



Iron County

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

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

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

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

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

Paul Putnam, District Director



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MSU Extension Upper Peninsula



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BY THE NUMBERS

100+ years in Iron County



3 Extension professionals located in Iron; 50 provide educational opportunities



619 youth involved in 4-H and other youth enrichment programs



116 MSU Alumni live in Iron County



MSU Extension website received 888 Iron County visitors; 84% were first-time visitors



\$21,124 spending with local businesses



MSU disbursed \$77,762 in financial aid to Iron County students



\$1,102,286 total economic impact in Iron County

Program Highlights

Fiscally Ready Communities: Capital Asset Management and Planning

Register at: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/FRC2020>

MSU Extension and the Michigan Department of Treasury in partnership present the 2020 Fiscally Ready Communities program: Capital Asset Management and Planning. Michigan communities have experienced fiscal instability for a number of reasons. This training will help prepare for future challenges through fiscally sustainable best practices. Recurring annual expenses are fairly simple to budget, but repair and replacement of big-ticket items can be much more difficult. A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will help your local government organize those major projects and forecast the expenses to make long-term planning simpler. This session will cover the basics of a CIP, best practices, and give participants a chance to share techniques that have worked for their community. Additionally, the training will assist both elected and appointed local officials in outlining your policies and procedures for capital asset management and preplanning. This will ensure that your local government is being proactive, while discussing the interconnectivity of many local government requirements.

The program will be offered nine times around the state in 2020. Northern Michigan locations include Iron River – July 8; St. Ignace – July 9; and Grayling – July 11.

This program is free, and designed for elected and appointed officials as well as local government administrators and staff.

Program Highlights



Senior Project Fresh coupons can be used at registered farmers markets to purchase fresh produce.

Food Safety in Iron County

MSU Extension educational programs for food service workers in Iron County inform and educate food establishment employees about the major risk factors that contribute most to foodborne illness—personal hygiene and health, cooking temperatures, holding temperatures and cleaning of food contact surfaces. Education increases the food safety skills of employees which decreases the risk and incidence of foodborne illness in Michigan and increases the productivity and profitability of food establishment businesses.

30 people from Iron County received food safety education from MSU Extension. Beth Waitrovich teaches ServSafe™ Manager classes 4 times a year in Dickinson County. ServSafe™ Certification, a national certification program is for those working in food service, is taught in 8 hour formats ServSafe teaches about foodborne illness, how to prevent it, and how to train employees on food safety issues.

The ServSafe Manager course uses proven techniques, covering new Food and Drug Administration Food Code rules and content related to the food industry. Topics in the course: providing safe food, forms of contamination, the safe flow of food from purchase to serving, food safety management systems, safe facilities & pest management, cleaning & sanitizing. MSU Extension provides participants education to successfully pass the Managers Certification exam. A score of 75% or higher is required in order to pass the Manager's Certification exam.

Senior Project Fresh

Gwen Apper, Community Nutrition Instructor, housed in Baraga County, was able to distribute Senior Project Fresh coupons in to eligible seniors in Iron County. Seventy-five seniors received coupons, which were used to purchase fresh produce from registered farmers markets.

Program Highlights

4-H Tech Changemakers

Michigan 4-H is one of only 15 states that received funds in 2019 through a partnership between the National 4-H Council and Microsoft to implement the 4-H Tech Changemakers program that aims to help close the rural broadband internet gap. Michigan's \$56,800 grant award is empowering teens to bring technology and digital skills access to their communities in Dickinson, Gogebic, Iron, and Menominee Counties in the Upper Peninsula.

The 4-H Tech Changemakers program puts teens at the forefront of creating change in their communities, empowering them to serve as digital ambassadors by equipping them with the tools, resources, and technical partners to help them be successful. In the Upper Peninsula, 4-H youth are teaching community workshops that increase adults' comfort level in utilizing digital technology and introduce the opportunities that broadband internet can provide.

In 2019, 4-H adult volunteers and youth from the Upper Peninsula attended national (Washington, D.C.) and regional (Chicago, IL) digital skills trainings hosted by the National 4-H Council and Microsoft that were funded above the grant award amount. 4-H digital ambassadors also receive mentoring by national and local experts.

The skills gained by these experiences are assisting local U.P. county 4-H programs to elevate teens as teachers. 4-H teens are building their leadership and communication skills, identifying and addressing local digital needs, and building digital skills for their future careers.



4-H Tech Changemaker, Rayven from Iron County is eager to help bridge sciences and humanities within her small rural community in the remote western Upper Peninsula of Michigan.



Program Highlights

Training for Local Zoning Board of Appeals

In partnership with the City of Iron River, MSU Extension presented a training program for Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) members in Iron County on Thursday, January 23, 2020 at Iron River City Hall. Planning for this started in Oct. 2019 and there were a total of 12 local appointed and elected officials from Iron County at the training.

