*  
Rebecca Holm  
*Office Manager*  
Emily Moore  
*Summer Assistant*  
Serena Tauer  
*Summer Assistant*



# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Neil Klemme (middle) served as 4-H Youth Development Educator in 2025. Also pictured are Braeden and Kasey, 4-H members who served as camp staff members in 2025.

## SUMMER CAMP: THRIVING IN IRON COUNTY

This annual report article presents the results of our comprehensive camp evaluation. The data reveals that our programming is effectively fostering thriving in multiple dimensions, including personal growth, community connection, and skill development. Iron County youth are discovering new passions, which is essential for a resilient and thriving Wisconsin.

### DISCOVERING NEW PASSIONS

The 4-H Summer Camp experience is built on the premise that when youth are exposed to a wide range of hands-on activities, they have the opportunity to discover new interests, a concept known in positive youth development as finding their "spark." This survey data strongly supports that this is a critical outcome of the camp.

This discovery phase is crucial for long-term engagement and personal fulfillment. It moves youth from passive consumption to active exploration. This enthusiasm is further highlighted by the fact that this exposure is not just about entertainment; it's about providing a space for these "sparks" to take root. Iron County 4-H provides a space where youth can explore without fear of failure, surrounded by supportive peers and mentors.

### IMPACT HIGHLIGHT: THE "ARCHERY EFFECT"

Positive youth development is not just about exposure; it's about building mastery and self-efficacy—the belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. Archery at 4-H camp stands out as a powerful example of this.

The evaluation asked youth to describe a moment when they felt really proud of themselves or successfully did something difficult. Nearly one-quarter of all proud moments described were tied to archery.

Archery provides immediate feedback. Success is clear and quantifiable (e.g., a bullseye). This creates a powerful, self-reinforcing loop where increased skill leads to more pride, which motivates further practice.

The qualitative data powerfully supports this. When asked why archery was a spark, campers didn't just say it was fun; they connected it to their competence and future plans.

- *"I got a bullseye in archery... it encouraged me to shoot more."*
- *"I want to get a bow because I like archery."*
- *"It was good practice for when I get a real bow."*

This is a prime example of a 4-H camp activity building a "spark" that carries value long after the summer ends. It isn't just about fun; it's about building a skill and a new identity—"I am someone who is good at archery"—that can be brought back to their home community. This is precisely how we build a strong, confident Iron County.

### 2025 CAMP THRIVE EVALUATION: KEY FINDINGS

Responses: 52

1

96%

EXCELLENT

Over 100% rated their experience as Good or Excellent!

2

87%

INCREASED CONFIDENCE

Feel more confident in my ability to handle challenges.

3

92%

EMPOWERING ADVENTURE

Camp Thrive helped me connect with my inner sense of adventure.

4

84%

CURIOSITY GAINED

More curious about the world around me.

5

87%

HELPED OTHERS

Felt able to help others at camp. Learned practical self-reliance and outdoor skills.

Data based on 2025 Camp Thrive Evaluation Results, highlighting key program context components and youth thriving data, all contributing to a seamless leadership development program from 3rd grade up.

4

# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## IRON SUMMER OUTPOST CAMP: FOSTERING LEADERSHIP AND INDEPENDENCE

### DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS:

A core focus of Iron Outpost Camp is developing leadership qualities in campers. Through various activities and challenges, participants are encouraged to step up, take initiative, and guide their peers. This hands-on approach helps them build confidence, communication skills, and the ability to work effectively within a group. A Real Colors Training facilitated by Klemme during camp, provides campers with a deeper understanding of their own communication style and the styles of others. This knowledge is crucial for building strong relationships, resolving conflicts, and leading with empathy and effectiveness.

### EMPOWERING THROUGH TEAMWORK AND INDEPENDENCE:

Campers develop independence through day-to-day practice. Campers take on responsibility for essential aspects of camp life, including prepping and cooking their own meals and setting up their own tents. These tasks foster a sense of self-reliance, teamwork, and problem-solving as they work together to ensure their basic needs are met. This experience not only builds practical skills but also a sense of accomplishment and independence.

