As part of Cooperative Extension our purpose is to teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities. We offer timely access to University research and knowledge through educational colleagues located in county offices, on five 4-year campuses and within three tribal nations. We work with local, state and federal partners to offer educational programs that address the important issues of individuals, families, businesses, and communities.

The Lincoln County Cooperative Extension Office is one of seventy-two county offices statewide, staffed by professional educators. We offer educational programs through four program areas: Agriculture and Natural Resources; Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development; Family Living; and 4-H Youth Development. The faculty and staff of the Lincoln County UW-Extension office meet educational needs of county residents by:

· Identifying and responding to local needs
· Strengthening communities to meet challenges
· Helping families to thrive in a rapidly changing world
· Working with farmers to improve production efficiency while preserving natural resources
· Empowering youth through development of leadership and life skills

UW-Extension personnel are academic staff and faculty members of the University of Wisconsin, employed by a cooperative arrangement between the University and the County. Cooperative Extension staff provide a direct link to the University of Wisconsin expertise and research. This university affiliation provides counties with access to community assessment tools, program evaluation expertise, a statewide network of program professionals, a source of professional development and access to University of Wisconsin programs. Lincoln County staff had 11,372 direct learner contacts for 2010. This figure does not include indirect contacts made through staff radio and television interviews and newspaper articles. Directly below is a summary of the key issues Lincoln County Cooperative Extension staff were focusing on in 2010.

Staff Member	Key Issues Addressed
Tom Cadwallader Agriculture Development Educator for Lincoln and Marathon Counties 22 years of service (100% FTE – funded 60% University/40% County–split between two counties)	• Agricultural Economic Development Strategies • Organizational Development for Farm Businesses and Associations • Grazing Based Livestock Production Systems and Sustainable Agriculture Principles • Agricultural Land Use Planning • Farm Business Management
Bonnie Rudie Family Living Educator Started May 1, 2010 (50% FTE – funded 60% University/40% County)	• Building Collaborative Relationships for Effective Programs and Services to Families • Family Financial Security • Advisor for Lincoln County Home & Community Education Organization
Tammy Hansen WNEP Coordinator for Lincoln and Marathon Counties 21 years of service (100% FTE – funded 100% Federal grant)	• Building Support through Collaboration for Community-Based Food/ Nutrition Programs for Food Stamp- Eligible Populations • Food Security • General Nutrition Education/ Dietary Quality for Low-Income Families and Individuals • School-Based Nutrition Education Programs
Debbi Warren WNEP Educator 2 years of service (70% FTE – funded 100% Federal grant)	• General Nutrition Education/ Dietary Quality for Low-Income Families and Individuals • Food Resource Management/ Food Shopping • Healthy Food Preparation • School- based Nutrition Education Programs

Art Lersch Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development Educator 7 years of service (100% FTE – funded 60% University/40% County)	• Helping organizations utilize their limited resources more effectively • Providing education and planning assistance to increase the efficiency of local government • Collaborating with businesses and other organizations on downtown revitalization programs • Teaching entrepreneurs business planning techniques • Designing and leading community planning sessions
Amanda Kostman 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor 6 years of service (100% FTE – funded 50% county/50% grants)	• Creating opportunities for youth to engage in community action and governance • Oversight and Management for Lincoln County Teen Court • Strengthening the 4-H Community Club program through older youth leadership opportunities, including 4-H Ambassadors, Camp Counselors and Club Officers
Debbie Moellendorf 4-H Youth Development Educator and Department Head 21 years of service (100% FTE – funded 60% University/40% County)	• Building and Supporting After School Programs • Creating Environment for Positive Youth Development • Oversight and Management for 4-H Community Club Program with a primary focus on adult leadership • General Office and Staff Administration
Beryl Vandre Emerich Support Staff 19 years of service (100% FTE – funded 100% County)	• Serve as office manager • Support for educators and other staff (mainly 4-H Youth Development, Family Living and WNEP)
Jeni Blaubach Support Staff 16 years of service (40% FTE – funded 100% County)	• Support for educators and other staff (mainly CRD and Ag) • Fiscal items for department (i.e. grants, invoicing and other duties not handled by finance department)

Imbedded in our programming are strong partnerships. Working with government agencies (including many departments in the county), community groups, schools, organizations and individuals, UW-Extension staff creatively engages others in our work. These partnerships enable us to reach county residents where they live and work, promoting life-long learning.