Program Description:

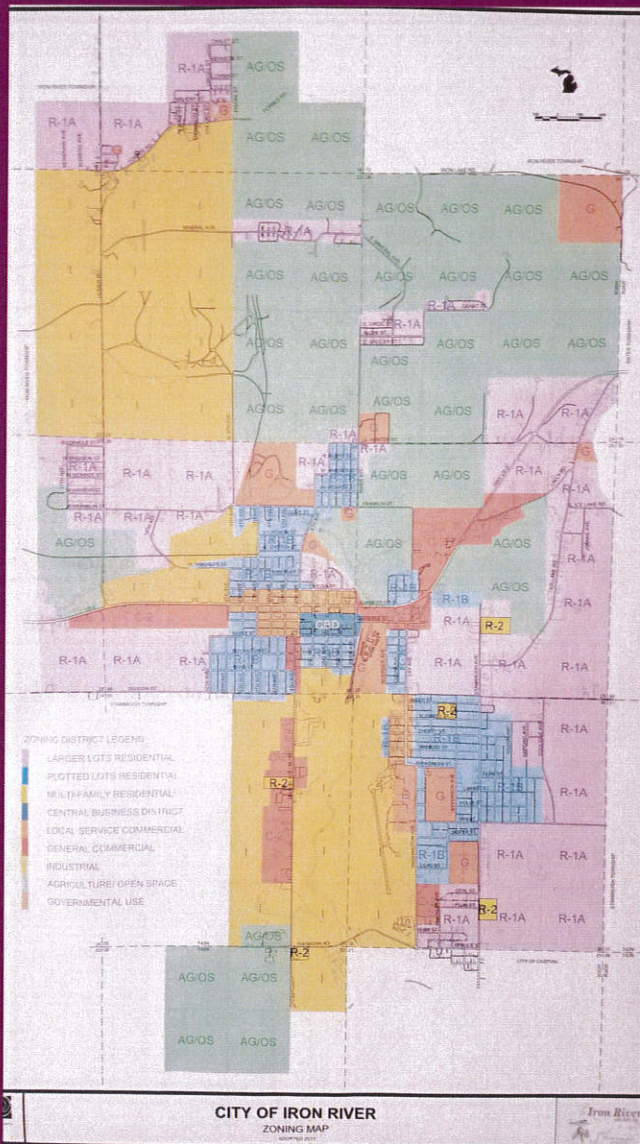
ZBA members are regularly confronted with difficult decisions regarding the physical development of the community. Faced with ordinance interpretation, appeals of previous decisions, and requests for variances, information on which to base decisions can seem vague, pressures can be great, and the threat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

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

- statutory requirements,
- appeals process,
- process to make a decision,
- rules of procedure, and
- conducting meetings

The training was tailored for ZBA members and staff responsible for administering the zoning ordinance. Master Citizen Planners earned 2.5 hours of continuing education.

Instructor: Brad Neumann, AICP, Senior Extension Educator, City of Marquette ZBA member (and former chair)



Program Highlights

4-H FIT Program in Iron Co.

Empowering Youth through 4-H, MSU Extension provides learning opportunities that help prepare youth for work, especially for jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math.

"...when I was involved in 4-H clubs several years ago, I had no idea the impact this would have on my life. I grew as a leader, communicator, citizen and person..." - 4-H Alumna

In August 2019, five Houghton-Keweenaw County 4-H youth participated in a career exploration program (Assessing Your Community for Tourism - FIT) to learn about community development by conducting a two-day professional tourism assessment in Iron County. Teens subsequently provided assessment results to community decision makers and gave a presentation about the experience.

Smart Gardening in Iron Co.

Michigan State University Extension provided a Smart Gardening educational booth at five different events throughout Iron County in 2019 directly reaching at least 115 adults and 66 youth. 183 people were reached indirectly, i.e. picked up resources. Events included the Iron Live, Work, Play Show, the Beechwood Historical Society's gardening event, Iron County Fair & Down on the Farm, and the West Iron District Library Parenting Fair. Consumer Horticulture staff and Extension Master Gardeners assist with these outreach events.

Educational programs continue with the Forest Park School Orchard at the Green Thumb Community Garden. An apple tree care workshop was provided to students in the Environmental Science class. Students learned about the proper way to stake an apple tree, why & when staking is important, pruning methods, and then practiced staking apple trees.

Iron County residents continue to receive gardening advice via the Consumer Horticulture Educator. 44 Iron County residents were directly assisted with their lawn, garden, and soil testing questions in 2019. Anyone can call MSU Extension's lawn and garden toll free hotline at 1-888-678-3464 or upload questions online through the Ask an Expert resource at www.migarden.msu.edu.