### FREEDOM TO CHOOSE:

While Outpost Camp provides a structured environment, it also recognizes the importance of choice and autonomy as appropriate for this age. Campers select from a list of activities, ranging from outdoor exploration, craft projects, fishing, and group board games. This freedom to choose allows them to explore their interests, try new things, and personalize their camp experience. This element of autonomy empowers them by, fostering decision-making skills and a deeper sense of ownership over their time at camp.

### BEYOND THE ORDINARY:

Outpost Camp is an opportunity for young people to challenge themselves, discover their potential, and develop essential life skills. With a focus on leadership, teamwork, and independence, this camp prepares them to navigate the complexities of the real world with confidence and resilience.

## YOUTH COUNCIL EXPANDS THROUGH BALDWIN-WISCONSIN IDEA GRANT

Klemme wrote and received a grant to expand the scope of the Iron County Youth Leadership council, deepening the learning for the youth through partnerships with UW-Madison and the School of Human Ecology and The School of Education.

Research interns were selected and took part in a certificate course at UW to learn a process called Participatory Action Research and video interns worked with a documentary film-maker to learn filmmaking techniques. Both teams implemented and shared what they identified as needs of our community and county.

Interns will receive a \$1000.00 stipend for their work. Next steps include addressing those needs through community partnerships.



## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



### CHOPPED DAY CAMP—LOCAL YOUTH SIZZLE AT SUMMER COOKING DAY CAMP

Chopped Day Camp provided local youth with a hands-on introduction to the culinary world, blending kitchen skills with real-world business application. The week-long program offered participants a look at the journey of food, from the grocery aisle to the plate.

A highlight of the camp was a field trip to Don and GG's, a popular local restaurant. Campers went behind the scenes to tour the professional kitchen and dining areas. The owners shared valuable perspectives on the daily operations of running a food business, offering a unique look into the restaurant industry beyond what is seen as a customer.

The sessions were led by a team of dedicated 4-H leaders and professionals with culinary arts training. These expert instructors guided youth through lessons on crafting delicious desserts and essential meal planning, covering everything from balanced nutrition to flavor combinations. Participants put

their learning into practice by preparing their own nutritious lunches and snacks each day, gaining confidence and independence in the kitchen.

The week's excitement culminated in a cooking contest. Campers pooled their new knowledge, creativity, and culinary skills to develop and prepare original dishes. A panel of judges evaluated the meals showcasing the remarkable progress made by all participants. The cooking camp successfully ignited a passion for food in local youth, equipping them with valuable life skills and a deeper appreciation for the culinary arts.

### IRON COUNTY 4-H: 2025 FAIR IMPACT REPORT

The Iron County Fair serves as the premier showcase for 4-H members' hard work, dedication, and talent. This year's event was nothing short of historic, characterized by record-breaking community support and exceptional project displays.

*The Pie Auction:* A new fundraising record was shattered as the community rallied to raise \$22,000. These funds are vital for supporting county-wide 4-H initiatives and scholarships.

*Animal Auction:* For the first time, our youth livestock sales surpassed the \$100,000 milestone. This incredible figure reflects the community's investment in our members' agricultural education and business management skills.

*Creative Arts and Woodworking:* The fair featured a particularly strong showing of art projects, ranging from traditional mediums to modern digital expressions, demonstrating the vibrant creativity of our members.

Our woodworking project saw high-quality entries that showcased advanced technical skills, precision, and an impressive attention to detail in every finished piece.

*Silent Auction & Dairy Booth:* These events were highly successful, offering a variety of community-donated items that drew steady participation throughout the fair.

A staple of the fair experience, the dairy booth performed exceptionally well, serving as both a delicious service and a reliable source of income.

The success of these various fair activities provides the Iron County 4-H Leaders Association with the necessary resources to provide support for club-level programming. These funds ensure that 4-H leaders can continue to offer high-quality, impactful experiences helping youth thrive throughout the year.

Thank you to the volunteers, parents, and community members who make the Iron County Fair a transformative experience for area youth.