Funding Extension Efforts

In 2010, the University of Wisconsin contributed $128,763 in direct funding for staff. The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program brought $44,919 in federal grant dollars to the county. An additional $526,862 was leveraged (volunteers, grants, donations, indirect state and federal support provided to staff) to carry out local programming.

For every county dollar invested to support Lincoln County UW-Extension, **the office returned $3.04** in leveraged state and federal contributions, grants, contracts and volunteer time in 2010.

Performance Evaluation

Extension educators use a variety of methods to measure the results of their work. Most of these methods are based on the logic model, meaning that outcomes, or for example demonstrating that people's lives or agency policies have been altered in positive ways through Extension programming, are emphasized. A variety of tools are utilized including but not limited to written evaluations, interviews (face to face, phone, and email) director/agency reports documenting results, focus groups and annual surveys (i.e. Social Norms surveys).

Typical questions asked of program participants are:

- What did you learn?
- What was the most useful thing you obtained from this program/training?
- How do you intend to use what you learned in the program? (Later, we often ask "How did you use what you learned?")
- What changes did you make in your life as a result of the program(s)/training?
- How have others been affected by a change in your behavior as a result of the Extension program(s)/training(s) you attended?
- How much did you know before the program versus after the program?

Evaluation is often ongoing, meaning that the effects of a program or programs are measured over time. Sometimes outcomes do not become apparent until at least several months after the program or training is provided. However, in most cases short and medium term outcomes can be readily determined and are documented. Many of the examples provided in the sections below show short, medium and long-term outcomes. In addition to evaluating our own programming work, Extension staff are often asked by other agencies or organizations for assistance in designing and the implementation of their evaluation plan.

Extension has also measured its overall impact on Lincoln County. In 2007, the University of Wisconsin-Extension Central District contracted with the Community Research Center (CRC) at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to conduct community survey's in each of the fourteen counties where the Central District operates. Two hundred fifty-five households responded to the survey in Lincoln County

59% of survey respondents in Lincoln County stated they have used the information and services of the Lincoln County UW-Extension office. Of the 59% who utilized the UW-Extension office, 96% indicated they valued the information and services. The majority (62%) of respondents stated they would travel up to thirty miles to attend an educational training or program. Written materials, study on own and newspaper were ranked as the top three ways respondents preferred to get information.

The survey instrument consisted of nine questions and asked respondents to rate the importance of community issues in two ways. First, how important the issue is to the person responding or to a member of their family, and second, how important the respondent perceived the issue to be for others in the community. Most questions asked respondents to rate their response along a scale from one to seven, with one being the lowest and seven being the highest of importance. UW-Extension staff have utilized the results of this survey, shared them with other groups and organizations, and gathered additional assessment data to determine program emphasis for the four-year planning cycle that began in 2009.

Extension Activities in Response to the Great Recession

Extension programming regularly changes to meet the most pressing community needs at a given time. This flexibility, along with the considerable resources and experience Extension educators bring to the table, continuously help Lincoln County residents and organizations identify and take advantage of opportunities and find solutions to vexing problems.

Currently, many of the more pressing issues relate to the effects of the Great Recession and its aftermath. The economic downturn hit the county hard. County unemployment rates during and after the recession have consistently ranked among the top ten in the state. Poor economic conditions are adversely affecting family stability, creating situations where local governments have to balance budgets while costs and service demands continue to rise and revenues dwindle, making youth ask profound questions about their future, and forcing farm businesses to look for ways to ride out the storm and eventually prosper. Lincoln County Extension programming is helping all these user groups cope.

Planning to Meet Local Needs

Highlighted in the sections below are examples of the programs which best describe what Extension did in 2010 grouped into four categories – ***Organizational Development (includes economic development activities), Leadership Development, Life Skills Development and Information Resource for General Questions***. The programs mentioned below are merely a sample of the initiatives Lincoln County Extension faculty undertook and by no means represent the complete body of work conducted by them.

I. Organizational Development

Extension works with numerous organizations, helping them to increase organizational capacity and sustainability to address local needs. Over the past few years, Extension educators have developed and facilitated numerous strategic planning projects. Community organizations such as Bell Tower Residence, Good Samaritan Health Center Foundation, and the City of Merrill are implementing their plans and regularly report to their oversight bodies what progress is being made toward achieving them. Extension has also assisted such organizations as the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers, organizations that help many local farmers and producers grow and market their products. Extension also took a lead role in the development and capacity building of the Lincoln County Teen Court, Lincoln County Drug Free Coalition, and the Lincoln County After School Network. All of these are organizations that address the needs of families and youth in our area.