Participants enjoying a seed starting activity at the Iron Live, Work, Play Show. Photo Credit—Rebecca Krans, MSU Extension

Program Highlights



Iron County First Impressions Tourism Assessment Quick Facts

By Will Cronin, Tourism & Community
Development Extension Educator

Worked closely with Paul and Erika at the Iron County Chamber to pilot the first countywide First Impressions Tourism assessment. The ICC has been a great partner for MSU Extension in this project! Assessment team of five MSUE staff with expertise in:

- Community and Regional Planning
- Local Government
- Tourism Development
- Arts and Culture
- Natural Resources and Forestry
- Over 16 hours of pre-visit research.
- Approximately of 200 hours in the county.
- Three men, two women, representing the Baby Boom, Gen X, and Millennials.
- Included a youth assessment by five high school-aged 4H youth.
- Data is still being compiled and the final report is not yet available, however the assessors visited tourism assets in Iron River, Crystal Falls, Amasa, Alpha, Chicagon, Gaastra, Caspian, Mastodon, and several locations in the backcountry.
- The adult assessment team evaluated:
- Twenty-eight unique tourism attractions
- Seventeen unique eating and drinking places
- Ten unique shopping places
- **Fifty-five total unique assets evaluated**

Community Forum Results

The Community Forum took place on November 11, 2019 at Young's Golf Resort in Iron River. Will Cronin gave a presentation discussing the findings and recommendations of the assessment team, grounded in research-based best practices of asset based community development.

Program Highlights

Evaluations were very positive, 100% of respondents indicated that they feel the FIT program can help Michigan communities interested in developing tourism. Additionally, all respondents felt their awareness of Iron County's assets increased, as did their knowledge of how to maximize those assets. All agreed that they envision themselves or the Iron County community using the information shared to advance tourism.

Key Comments:

"I feel confident that we can make great improvements on our county tourism after this program."

When asked to specify short term actions they intent to take as a result of the FIT program, comments included:

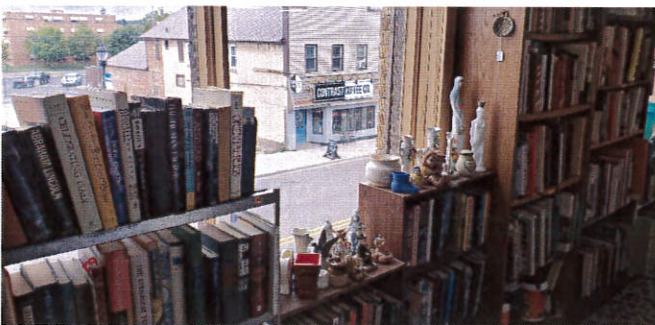
"Explore the theater and facade program for my community, also improve our business website/yelp."

"Work with Iron County Chamber on better promoting water trails."

"Help others with google listings and adding websites."

"Ask for help from those more knowledgeable of social media; put a mural on my building, better signage."

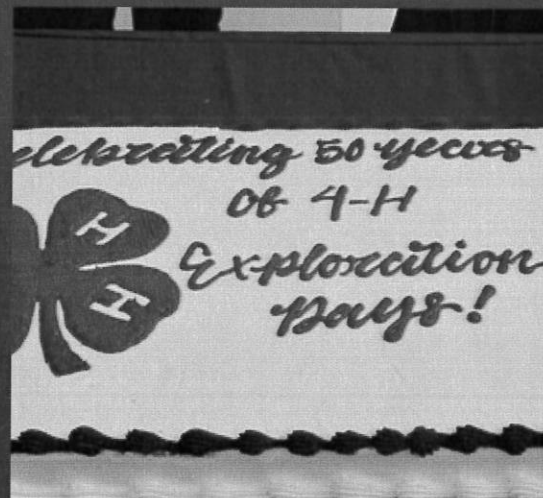
"Update the outside of my business to look cleaner, help other businesses with their social media outreach."



Investing in Iron County Youth with 4-H & MSU Extension

According to research completed by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University-

4-H'ers are 4X more likely to make contributions to their communities, 2x more likely to be civically active, and 2x more likely to make healthier choices.



4-H Exploration Days

This MSU precollege program, that takes place annually in June, brings youth ages 11-19 to the campus of Michigan State University to live like a college student for three days and build critical life skills for the transition to college and adulthood. There are more than 200 session choices held on and off campus that attending youth can choose from. The program is designed to increase responsibility, confidence, independence, decision-making, communication and leadership skills. It also fosters the ability to meet new people and make new friends from different places and backgrounds while developing and expanding career and personal interests. Iron County sent 17 youth with five chaperons to Expo Days in 2019, a milestone celebrating 50 years of Exploration Days.

Other happenings in Iron County 4-H

Our Iron County 4-H office was visited by Jeff Dwyer, Director of MSU Extension in August. It was wonderful to have a visitor from campus experience our operation in Iron County. Jeff was here for half an hour but learned a lot about what we do in Iron County. Before he left, I was able to give him a quick tour of the building—he was quite impressed and took lots of pictures.

On Sunday, October 13th, the Iron County 4-H Council held their annual Awards Banquet at the Windsor Center in Iron River. There are 44 youth and 29 adult leaders and volunteers. Our volunteers were recognized for **one to fifty-one** years of volunteer service. Youth were recognized for **one to fourteen** years of 4-H membership.

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