*Pictured right:  
Summer Assistants  
Serena Tauer and  
Emily Moore pose  
for a photo during  
the 2025 Iron  
County Summer  
Youth Camp  
program.*



*Thank you, Serena  
and Emily, for your  
hard work and for  
making this  
summer a huge  
success for area  
youth!*

# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## SISU ENDURANCE TEAM

### SET XC Ski Club

- 38 youth skiers (K-12)
- 5 enrolled coaches | 1 enrolled youth coach

### SET Running Club

- 16 youth runners
- 2 enrolled coaches | 6 volunteer coaches



## DAY CAMPS & PROJECTS

### Specialized Hands-On Learning

- **Chopped! Day Camp:** 9 culinary participants
- **Project Meetings:** 9 youth mastered shooting sports and 7 participated in woodworking at Saint Maud's.
- *Highlight:* Learning by Doing

## YOUTH CAMPS

### Iron County Summer Youth Camp

- 87 Youth (57 Campers + 30 Staff) | 11 Leaders
- *Highlight:* "Youth Leading Youth" — 30 high school-aged camp staff members.

### Outpost Camp:

- 15 Middle Schoolers | 3 Staff



## CHARTERED CLUBS

### 46 Total Club Members—Year-round Engagement

- **Green Team:** 18 youth | 6 leaders
- **Penokee Range Livestock Club:** 17 youth | 17 leaders
- **Adventurers of the North 4-H Club:** 11 youth | 3 leaders



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### Approximately \$30,200 Raised for Youth Programming

- **Includes:** Local donors, grants, registration fees, and other fundraising.
- **"Powered by You.:"** None of these programs would be possible without the generous support from individuals and businesses within our community.

*\*Total does not include funds raised by 4-H Leaders Association.*

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Joseph Miller served as Community Development Educator in 2025.

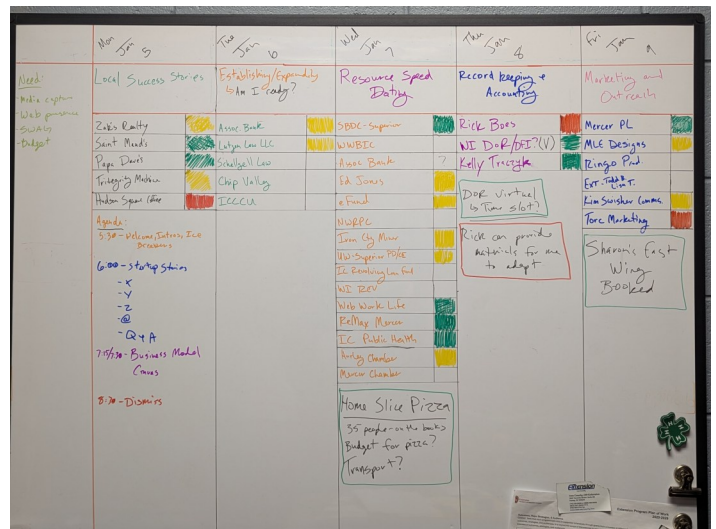
## LESSONS LEARNED

2025 was a learning experience for Community Development Educator Joseph Miller. First and foremost, it was repeatedly made apparent that the most vital tool in any toolbox is a thoughtful plan. No plan is fool-proof, but having a blueprint to work from is necessary for ensuring controlled outcomes that resemble the initial vision. Another recurring lesson throughout 2025 was that words matter: whether spoken or written, words have an impact on the audience, and word choice is important. It is also extremely important to remember—and stay true to—one’s word. And lastly, another major lesson from the past year is to show up when it counts. Memory and details are malleable, but everyone remembers who shows up when it matters.

If there’s one thing that ties these lessons together, it’s that community development requires inclusivity. Most folks want to be thought of and want to be included, and Extension work relies on many hands coming together for positive change. In 2026 and beyond, Joseph aims to be a better Extension educator through thoughtful planning (hit ‘em with the logic models!), clear language, kept promises, continuing to show up, and keeping Iron County informed about local, regional, and statewide opportunities.

