

Otsego County Extension Staff

Philip J. Alexander 1984-2007
 Diann Axford 1987-1991
 Rollin D. Bailey 1917
 Benjamin J. Bartlett 2005 To Date
 Julia Saigeon Beard 1954-1974
 Lester V. Benjamin 1926-1930
 Rhonda Fleming Behnke 1978
 Marlene Caszatt 1998-2002
 Carolyn Crittenden 1950-1951
 Linda Cronk 2005-To Date
 Kim Dillon 1991-1997
 Leon L. Drake 1930-1933
 Claude M. Elmore 1945-1946
 Joyce I. Engel 1953-1954
 Michelle Franks 2001-2003
 Cindy Funk 1994-1998
 Denise Gapinski 1990-1999
 Arthur W. Glidden 1938-1946
 Mary Ilford Guggisberg 1930-1932
 Bonnie Hamlin 1974-1982
 Rose Mary Parlett Head 1947-1950
 Judy Heinowski 1976-1978
 Winfield S. Harrison 1939-1940
 Phyllis Henry 1945-1946
 Alice Hertzler 1936-1938
 Lester J. Howard 1969-1991
 Cindi Huellmantel 2002-2007

Extension work as a life profession involves more than a mere job – it is also a philosophy of living.

To be able to refer to your occupation with pride, to engage in the wide variety of tasks, to enjoy association with people – and through it all to realize that are engaged in a constructive job which in turn is assisting others, and at the same time building yourself , is to reach the philosophy of Extension Work.

- Arthur Glidden, 1939



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Sherry Huff 1975
 Lori Hunt 1993-To Date
 Dorothy Prebble Jensen 1953-1957
 George K. Johnson 1948-1954
 Pam Kail 1982-1988
 Llewellyn B. Karr 1936-1938
 Bonnie Karlake 1967-1982
 Arthur C. Lytle 1919-1930
 Susie Marshall 1998-2002
 Raymond M. McMullen 1946-1969
 Jack Middleton 1991-2003
 Terry Murphy 2000 - 2007
 Renetta Noa 1998
 Betty Noeske 1982-1987
 Cathy O'Connor 2007-To Date
 Debby O'Neill 1998-To Date
 Andrew L. Olson 1941-1944
 Theresa Plachta 1999-2004
 John C. Post 1954-1957
 Bethany Prykucki 2004-To Date
 Lawrence R. Queal 1918-1919
 Janet Rathke 1988
 Kristin Sorgenfrei 1992-1996
 Mary Tithof 2001-2004
 Orville F. Walker 1959-1964
 Nola Jean Weber 1947-1947
 Joyce Williams 1951-1953
 Ann Widger Wright 1979-2003

Campus Connection

The Extension office in our county is a direct link to the vast research and informational resources found on the campus of Michigan State University. There are 16 colleges within MSU and eight work directly with Extension.

Extension is housed in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR). Extension Specialists are in the following departments:

Agricultural Economics
Animal Science
Biosystems & Engineering
Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies
Crop & Soil Sciences
Entomology
Fisheries & Wildlife
Food Science & Human Nutrition
Forestry
Horticulture
Plant Pathology



Extension Specialists, like the soil scientist in the above photo from the 1940s, traveled to Otsego County occasionally to personally meet with local constituents and provide assistance.

Computer Lab at County Library

In 1996, Dr. Paul Freddolino approached the Director of the Otsego County Library, Maureen Derenzy, to explore the idea of creating a computer lab for MSU social work students taking classes through the Alpine Regional Education Center (AREC). The 8 computers used the Library's internet connection to provide access to on-line resources at MSU. The agreement allowed the general public to also be able to use the new technology. "It was the biggest gift," said Derenzy. "There was nothing like it in northern Michigan."

Area of Expertise Teams

In the 1990s, an issue based, multi-disciplinary approach called Area of Expertise Teams was initiated. Extension educators from campus and the counties joined efforts in addressing the state's most pressing problems and opportunities. Of the 28 teams, the most active in Otsego County included Community Development, Food Nutrition & Health, Forage/Pasture Grazing, Forestry, Land Use, Leadership, State & Local Government, and Tourism.

University Center at Gaylord

Michigan State University along with eight other colleges and universities formed the University Center in 2002. It was an expansion of AREC and would allow residents of Otsego County to take higher education courses locally.

In addition to "bringing the University to the people", there are several opportunities for citizens of Otsego County to attend programs at MSU. Here are a few examples:

Farmers Week / ANR Week: This annual event began in 1916 and is held during MSU's spring break. It offers lectures, source for the latest in farming techniques and research. Many statewide associations also meet during this event.

Little Farmers Week

As an alternative to going to MSU, campus brought an abbreviated version of Farmers Week to Otsego County during the 1950s. For five consecutive days, two Extension Specialists each took an hour at each meeting to discuss new ideas and methods regarding general agriculture.

Ag Expo is Michigan's largest agriculture equipment exposition. It began in 1978 and is held in July at the 35-acre demonstration field.

4-H Exploration Days is an annual MSU pre-college program that offers nearly 200 fun, action-filled classroom and field trip sessions. During their three-day stay, participants attend sessions such as decoy carving, sign language, produce their own TV show, and 4-H Business & Entrepreneurship. This event began in 1970.

College Week was originally named Farm Women's Week, then College Week for Women, and finally College Week, this annual program was discontinued in the late 1990s.