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## Effort to gather, gain young professionals

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One of the biggest concerns you'll hear local employers raise is the difficulty of attracting young professionals to the Monroe area.

It's hard to keep some of the best and brightest of our youth from leaving to explore new areas, and it's difficult to convince people to move to our smaller communities. It's commonly called a "brain drain," a shortage of well-educated, highly-qualified young employees that employers look for when looking to stay or relocate.

There is an effort under way to pool the resources of the area's young professionals and encourage discussion about creating communities that are attractive to young professionals. From 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, a young professionals event will be held at the Monroe campus of Blackhawk Technical College. State Rep. Brett Davis, R-Oregon, certainly a young professional himself, will be a guest speaker. A 2007 Green County Young Professional of the Year will be named. And there will be networking and discussions.

The event has been organized by young professionals from Green County University of Wisconsin-Extension, The Swiss Colony, Inc., Blackhawk Technical College and Roth Kase USA Ltd. It's being called "a fun way for young professionals to meet their peers in Green County" by Lori Rodefelf, learning resource specialist at BTC.

"Our intent with the event is to connect young professionals with one another so they can begin to take an active role in creating communities that young professionals can be excited about living and working in," said Sarah Burgert, UW-

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Extension community resource development educator.

What happens after Thursday's event really is up to the young professionals who get together. The issue certainly is an important one to the economic future of Green and Lafayette counties, with communities that are seeking ways to grow tax bases and improve the quality of life. Those undertaking the effort to tackle the issue should be commended. As the UW-Extension states in a news release, it's important for young professionals to be involved in community organizations and local politics, so they have a voice in the things which affect their everyday lives. Certainly in Green and Lafayette counties, where there usually is a dearth of candidates for public office, there is an opportunity for younger people to be involved and to make a difference.

Any young professional interested in attending the event probably should make their intentions known soon, as planners want to make sure there's enough food for everyone. Contact Jayne Butts in the UW-Extension office at [jayne.butts@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:jayne.butts@ces.uwex.edu) or 328-9441.

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