



# Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – September 2016

*It is an initiative of UW-Extension to connect, inform and empower Latinos in the Fond du Lac area.*

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## **Preserving Wisconsin's Harvest**

The "Preserving Wisconsin's Harvest" series offers a hands-on approach to canning foods, while providing participants with the most current, scientific information. Nineteen participants canned pie fillings on July 12<sup>th</sup> and "Italy in a Jar" (bruschetta) on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Following the sessions, 100% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident in their ability to safely preserve foods at home. Comments included: "I will use this information for home canning and pass on this knowledge to my children and grandchildren," "UW-Extension brings information and classes to the community – that brings people together," and "Great teacher and great class." The last session – Canning Condiments – is scheduled for September 20.

## **Veggie Bites**

To help guide shopping at the Downtown Fond du Lac Farmers Market, customers stop by the information booth to pick up the weekly "Veggie Bites" publication, offered by UW-Extension Fond du Lac County and Living Well FDL. It features selection, storage and preparation of a highlighted fruit, vegetable, or herb.

## **Latinos Unidos en Fond du Lac / Latinos United in Fond du Lac County**

It is an initiative of UW-Extension to connect, inform and empower Latinos in the Fond du Lac area. Recognizing the need to reach out to Latinos in the area, UW-Extension applied for a grant through the Summer Affirmative Action Internship Program. Intern Michelle Ruelas, a student of Marian University, working together with Araceli Oswald, 4-H Youth Development Assistant, developed a data base of Latinos in the area, held a couple of listening sessions and created a plan to keep the Latino community engaged in their own growth.

The Facebook open group: "Latinos Unidos en Fond du Lac" was created to better communicate and connect with Latinos in the area. Currently it has over 300 members, resources, events, classes, tips, opportunities and more that has been shared in this group.

Monthly meetings are being held at UW-Extension. In these meetings Latinos have the opportunity to share experiences, assume leadership roles, brainstorm on ways to address their needs, plan upcoming events, learn and network. Each meeting has a learning topic, i.e. Marine Credit Union gave a presentation about the TIN number. This group will host a Celebration of Independence on September 15 at Lakeside Park. They have a meeting planned on November 1 for a conversation of Latinos with the Police Department and other organizations to learn from each other and address some questions and concerns of the Latino community.

This group also has a great support group. Representatives of groups, organizations and schools have come together to provide Latinos with resources and information. These groups meet separately.

## **Downtown Exploratory Committee**

The Fond du Lac City Council appointed area residents to a Downtown Exploratory Committee in April to make recommendations about all aspects of the downtown and asked Diana Tscheschlok to facilitate. Participants in the group were chosen for the diverse viewpoints they bring from their positions as people who own downtown businesses, volunteers connected to organizations like THELMA Center for the Arts, life-long residents, employees working in the downtown, people who work in Fond du Lac but don't live here, and people who don't use the downtown.

With this wide range of starting perspectives, the group began their work together by learning how downtown change efforts work now. Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership Director and Board Members, City Staff, and the Downtown Development Program Manager with the WI Economic Development Corporation spoke about what they do, what it means to be a WI Main Street Community, and existing plans.

In May and July, the committee identified and discussed priority areas they were interested in working on. By framing strategic issues through powerful questions, the group is furthering their own thinking and hopefully offering a guide for the many other stakeholders who will be needed to implement ideas. In an area where so many property owners, business owners, residents, and government ordinances intersect, finding common ground and a shared vision is challenging. The group members hope that their work will add to the progress already happening and be useful for the City when presented to City Council in December.

The work of the committee, including video of the Chairperson's update to City Council on August 24, is online at <https://www.fdl.wi.gov/departments.Impl?DeptID=7&DeptPage=217>.

## **Introducing the New Crops and Soils Area Agent**

Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing has joined the UW-Extension Fond du Lac County as the Crops & Soils Area Agent. Her long agricultural career includes working in academia, industry, government, and most importantly Extension and outreach in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and now Wisconsin. Ortiz-Ribbing's appointment is a 50:50 shared appointment with UW-Extension Dodge County providing educational outreach, opportunities and support in the areas of agronomic and horticultural crop systems. She plans to encourage and promote cross-county programming.

Starting June 1, 2016, Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing hit the ground running. She has already helped facilitate the Fond du Lac and Dodge County Forage Councils annual Twilight meeting which was attended by 109 forage producers and ag professionals from both counties. In addition, she partnered with Fond du Lac Country Visions Coop and with the Forage Council to host an Agronomy Field Day with the theme "From the Ground Up." About 90 producers listened to speakers discussing cover crops, soil mycorrhizae, root systems, and seed treatments. Silage chopping was also offered. Trying a new process to get producers their results quickly, 151 samples were chopped and analyzed onsite by Rock River Labs, providing producers results immediately.

Ortiz-Ribbing also facilitates the 22 member Rock River NonPoint Source (NPS) Workgroup and 11 members in the NPS Education and Farmer Led Council Subgroups in Dodge County. This group is organizing a producer educational workshop, for February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, featuring nationally-known NRCS speaker Ray Archuleta and Justin Morris to encourage participation in forming a producer led Rock River watershed council.

Extension Connection Contributors:

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Araceli Oswald, Bilingual 4-H Youth Development Assistant

Diana Hammer Tscheschlok, Community, Natural Resource & Economic Development Educator

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