- **Bell Tower Strategic Planning, Intermediate Outcomes:** With a $4 million annual budget, the not-for-profit Bell Tower Residence (BTR) in Merrill, WI is by far the largest assisted living complex in Lincoln County. Despite its size and success over most of its existence, the past several years have been challenging. Aging administrative staff, a more competitive market that increasingly includes entities offering wider arrays of services, dwindling numbers within the Holy Cross Sisters Province that supports BTR, and the burdens of a loan that financed a remodeling and expansion project have all weighed heavily on the facility's ability to provide cost effective, quality services. In mid-2007, increasing concern about these challenges prompted the organization's administrators and board of directors to ask Art Lersch, Lincoln County CNRED educator, to lead them in the development of a five year strategic plan. The original strategic plan and a recently completed (early 2010) update and accomplishment review have become cornerstone pieces of an organizational transformation which is helping BTR to reposition itself to become the premier assisted living facility in north central Wisconsin.

  During the initial 2007 planning phase, Lersch designed and facilitated a process where stakeholders including the entire board identified mandates and organizational core values, performed comprehensive SWOT and stakeholder analyses, revised the BTR mission statement, prioritized issues to be addressed, and identified strategies that would help the organization become more viable. An action plan, the roots of which were first established during this initial planning process, was further developed and expanded upon by the stakeholders.

  In the effort to create more financial stability – a priority identified in the original plan – the organization implemented prudent rent increases each fiscal year since the start of plan implementation. These increases helped offset what would have been larger operating deficits in 2009 and 2010. Identified in the plan as an important way to help achieve more financial stability, investment reviews are also now done on a regular basis and modifications are made to achieve maximum possible returns.

  The original plan as well as the update called for annual increases in BTR's marketing budget. These increases took place, helping the marketing staff to implement new strategies including more upbeat direct mailing campaigns and community awareness events that more effectively showcase BTR as a unique institution which now cares for more acutely ill people with far a more personal touch than many typical nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

  Despite the continuing poor local economy, these strategies have begun to pay dividends as four of 14 long-standing vacant units recently became occupied. A management firm that BTR now partners with (a direct action in part taken to expand on strategic plan initiatives) recommends that the marketing budget receive more substantial increases.

  Diversity of service, based largely on strategic plan and update report suggestions, is now being emphasized. As residents' acuity increasingly becomes more pronounced, planning documents call for the organization to use underutilized areas of the BTR complex for services such as dementia care that are becoming more in demand. This diversification of services is seen by BTR stakeholders and its partner management company as key to the facility being able to compete well into the 21st century.

  The results documented above come primarily from BTR executive director reports to the board which are updated on a regular basis and provided to Lersch. They are supplemented by the strategic plan accomplishments review he conducted.

- **Fair Board Dispute Resolution Process Development:** Lersch led a discussion amongst representatives from the Lincoln County Fair and 4-H Leaders Association Boards as they developed County Fair dispute resolution procedures. The county's Public Property Committee required that this be done prior to granting a fairgrounds contract to the organizations. The initial document was in force during the 2010 County Fair. At the end of 2010, Lersch developed a process for and facilitated a group once again consisting of representatives from both boards as it made the procedures clearer and more legally binding.

- **Wisconsin Community Leadership Coordinators Conference:** Forty-one leadership development program coordinators, Extension and non-Extension, attended in June the third Wisconsin Community Leadership Coordinators Conference. Those in attendance included five Kazakhstani citizens seeking to develop a leadership development program in their country. Lersch led a group of university and chamber people in organizing and putting on the event. On a four point scale, with 3 being "very good" and 4 being "excellent," participants gave the conference an overall average rating of 3.7. When asked how they intend to apply what they learned, a couple sample comments were:

  - I have a "to do" list about 12 [items] long! Change curriculum, alumni engagement plan, friend development.

  - Help to move my program into the future to keep it relevant and sustainable.

  Another similar conference is tentatively scheduled to take place in 2012.

- **Low-Income Women Support Group:** A women's group was organized by Rudie in collaboration with St. Vincent's and United Way. This group discussed various topics including stress, finances and nutrition. The feedback from the women who participated was extremely positive. Agencies working with this at risk group were also pleased with the sessions.

- **City of Merrill Police Department Strategic Planning:** Following a five meeting process led by Lersch in which the City of Merrill Police Department developed its first ever strategic plan, he along with the department's chief and top captain summarized its primary points for interested community stakeholders. The plan, including the realization of goals to develop a police training academy for local interested citizens and to revise and launch a new department website was in full implementation stage by year's end.

