

## University of WI-Extension

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**September 2008 Edition**

**Extension Education & Recycling  
Committee – Douglas County**

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### EXTENSION & INTERNATIONAL LIAISON AGENT

*Tom Syverud*

Net farm income is expected to continue to rise in Douglas County, however not as much as statewide. The rise is due to corn and soybean prices, and we depend more on animal product sales. While dairy and livestock sales may decline, there has been a growth in sales of hay and oilseeds, like canola. The horticulture enterprises of vegetables, greenhouses and nurseries account for over \$1 million in economic activity and 60 full or part-time jobs.

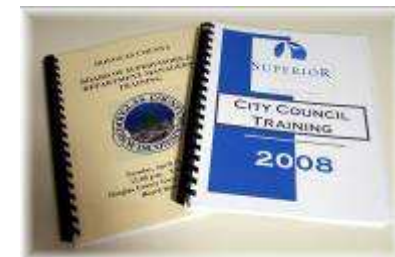
Higher production costs will limit the increase in farm income. Purchased feed, fuel and nitrogen fertilizer all cost more. Natural gas is the raw material for nitrogen fertilizer. The weak US dollar has also increased the cost of potash imported from Canada. Higher feed costs are also due to the increasing volume of corn used in ethanol production. Prices in farm inputs were not expected to rise as much as last year, however recent problems in the economy can change that. At current prices, the government program payments to farms are also down. While the weak dollar makes agricultural commodity exports competitive in the world market, it keeps feed prices high. Finally, inflation is a wild-card.

To be called a farm, it must have sales of a \$1,000 or more in a year. In Douglas County, 95 % of the farms have sales of less \$40,000 a year, 50% have sales less than \$3,000 a year. About a third of those farming, considerate it a principal occupation and the average age is between 50 and 60 years old. In most categories of agricultural products sold, the County ranks in the lowest 10% statewide. Exceptions are berries, aquaculture, and nursery stock. Still, agriculture accounts for around \$50 million in economic activity and 500 jobs. While farmland continues to be lost, it may have less to do with suburban sprawl than with the relative profitability of farmland. The amount of undeveloped land is increasing.

### COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

*Fariba Pendleton*

On June 30, 2008, a training was implemented by Pendleton for the Superior City Council members. The purpose of the training was to provide a foundation of information to assist in making knowledgeable decisions while carrying out responsibilities of a City Councilor. Subject matters learned by participants included, but were not limited to: City Organizational Structure, Roles & Responsibilities of the Council Members, Mayor, and Department Managers, Financing, Open Meetings Law, Ethics & Conflict of Interest, and Comprehensive Planning. In addition, the Duluth Superior Community Foundation "Tools of Civility" were discussed with the attendees. The feedback received from participants was extremely positive and in general, they perceived the information learned as very beneficial.



Pendleton has been taking a very active role in providing government education for local officials.

The success of the April training for the Douglas County Board of Supervisors led to the above training and upcoming trainings for County Committees this fall. These are all quality trainings utilizing research based information from UW-Extension Local Government Center, Wisconsin Counties Association, and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

As travel costs continue to rise, local elected officials have expressed great satisfaction & appreciation for these local quality trainings.

## FAMILY LIVING PROGRAM

Linda Bruce

### Life After Incarceration

For a 10-week period ending in July, Bruce worked with male inmates in the Douglas County jail in a series of Life After Incarceration (LAI) lessons. LAI is an integrated program designed to help reduce recidivism and prepare individuals for their return to society by providing supportive social, educational, and vocational knowledge and skills. Topics include coping strategies, decision-making, financial goal setting, exploring education, employment/vocational training, returning to family/friends, and parenting.

Participating inmates completed evaluations before and following the Life After Incarceration lessons. All felt the lessons were valuable and would make a positive difference in their lives upon release. Written comments included:

- ❖ The most important thing I learned was stress management.
- ❖ I have learned to keep an open mind – to learn everything you can, stress management and working with people to try to resolve conflict.
- ❖ Remember what you learn and apply it daily. The only person that can get you angry is yourself.
- ❖ I know have the ability to forgive myself and move forward in life in a positive manner. I cannot control others, but I can control myself.
- ❖ I would tell other inmates to sit down and really think about where you and how you got there – accountability is the key in moving forward.
- ❖ Motivate yourself. You only have one life.
- ❖ I no longer let everything around me stress me out.
- ❖ I have learned that I have the ability to weigh my options instead of making split second decisions without thought.
- ❖ I have learned to take responsibility for my actions, and to change my old habits.
- ❖ Never give up on yourself.
- ❖ Thank you for making me a better person.

## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Sarah Wilcox



### 4-H Camp Counselor Trainings

Douglas and Washburn County 4-H hold “Junior Camp” together for three days each June. This year the State 4-H Program implemented a new policy that requires 4-H camp counselors to receive six hours of training, not including camp planning time (activities, schedule, etc.), prior to camp.

Wilcox created a pre-training survey and used the counselors’ responses to determine where the most need for training existed. For example, there was a strong need for “helping campers develop a sense of group ownership.” Wilcox helped counselors assemble camp backpacks that they used to select welcoming activities for their cabin groups, lead group games and activities with their campers during down times, and assist their cabin groups in selecting and performing a “4-H appropriate” camp fire skit.

A post-camp survey determined that, on average, counselors learned the most about the following topics at the pre-camp trainings:

- ❖ Their roles and responsibilities as counselors.
- ❖ The significant role teamwork plays during camp.
- ❖ How to help campers develop a sense of group ownership.
- ❖ Effective ways to fill “down time.”

When asked what one thing learned at counselor training most helped them at camp, counselors said:

- ❖ “How to handle children who had inappropriate attitudes and behavior.”
- ❖ “The differences in different age groups of kids.”
- ❖ “That I knew the other counselors before attending camp.”
- ❖ “The kids always come first. This one rule helped me make decisions, like what would be more fun or more helpful to the campers.”
- ❖ “How to ‘be there’ for campers when they’re having a hard time.”

## COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Joan Wimpe

Northland Wisconsin Financial Wellness, a financial education program/club, co-sponsored by the Superior Public Library was initiated in July and August. The program targeted 5-8<sup>th</sup> graders and involved 8 youth. Youth reported that they’ve gained a lot from the money club and commented: “It’s a good influence for kids”, “We learned how to share and save and spend money”, “We learned about percentages”. The group voted to continue the club for up to four years. A second group is scheduled to begin in October and targeting 3-5<sup>th</sup> graders. A grant from \$\$ Smart Week of \$500 will help to fund the second group where there may be 20-25 youth.

Secretary Roberta Gassman of Workforce Development recently met with a group of local citizens regarding local issues. Secretary Gassman reported that the minimum wage rate will likely increase and has the support of Governor Doyle. The Superior Days Youth Delegation had presented and advocated for equal minimum wage rates for youth and adults. She indicated that having youth advocating for equality in minimum wage rates made an impact on the decision making. This is a great example of youth initiating change in their community and governments.

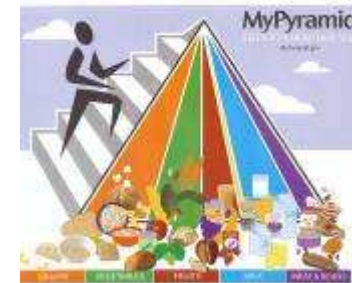
For the past two years the Superior, A Community for Youth has planned and coordinated Lake Superior Day in July. Additional community partners and a new variety of activities to the celebration were added this year. This typically small event suddenly blossomed to 300-400 youth and families! There seems to be several ideas about what contributed to the change at this year’s events: different activities such as kite flying, moonwalk, face painting, etc., the air show, gas prices, having a tent, and the presence of the LL Smith. Whatever happened, it was a great afternoon with many educational and informational activities. Youth involved were thrilled with the outcome of the day and felt very successful!

## WI NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Grace Gee and Toni Britton

The Douglas County Nutrition Education Program (NEP) partners with several community organizations that work with adults. One organization that Grace Gee, Nutrition Program Coordinator, works with regularly is the Human Development Center-Chemical Dependency Unit.

In the past year, 15 classes have been taught to 87 clients in treatment for substance abuse. The sessions are taught as a series and emphasize the importance of healthy eating and being physically active when recovering from chemical dependency.



Topics taught include the My Pyramid guidelines, healthy beverage choices, reading food labels, and cooking sessions.

Written evaluations done at the end of each class series found:

- ❖ 78% of the clients rated the sessions “fun and interesting”
- ❖ 22% rated the class “ok, not bad”
- ❖ 0% rated it “so boring I almost fell asleep”

When asked “The best part of our time together”, sample comments were:

- ❖ “Learning about food I didn’t know”
- ❖ “Learning amounts of food to eat”
- ❖ “Questions and good answers”
- ❖ “Getting cookbook at end of the session-recipes are easy and low cost”