



Extension Connection

Monthly Highlights – May 2014

For participating in Cool Choices, County Team DSS Fiscal won the opportunity to have a brown bag lunch with County Executive Allen Buechel.

- [Environmental Sustainability](#)
- [Financial Literacy](#)

Environmental Sustainability

Fond du Lac County is in the middle of a goal to reduce energy expenses by 10% over five years. Some of the savings are coming from high efficiency appliances and lighting installed as older equipment gets replaced, but meeting the goal will also require employee actions to save energy while at work.

To encourage new habits among employees, Fond du Lac County and the City of Fond du Lac participated in [Cool Choices](#) this winter, a competitive activity designed to inspire sustainable actions at work, at home, and on the go. Actions such as slowing down to drive 65 mph on the highway or turning off water when brushing teeth were assigned points based on the environmental impact they made. Over the eight week game, 176 employees took actions which, if sustained for one year, will:

- Cover the electric bill of [Harbor Haven Health & Rehabilitation](#) for January and February 2014.
- Save more natural gas than what was used in the City/County Government Center in June 2013.

Throughout the activity, employees submitted ideas for how to save water, energy, and gas at work. These ideas will be analyzed for feasibility, and the Energy Team will continue to promote sustainable habits in government facilities to conserve natural resources and tax dollars.

Financial Literacy

What is financial literacy? “The U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission defines financial literacy as ‘the ability to make informed judgments and to take effective actions regarding the current and future use and management of money.’ Financial literacy should include the ability to understand financial choices, plan for the future, spend wisely and manage and be ready for life events, such as job loss or saving for retirement.” (Basu, Somnath Dr. Associate Professor, Finance, California Lutheran University, Financial Literacy and the Life Cycle, White Paper, White House Conference on Aging, 2005.)

Fond du Lac County, UW-Extension Family Living is supporting the need for financial literacy education through educational programming currently targeted to youth. Recently UW-Extension Family Living was involved with the Reality Day event held at Fond du Lac High School.

Reality Day at Fond du Lac High School

Approximately 190 students in grades 10–12 participated in a Reality Day simulation sponsored by the Fond du Lac High School for its students with community member volunteers. Reality Day simulation is the compilation of classroom instruction based upon personal finance concepts. Youth have researched a career of their interest and proceed through the Reality Day simulation of real life expenses individuals incur. Community volunteers interact with students as they work through the different categories highlighted within the Reality Day simulation. Reality Day at Fond du Lac High School is held two times a year, spring and fall. UW-Extension Family Living serves on the planning team and secures the 60 plus volunteers instrumental to the event. Thirty-one Marian University students who are finance majors also volunteered their time at the event.

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