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May 9, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to commend the La Crosse County UW-Extension staff, specifically Agriculture Agent Steve Huntzicker and Horticulture Educator Joyce Cielecki. Steve and Joyce do an outstanding job reaching out to the community and are always a pleasure to work with. We very much value the business partnership we have with the two of them and the UW-Extension.

Our TV station routinely conducts market research to determine what type content is of interest to viewers in our area. As the result of a recent survey which identified gardening as the most popular hobby among residents in the 13 counties we serve, we approached Steve and began talking about ways to communicate more gardening related information to area residents. Working together, we came up with the Ask a Master Gardener Volunteer website featuring a question and answer forum and a weekly television segment called Hands on Gardening.

The Ask a Master Gardener Volunteer website is a three way partnership between the UW-Extension (Steve and Joyce both answer questions as needed and help manage the volunteers), the Bluff Country Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV's research and respond to the gardening questions submitted by users) and WKBT provides the technical expertise to manage to the website and promote it. We are now entering our third year and average more than 7,000 hits each year on this site.

Hands on Gardening airs on WKBT in our highly rated morning newscast reaching about 8,000 viewers and in our 9pm newscast on sister station MyNetwork TV. Steve and Joyce determine timely topics and what information is of use to viewers. We videotape the segments and produce them for air. We've gotten positive response from viewers, who tell us they really appreciate the fact that this information is local and very practical for people in our area.

We're proud to partner with the UW-Extension to provide area residents with information they find of interest and we look forward to continuing and growing this business partnership in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Paape". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Anne Paape  
News Director  
WKBT NewsChannel 8