PLACEMAKING	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	DIGITAL EQUITY
<p>At the core of Community Development is Placemaking. Placemaking is a quality-of-life philosophy that emphasizes a community’s vitality, livability, and overall health. A healthy community or place empowers its members to shape their surroundings through teamwork. And a strong understanding of place allows a community to define what makes it unique, emphasize that uniqueness, and present the best version of itself to visitors and neighbors.</p>	<p>The Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Hub writes that “Entrepreneurs revolutionize, solve problems, and serve needs across all aspects of society.” The foundation of entrepreneurship is recognition of a specific need and the willingness to address that specific need with new solutions. Most often, an entrepreneur will address the need with a new business venture. Although profit and financial gain are often considered as part of the entrepreneurial process, they are not the only factors.</p>	<p>Digital Equity is the condition where all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity to fully participate in our society, democracy, and economy. The division between those who are technologically proficient enough to participate in digital society and those who are not is often referred to as “the digital divide”. Achieving digital equity is essential for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.</p>

Pictured right: Joseph began planning the 2026 Entrepreneur Boot Camp in July of 2025 using lessons learned from the first iteration of Boot Camp in January. The SBDC Small Business Clinic in Ashland, hosted by Northwood Technical College and Ashland Area Development Corporation—and sponsored by the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center—served as the perfect networking opportunity to begin connecting regional and statewide resources to local entrepreneurs. The Small Business Clinic brought together well over a dozen partner organizations to provide a comprehensive series of business development presentations and workshops, including an LLC Formation Lab, AI for Small Business workshop, Digital Marketing Clinic, funding programs, and more. At right, Joseph’s whiteboard (as photographed on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025) reflects the logistics and coordination that goes into bringing together over 20 presenters and partners for the weeklong 2026 Entrepreneur Boot Camp program.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## 2025 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

### ZINE-MAKING PROVIDED USEFUL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DATA IN 2025

Zines, short for magazines, are DIY publications that are easily reproducible. Although typically associated with counter-cultural movements, zines are perfect for sharing information such as how to write a business plan, the history of municipal comprehensive planning, and diverting various types of waste into revenue streams. Using material developed during 2025 Entrepreneur Boot Camp, Joseph facilitated eight zine-making workshops throughout the summer—six at the Iron County Farmers Market, one at the Iron County Fair, and one at the UW-Extension Area 1 Meeting. Participation was generally low at the Iron County Farmers Market throughout the summer, though interest was very high in the buckets of surplus/donated seeds kept at the table to entice visitors. Despite the low participation rate, it was a valuable experience, and the Iron County Farmers Market will be an excellent partner for other community development programming efforts. Their support and work in the community are greatly appreciated.



*Pictured above: A selection of zines created during 2024 and early 2025.*

### REGIONAL COLLABORATION AT THE SBDC' SMALL BUSINESS CLINIC

Late July included a visit to Ashland for the SBDC's Small Business Clinic, hosted by Ashland Area Development Corporation and Northwood Technical College. The SBDC, or Small Business Development Center, is a business development organization that provides a wide range of business support programs throughout the state. Iron County's "local" branch is based in Superior, which means access is a bit tricky. That's what made the event especially important—establishing and maintaining relationships with regional and statewide resources is vital to the success of our rural county, and the venue served as an excellent space for networking. Connections were made with a dozen organizations providing technical, financial, and educational resources in our area.

### HURLEY KICKS OFF TWO-YEAR RURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURE PROGRAM

Wisconsin REV (Rural Entrepreneurial Venture) started up in Hurley, kicking off in September with a data presentation by Dr. Matt Kures, Distinguished Community Development Specialist and REV Program Specialist Lisa Taylor. Joseph serves as coach for the REV team, which is a two-year program aimed at achieving local economic development goals through entrepreneurship. Next, the team will work on setting near-, mid-, and long-term goals related to entrepreneurial growth focused on resources already available in the community. Wisconsin REV is based on a proven economic development framework pioneered in Nebraska.

### PULLING TOGETHER: A HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

October's treat included an author engagement with Tom Mosgaller and Jeff Yost in support of their book *Pulling Together: A Handbook for Community Change*. The book, which presents a logical expression for how to successfully set and achieve goals at the community level, is told through digestible stories from people all over the region. One story written by former Iron County Community Development Educator Will Andresen tells the tale of Miners Memorial Heritage Park in Ironwood, a sprawling series of all-season trails and local heritage monuments. 18 community members attended the engagement.

### TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT TOWN HALL EVENT

In November, alongside members of the Iron County Economic Development Committee, City of Hurley, and MSA-Professionals, Joseph facilitated a Tax Increment District Town Hall event at the Iron County Memorial Building. In preparation for the Town Hall, information was assembled and distributed through various channels, including social media, local newspapers, at the event, and door-to-door canvassing within the district map and on Silver Street. Attendance was high, with 21 attendees representing various community anchor institutions, local businesses, and private citizens with questions about how their taxes might be affected.

### ENTREPRENEUR BOOT CAMP

And finally, December was dedicated to planning the next iteration of Entrepreneur Boot Camp, connecting with resources and technical assistance providers, and getting word out about the program.

# FOODWISE



## HEALTHY CHOICES, HEALTHY LIVES

For more than 30 years, UW–Madison Extension has provided local nutrition education across Wisconsin through the federal SNAP-Ed grant program. The congressional budget reconciliation bill signed into law on July 4, 2025 ended federal SNAP-Ed funding, effective September 30, 2025.

Working with schools, food pantries, farmers markets, and community centers, FoodWise has taught practical, evidence-based skills in meal planning, food safety, and food resource management, helping people stretch food dollars and make healthier choices. We are grateful for our partners and participants and the opportunity to advance healthier communities in Iron County.

The 2025 Ashland, Bayfield, Iron County FoodWise Team consists of (L-R) Educator Deb Leonard, Regional Program Manager Jill Sanders, Educator Lindsay Larson, Healthy Communities Coordinator Marisa Dyer, Coordinator Stephanie Bakker.

## ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

UW–Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Iron County, FoodWise partnered with schools, summer-school programs, Head Start programs, senior meal programs, and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.



## IRON COUNTY IMPACTS IN 2025

Iron County FoodWise created and shared a monthly FoodWise Nutrition Newsletter that included information on food security resources, Harvest of the Month, recipes, programming updates and opportunities, and general health and well-being information.

The virtual StrongBodies strength training series was offered on an ongoing basis throughout the year in collaboration with other FoodWise teams.

FoodWise facilitated a local food educator coalition, FERN (Food Educator Resource Network). Networking meetings were facilitated to connect on community needs and priorities, explore collaborative upcoming community programming, and inform and align professional development opportunities.

- Site visits in 2025 included: Hulings Rice Center and the hazelnut processing system, Cable Community Farm, Bad River Fish House, and the Bad River Health and Wellness Center addition.

**FoodWise Nutrition  
December 2025 Newsletter**

**CELEBRATING DEB LEONARD'S  
REMARKABLE JOURNEY  
WITH FOODWISE**

As we turn the page toward December, we honor someone whose impact on Iron County has been nothing short of extraordinary: Deb Leonard. After more than 20 years of dedicated service with the FoodWise program, Deb will be retiring on December 1st.

Throughout her time with FoodWise, Deb touched countless lives—whether in classrooms, gardens, senior meal sites, or out in nature. Her presence has been a constant source of warmth, knowledge, and encouragement for learners of all ages. From nutrition lessons to hands-on gardening, Deb brought passion, energy, and light to everything she did.

A few words from Deb as she reflects on her time, "I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the community partners and participants who have supported the FoodWise program over the years. Your enthusiasm for making food and nutrition a priority in your lives has truly inspired me. The passion you brought to our shared mission gives me hope that the importance of food will continue to be passed down for generations to come."

As Deb enters retirement, she looks forward to staying engaged with the community, spending more time outdoors, and continuing to enjoy the activities that bring joy and fulfillment to others and herself.

We extend our deepest thanks to Deb for her years of service and the joy she brought to so many. May your retirement be filled with adventure, peace, and continued learning.

Thank you, Deb!  
If you would like to send well wishes to Deb, please email [Deborah.Leonard@wisc.edu](mailto:Deborah.Leonard@wisc.edu) or [stephanie.bakker@wisc.edu](mailto:stephanie.bakker@wisc.edu).

