



# WEXFORD COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024

401 N. Lake Street, Suite 700 Cadillac, MI 49601

## Message from the District Director

It's a privilege to once again highlight the impact of our ongoing collaboration between Wexford County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Thanks to your continued partnership, our team has been able to deliver meaningful, research-backed programs that benefit youth, families, entrepreneurs and the broader community of Wexford County.



Throughout 2024, MSU Extension staff have worked diligently to promote healthier lifestyles, support local and emerging businesses, foster youth leadership and career readiness, and assist farmers with business planning, pest management, crop production, and mental health resources. Our team members are deeply embedded in the community! We live here, work here, and are ready to respond to the emerging needs of our neighbors.

This progress wouldn't be possible without your support. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Wexford County, thank you for helping us make a difference. We're excited about the year ahead and hope to see you at one of our upcoming programs or events.

## Impact



37,484 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters and handouts



34 answered Ask Extension questions



1,357 participants from the county attended programs.



45 volunteers in the county



68 total soil tests processed



59 programs hosted in the county

## Wexford County Office Staff:

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**Kate King**  
*4-H Program Coordinator*



**Heather Salas**  
*Office Manager*



**Eric Karbowski**  
*District 6 Director*



**Danielle Schrock**  
*Master Gardener Program Instructor*



**Niki Schultz**  
*MSU Extension Educator*



**Kendra Gibson**  
*Community Nutrition Instructor*



**Bill Lindberg**  
*Christmas Tree Educator*



**Erin Lizotte**  
*Integrated Pest Management Coordinator and Educator*



# Beyond Ready



**Sign Up for our Newsletter:**

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/AcBjb7p/D6>



**Follow us on Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/MSUExtensionWexfordCounty>

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## Overall Impact

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



12 policy, systems, and environmental changes with those PSE sites. 1,490 people impacted.



9 Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy System and Environmental sites receiving PSE education within the county.



174 client consultations from Wexford County



29,264,562 contacts through social media, web activity, e-newsletters, and handouts. (STATEWIDE)

## Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Agricultural Productivity

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67,320 of participants in community, food, and environment programs from across Michigan



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



57 participants in county agriculture programs.



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





87 youth enrolled in 4-H



1,357 4-H youth participants



30 4-H total volunteers



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



777 participants in nutrition and physical activity were hosted in-county.



512 of county residents who participated in health and nutrition programs.

### SNAP ED Highlight:

After completing several Cooking for One series, we talked about ways to continue being active with other residents outside of face-to-face lessons. After checking in a couple months later, they informed me that they implemented chair exercises after our previous conversation. Almost everyday, about 15 residents meet to do at least 15 minutes of chair exercise together. This goes to show that starting a simple conversation can help create sustainable positive health behaviors.

*"I have felt more energized since starting chair exercises. It has helped me get through the winter blues."*



### 4-H Program – Bullseye Bash Target Archery Competition

4-H Bullseye Bash Target Archery Competition in Cadillac, Michigan, became more than just a local event—it became a celebration of growth, community, and the power of friendly competition. The day was a reflection of the importance of providing young archers with a low-pressure environment to learn, grow, and prepare for the bigger challenges ahead.

The friendly competition had allowed young archers to grow, not just as athletes, but as people. It reminded them that success isn't always about winning—it's about progress, perseverance, and the community that supports you along the way.



## Wexford County MSU Extension Highlights:

### ***Christmas Tree Educator Updates:***

The Spring Christmas Tree Meeting at the Lake City Research Station was a great opportunity for local growers to learn and connect. The afternoon included lunch and several short presentations focused on practical topics like weed control, pest management, tree nutrition, and using weather tools to track pest development. Attendees picked up useful tips to support healthy tree growth and had time to ask questions and share ideas with others in the industry.



### ***Alliance for Economic Success: Michigan Economic Developers Association's 2024 Capitol Day -***

MEDA's 2024 Capitol Day, now called Economic Development Impact Day, brought together economic developers and state leaders to discuss key issues like workforce housing and legislative priorities. The event featured policy updates, networking, and conversations aimed at strengthening Michigan's economic development efforts.

### ***Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Highlight:***

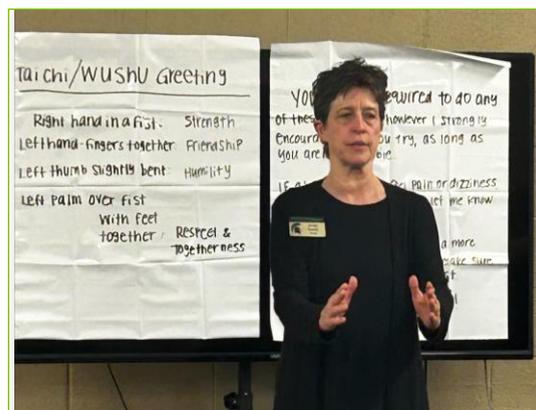
A two-day event in Cadillac, Michigan, bringing together over 100 participants from across the state to share ideas, attend breakout sessions, and strengthen rural entrepreneurial communities. Hosted by MSU Extension, the conference featured expert speakers, local charm, and practical strategies for economic development.



## Wexford County MSU Extension Highlights:

### ***Health Educator Highlights / updates:***

MSU Extension offers a variety of health programs to help people manage chronic conditions and improve wellness. Workshops include Stress Less with Mindfulness, RELAX: Alternatives to Anger, Tai Chi for Arthritis, and Dining with Diabetes. The PATH series supports self-management for chronic disease, pain, and diabetes. These programs are practical, supportive, and open to the community.



### ***Integrated Pest Management Coordinator and Educator :***

As a member of the Integrated Pest Management Program, Erin and her team coordinated meetings to educate the community about the Spotted Lanternfly, Box Tree Moth, Balsam Woolly Adelgid, and the Spongy Moth to keep the community informed. Response Teams for box tree moth, spotted lanternfly, and balsam woolly adelgid have been developed by the IPM Program over the last 3 years in response to emerging or critical IPM issues including invasive pests. Response Teams consist of relevant state, federal and university partners including regulatory, research, outreach and communications expertise. The team facilitates information exchange, collaborative monitoring, mitigation planning, resource sharing and consistent messaging to stakeholders.

The Michigan Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Alliance hosted members of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) pesticide regulatory team for tours.



# Master Gardener Program Updates:

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program offers adults in Wexford County science-based training in gardening and horticulture. Participants gain practical knowledge and become certified Master Gardeners, helping to lead local gardening projects and share research-backed practices with the community.



## Food Safety Educator Highlight:

During a ServSafe® class, Food Safety Educator Kara Lynch was sharing resources, including the [Think Food Safety](#) (TFS) social media page. A participant shared her excitement and support of following TFS saying “I love it” and encouraged others to follow it. Her excitement about some of the information and resources she has gleaned from the site was evident. This organic show of support is helpful to get feedback on the impact and encourage others to follow.

Another participant provided feedback after taking the ServSafe® class with Kara:

*“Thank you so much for your help with studying for the serve safe exam. I appreciate your professionalism and desire for everyone to succeed.”*

### Impact:



142 participants in community, food and environmental programs from Wexford



71 participants in agriculture and agribusiness programs from Wexford



512 participants in health and nutrition programs from Wexford



644 participants in children and youth programs from Wexford



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