- **City of Merrill Fire Department Strategic Planning:** Lersch completed his work facilitating the group that developed the Merrill Fire Department's first ever strategic plan. In April, he also completed the plan report. During the final planning meetings, group members identified strategic issues, created goal questions related to the most important issues, and developed basic action plans meant to "answer" the goal questions. The fact that five city Council members took part in the project along with four fire staff shows how seriously this first step toward implementing performance based budgeting within the department was taken.

  Primary goals set by the group to accomplish over the next three years are:

  - **Does it make sense for the city to acquire the EMS service?** (Currently, the county contracts with the city to provide EMS/ambulance.)

  - **How does the Fire Department and city better communicate the needs of the department and what it does for area residents? (education)**

  - **What must be done to identify the most viable option for establishing a centralized fire station that allows the department to continue providing the highest quality service while increasing its efficiency?**
  - **How do we increase staffing levels and create departmental efficiencies using methods like a paid on call (POC) model/combination department?**

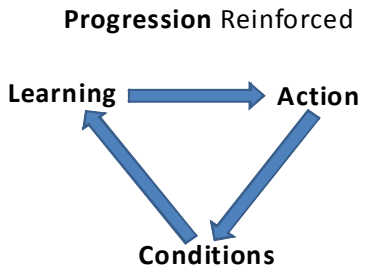
  - **How does the Fire Department replace the old equipment (primarily fire trucks/pumper) and technology that it currently utilizes?**

In June, the fire chief, assistant fire chief, and Lersch gave a well received presentation highlighting department initiatives and plan goals to 65 city residents. Late in the year, the city was working to determine the feasibility of proposed plan initiatives.

- **Wisconsin County Fair & 4-H Educator Involvement Survey:** In mid-October, Lersch completed a report outlining the results of a statewide survey he developed with assistance from Lincoln County 4-H staff. The survey, completed by Extension youth development educators, was prompted by organizational issues arising in both the 4-H Leaders Association and Fair Boards. The results are helping members of the two bodies determine what type of organizational structural changes should be made in relation to how the Lincoln County Fair is managed.

- **Good Samaritan Health Center Foundation Fund Application Process:** At the request of the Good Samaritan Health Center Foundation Director, Lersch helped revise the organization's fund application process and review procedures. The primary goal that he suggested and that was achieved through the revisions was to place greater emphasis on requiring organizations that receive funding to provide more details about the outcomes realized from the programs foundation dollars are used to support.

- **Lincoln County Health Department Evaluation Training:** Lersch developed and conducted an evaluation of outcomes training for the entire Lincoln County Health Department staff. The highly interactive training focused largely on the following concept.



An example of how this diagram could be applied by the Health Department would be for it to provide a seminar that helped people learn about and then take action to prevent disease. Their lives change for the better (conditions) which leads to more learning and so on.

The Health Department director characterized the training as being the best she has ever attended on developing effective program evaluation methods. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 3 being "quite effective" and 4 being "extremely effective," those who took the training (11 attendees) on average rated it a 3.2. When asked "How do you intend to apply what you learned toward developing evaluation plans and/or tools?" some of the comments were:

- Most of what was learned today I will use in [creating] the logic models for the programs I am involved in. The training was very helpful.

- We have many programs to evaluate. Using what I learned today in evaluating the immunization programs should help me with evaluating other programs.

- Using templates and resources [provided in the presentation] and jumping in.

According to the Health Department director, staff has used what they learned to evaluate immunization and preparedness programs. In early 2011, staff was working to link the department's strategic plan, quality improvement and accreditation effort by using evaluation tools and results.

- **Helping the Ginseng Industry Cope with Disaster:** On the evening of May 7th, 2010 ginseng growers in and around Lincoln and Marathon Counties, the heart of the Wisconsin Ginseng industry, were hit by a late spring snow fall that decimated the structures that shade this cultivated forest herb from the summer sun. If that wasn't bad enough, the next night temperatures dropped below freezing causing significant damage to the plants that had already begun to grow. There was little doubt about the damage to the shades and the costs to rebuild them, but the eventual damage to the crop probably won't be known until next year when the plants in the established gardens that lost this year's growth try to grow again.

  The value of having a local Extension presence that understood the value of the industry to the community and the unique challenges faced by this high value specialty crop was very apparent as the industry struggled to get back on its feet. Immediately after the event Extension met with the Executive Director of the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin and brought all of the key players together to strategize on how best to deal with grower education needs, work with the media, coordinate emergency efforts with county, state and federal agencies and develop communication pieces for the financial support industries.