**University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Division of Extension  
Ashland, Bayfield, Iron County  
FoodWise Nutrition Team**

Stephanie Bakker, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator  
Extension Ashland, Bayfield, Iron Counties  
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[deborah.leonard@wisc.edu](mailto:deborah.leonard@wisc.edu)

Marisa Dyer, Healthy Communities Coordinator  
Phone: 715-882-7017 (Ashland County office)  
[marisa.perlberg@wisc.edu](mailto:marisa.perlberg@wisc.edu)

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**FOOD WISE** Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

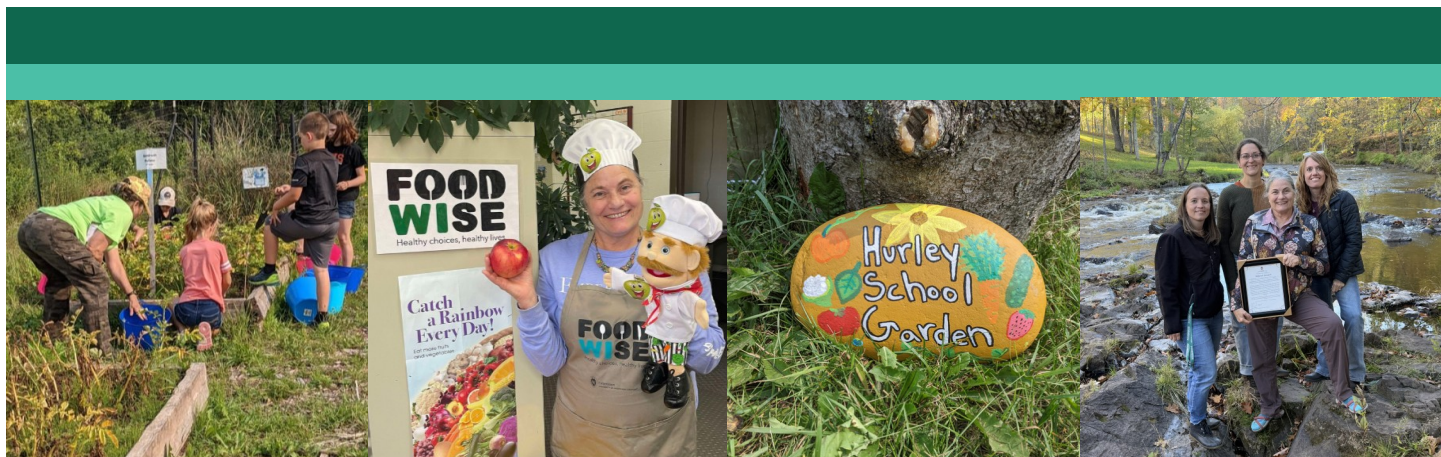
# FOODWISE

## DEB'S LEGACY IN IRON COUNTY

After 20 remarkable years with the FoodWise program, Deb Leonard officially retired this year, leaving behind a legacy that has shaped Iron County's commitment to healthy living. Deb has long been a trusted source of nutrition and wellness knowledge, empowering community members of all ages to make healthier food choices and stay active. Her enthusiasm, kindness, and deep dedication made her a beloved partner to schools, families, and organizations across the county.

Deb's influence can be seen throughout the Hurley and Mercer School Districts, where she helped nurture both the Hurley School Garden and the young learners who grew alongside it. She shared essential food-safety skills with local youth through the 4-H babysitters class and brought new, nutritious food experiences to older adults at Iron County senior meal sites just to name a few.

Her contributions have touched countless lives, and her colleagues—and the community she served so passionately—will deeply miss her energy and expertise. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Deb for her decades of service and the lasting impact she leaves behind.



## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Extension remains committed to serving all Wisconsin communities. While SNAP-Ed programming is ending, Extension will continue to bring university resources to residents across the state. Some short-term coverage gaps may occur, but our broader mission to provide health and nutrition education to everyone in the state of Wisconsin continues.

The Health & Well-Being Institute will also continue to provide health education, including StrongBodies. You can explore the variety of Extension health and well-being programming here: <https://health.extension.wisc.edu/focus-areas/>

For further information contact Kathryn Boryc Smock, FoodWise State Program Manager and Health & Well-Being Institute Associate Director, at [kathryn.boryc@wisc.edu](mailto:kathryn.boryc@wisc.edu).



