



Dean and Director
University of Wisconsin-Extension
601 Extension Building
432 North Lake Street
Madison, WI 53706-1498
608-263-2775
608-265-4545 (fax)
800-947-6644 (TTY)

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Dear Senator/Representative,

During several of my recent visits with legislators, we discussed Cooperative Extension's resources and educational approaches we are using to help Wisconsin residents cope with the recession. Because this information was so well received by your colleagues, I wanted to share it with you. We offer timely and accessible information and educational programs in counties supported by the resources of agencies, businesses, nonprofits and the University of Wisconsin System. By doing so, we leverage state resources with county and federal funds to educate people where they live and work. Our presence in 72 counties and three tribes is critically important during difficult economic times.

- In the area of family financial management, we provide print and web-based educational materials and programs about managing finances in tough times. Topics include cutting spending during a recession, dealing with creditors, using emergency savings and getting by between jobs. These resources are available at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/> and are shared with local media statewide. We also offer a *Managing Your Personal Finances in Tough Times* blog available at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/toughtimes/>, and we offer a summary of other financial programs and their impacts at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/impact/index.cfm>.
- We help communities build an effective response to the foreclosure problem by conducting local programming on foreclosure and predatory lending prevention. We collaborate with public and private sectors to organize conferences seeking solutions to the foreclosure problem. And, we provide essential data that informs decision makers on where to target resources.
- Our educators created a "community indicator" series that presents local data on subprime lending and foreclosure. The information helps identify opportunities and problems facing communities and opens the door to careful planning. Foreclosure information is available at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/economies/communityindicators/Indicators_Links.cfm#foreclosures.
- We also continue our strong commitment to agriculture, a \$59 billion industry in Wisconsin, which provides 354,000 jobs in the state. Declining milk prices and high costs for energy and feed put enormous financial and emotional pressures on our farmers. *Farming through Difficult Times* is a website that contains a variety of articles available at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/farmfinances>. Our educational programs on farm financial issues are a collaboration between local county agents and faculty and staff from University of Wisconsin campuses at Madison, Platteville and River Falls.

We offer many of these programs in your district for your constituents, and I'd like to share more information with you about them. Please feel free to call me at (608) 263-2775 to set up a visit or for more information. On behalf of my colleagues in Cooperative Extension, I thank you for your continued support as we work to the same end – strengthening Wisconsin families, farms, businesses and communities.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Klemme
Dean and Director

University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.