



1960s – 1970s



Highlights from 1960 – 1979

1960: Soil Improvement: Thomas Theisen of Elmira Township was the first to use bulk spreading of commercial fertilizer in the county. The resulting crop of 7 ½ – 8 tons of silage per acre convinced Tom and his neighbors of the benefits of this practice.

A report on the Tourist and Resort Institute was given to the Otsego Lake Chamber of Commerce resulting in a request for over 30 bulletins on motel management.

1961: Largest 4-H electrical club in northern Michigan with 45 boys from Otsego County. This was a successful effort to attract older boys to 4-H. Leaders included: Carl Carlson, Donald Crandall, Pardie Olund, George Galbraith, and Douglas Styles.



1962: The section of I-75 that runs through Otsego County opened. Major changes and rapid growth would result.

1964: Weekly outdoor cooking demonstrations at Otsego Lake State Park helped campers feel welcome and learn about food safety.

There were 35 certified seed potato growers in Elmira.

1965: MSU President John Hannah toured two beef farms in Otsego County.

1965: “One of the most significant developments in Otsego County was the adoption of the county zoning ordinance which became effective August 5, 1965.” The effort actually began in 1939 when an intensive land use study was made in the county but remained idle since the 1950s.

U.S. Plywood opened in Gaylord

1966: Commercial beef cattle production continues to grow more important as an enterprise in Otsego County.

More than 100 local teens - including 12 boys attended the 4-H Baby Sitting Clinic

1967: Extension specialist, Gladys Knight, held an all day workshop for women who are responsible for quantity food preparation. She also assisted with the kitchen plans for the new Methodist Church in Gaylord.

The Extension office made a temporary move until the new courthouse opened in 1969.

Welcome Mat Project for new residents to get acquainted was initiated. This was a forerunner of Welcome Wagon.

1969: Forest Products Short Course conducted for pallet makers using second grade hardwood.



1969: Les Howard became CED following the death of Ray McMullen. One of his first tasks was to help develop a county-wide building code and green belt amendment to the county zoning ordinance.

1974: Julia Beard transferred to Emmet County after 19 years serving as Extension Home Economist and 4-H Agent in Otsego and Montmorency Counties. The dual position was split. Bonnie Hamlin became the new Home Economist. 4-H is assigned to Roger Manning, a multi-county agent in Alpena with a program assistant located in Otsego County.

The Pigeon River Advisory Council is created to provide input to the DNR’s management of the nearly 100,000 acre forest. Les Howard was a member of the 17 person Council and served as chairman for several years.

1975: Otsego County celebrated its Centennial

1979: “Grasshoppers have been a very serious problem - from loss of most of a hay crop, total loss of oats for grain, and destruction of many gardens. The most unusual situation involved eating a tuba harness and destroying the reed in a clarinet when the instruments were left on the ground while band members practiced.”

Ann Widger began her 25 year career heading up the 4-H program in Otsego County.