# OFFICE MANAGER



*Rebecca Holm served as Office Manager in 2025.*

Rebecca Holm provided support to all Extension Iron County Educators and Summer Staff in 2025.

## 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.
- Directed clients to statewide horticulture resources for diagnostic testing of soil, plants, and insect samples.
- Iron County Mobile Food Pantry registration, documentation, and newsletters.
- Maintained and distributed community snowshoe inventory. 94 pairs were checked out by organizations and individuals in 2025.
- Coordinated reservation of the Iron County Action TrackChair.

## EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

- Distributed monthly "Just in Time Parenting" newsletters to 24 parents of new babies born in Iron County in 2025.

## PROGRAM SUPPORT

- Coordinated enrollment and documentation of all 4-H programming in 2025, including the SISU Endurance Team (SET) and summer camp programs.

- Maintained and distributed SET Ski Club equipment. 35 sets of equipment were checked out during the 2025 season.

## FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

- Maintained financial records and documentation for Extension, 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, and 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.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- Assisted courthouse staff and outside groups with using the boardroom AQUOS Smart Board.
- Assisted County Clerk with the election canvass.
- Led county rebrand and new website projects.
- Serves as county website administrator.
- Maintained a Facebook page for the Iron County Courthouse.



*Pictured above: The Area 1 County Support Staff Team attended the County Administrative Professional Development Day at the Lake View Conference Center in Wausau, WI, May 2025.*

*(L-R) Extension Iron County Office Manager Rebecca Holm, Extension Bayfield County Office Manager Theresa LaChappelle, Extension Ashland County Office Manager Blake Frost, UW-Madison Extension Douglas County Office/Media Specialist Ellen Chicka.*

# AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR AREA 1

This Annual Report highlights some of the programming efforts of our educators and staff members. In 2025 the Iron County Extension office operated with one part-time and two full-time educators, one full-time office manager, and two summer assistants to provide 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 2025, Iron County also provided funding for seasonal assistants for the extensive summer youth programs. County funds helped 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, was fully funded by federal SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) funds that came through UW-Madison Division of Extension. The FoodWise program was defunded by the U.S. Congress effective September 30, 2025.

County funds are not involved in the salaries of the FoodWise Coordinator, FoodWise Educator, or Area Extension Director.

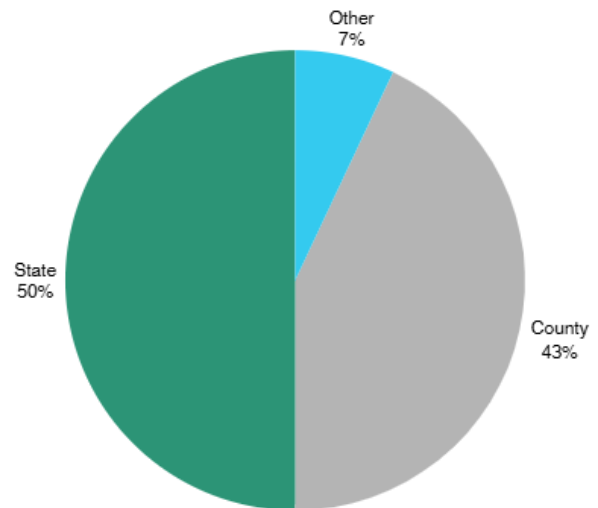
Iron County also provides office space for Cathy Techtmann, an Extension Environmental Outreach Specialist.

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



*Mary Pardee served as the Area Extension Director for Area 1 in 2025 (Area 1 includes Iron, Ashland, Bayfield and Douglas Counties).*

<b>County</b>	Co-Funded Staff Fee	\$ 85,268
	Support Staff	\$ 72,744
	County Educational Staff	\$ 13,777
	Office & Technology	\$ 7,380
	Educational Program Support	\$ 7,713
	Committee Expense	\$ 1,140
	<b>TOTAL COUNTY</b>	<b>\$ 188,022</b>
<b>State</b>	Co-Funded Staff Salary/Fringe	\$ 112,822
	FoodWise Staff & Program Support	\$ 73,326
	Office & Technology	\$ 1,802
	Professional Development	\$ 220
	Director Salary/Fringe	\$ 34,833
	<b>TOTAL STATE</b>	<b>\$ 223,003</b>
<b>Other</b>	Donations, Grants, Fees	\$ 31,726
	<b>TOTAL OTHER</b>	<b>\$ 31,726</b>
<b>TOTAL EXTENSION BUDGET</b>		<b>\$ 442,751</b>



## 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 \$90,350.

\*2025 Independent Sector rate = \$37.79/hr.

# IRON COUNTY AGRICULTURE-EXTENSION-EDUCATION COMMITTEE


The 2025 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!<sup>1</sup>

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><b>ROXANNE LUTGEN</b> <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"><li><i>Finance, Law Enforcement, Library, Memorial Building</i></li></ul>	<p><b>WILLIAM THOMAS</b> <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"><li><i>Forestry, Harbors &amp; Parks, Highway, Land Conservation/Recycling/Solid Waste, Law Enforcement</i></li></ul>	
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	<p><b>JAMEY FRANCIS</b> <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"><li><i>Aging Advisory, Board of Health, Commission on Aging, Harbor Commission, Economic Development, Memorial Building</i></li></ul>	<p><b>DOUG SWARTZ</b> <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"><li><i>Land &amp; Zoning, Fair Board, Human Services, Economic Development, Memorial Building, Railroad Commission</i></li></ul>	
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	<p><b>PAUL MULLARD</b> <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"><li><i>Board of Health, Economic Development, Fair Board, Harbor Commission, Land Conservation/Recycling/Solid Waste</i></li></ul>	<p><b>LARRY YOUNGS</b> <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"><li><i>Economic Development, Northwest Wisconsin CEP, WITC Board, Hurley TIF District</i></li></ul>	
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# EXTENSION IRON COUNTY WEB ANALYTICS

## 2025 YEARLY INSIGHTS FOR IRON.EXTENSION.WISC.EDU & SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

### Total Users:

3.4K ↑ 11.7% \*2024 Users: 3,021

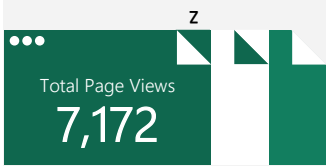


### New VS. Returning:

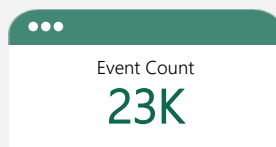
● New visitors Total: 3.2K  
● Returning Total: 342



### Total Page Views:



### Sessions:

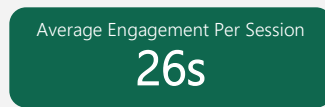
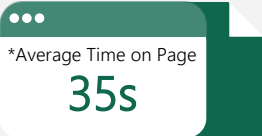


### Sources of Traffic:



How did visitors find the website?

Google	1.1K
m.Facebook.com	607
l.Facebook.com/	375
facebook.com	194
lm.facebook.com	183
Bing	144
co.iron.wi.gov	44



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

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

Extension Iron County Home.....	1,903
Food Security Resources.....	364
Iron County Summer Camp Programs .....	301
Staff Directory.....	281
4-H & Youth.....	276
Iron County Summer Youth Camp Pre-Registration is OPEN.....	263
Join 4-H.....	253
Join Our Mailing List.....	228
Outdoor Adaptive Equipment.....	178
FoodWise Newsletters.....	173

Extension Iron County's Facebook account continues to be a useful tool in sharing program information and resources to target audiences. Currently there are 1,096 followers. Below are analytics for 2025.



New Page Likes	59	-
Women	77.9%	-
Men	22.1%	-
Views	118.2K	-
Content Interactions	3.3K	↑ 52.3%

Extension Iron County's Instagram account was created in March 2021 to expand outreach to a younger target audience. Currently there are 293 followers on Extension's Instagram page. Below are the demographics for 2025.



New Followers	93	-
Women	78.3%	-
Men	21.7%	-
Views	887	-
Content Interactions	23	↑ 100 %



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:**

Mary Pardee  
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**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
IRON COUNTY