  We held a grower education meeting within a week and had over 100 growers in attendance, representing about two-thirds of the industry, including about 30 Hmong growers. We had insurance and crop production specialists on hand to answer questions and hear concerns, which we kept track of to help guide our work. While the growers worked to rebuild their gardens Extension coordinated the response the Farm Service Agency, Wisconsin DATCP, helped draft the needed resolutions and letters to declare a state and federal emergency and because of my knowledge of the crop and the industry I was asked to take part in the Wisconsin State Emergency Board meeting that got the ball rolling on providing federal emergency assistance. We also worked with the growers in providing information to the media, including providing up-to-date photos and information for a Wisconsin Public Television's Here and Now program.

  The work has continued on with another grower meeting in August, with another 100+ growers in attendance, development of a risk management strategy paper for the industry to use in developing a diverse approach to minimizing risk, and a special twilight grower meeting for the Hmong growers, which had about 40 in attendance. While each grower faces unique challenges in to dealing with the effects of the disaster we made great strides in bringing the industry together. A true sign of their appreciation was having the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin ask for continued assistance in strategic planning and educational efforts this upcoming year and the Ginseng and Herb Cooperative requesting that Extension help them develop their strategic plan in December of 2010.

- **Lincoln County Ad Hoc Committee, Government Services Project:** At the request of the Lincoln County Board, Lersch began working with a special Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate county services. Under his leadership, the committee decided to first focus its efforts on determining what Lincoln County government is required to do based on state statutes and public desire and on exploring ways to better manage county costs. The committee's purpose statement was unanimously approved by the full County Board in January 2011 and served as a way to officially begin a process ostensibly meant to study and make decisions about the county's long-term fiscal health.

- The **Lincoln and Marathon County Agribusiness Incubator projec**t took a few more steps forward in 2010. Working with Grassworks, the state grazing organization, and the Pri-Ru-Ta RC&D Council the project was successful in getting a USDA Risk Management Agency, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Grant to develop an apprenticeship program for grazing based dairy farmers. The basis for the effort was the paper Extension published, "The Farmers Career Path", as a part of the Incubator Project development. In the research that was done during the early stages of the project it became fairly obvious that a defined pathway that included some kind of apprenticeship that included an active mentoring component was missing in most communities. The project is working with the Department of Workforce Development and the Technical College System to develop the apprenticeship curriculum. We also began working with the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems to develop some mentor training materials that can be used for a variety of situations. One our grazers set up another incubator farm using many of the things that were learned through the Guralski Farm that spun off two successful farms in 2008. Extension has invested a great deal of time working through the financials to make sure the farm would cash flow and based on that work Joe was successful in getting local financial support to buy and develop a second farm devoted to getting new farmers started.

- **Merrill Mayoral Forum:** At the request of the Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce, Lersch designed, developed questions for, and moderated the City of Merrill Mayoral Forum. Attended by approximately 70 city residents, broadcast live on WJMT radio, and given television coverage, the forum was specifically designed as an educational event where people could learn more about the candidates' substantive ideas related to issues like city economic development policies, budget matters, and government structure.

- **Exploring Renewable Energy Options for Lincoln County:** In a continuation of work begun in 2009, UW-Extension worked with a small group of farmers, agricultural businesses and independent broadband providers on a couple of different projects improving our access to both wind energy and co-located line-of sight wireless internet systems that will improve the rural capacity for farms and small businesses.
    - Hosted a wind energy workshop at Wausau East High School. Wausau East has a wind generator similar in size to units that could be used for small farm applications. Thirteen people attended the workshop and evaluations found the information to be very useful.
    - Worked with an area farmer and the Federal Aeronautics Administration, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation – Aviation Division and the Merrill City Airport to get approval for installing a meteorological (met) tower on a farm southeast of Merrill to determine what size system would be appropriate for the area.
    - Wind data from the met tower is being downloaded on a computer network three times a week and the data is being shared with area educators.

- **Area Grazing Network Continues to Lead the State:** The success of the partnership between Lincoln and Marathon County Extension and Land Conservation Offices in coordinating this network is not only reflected in the steady increase in attendance at area pasture walks from 2009 to 2010, the network continues to draw attention from other areas of the country looking at imitating our success in both farmland conservation and attracting new farmers. One of the **Grazing Network** members was awarded the Wisconsin Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. The award highlights the positive economic and environmental benefits to grazing based dairy farms.

- **General Nutrition Education Programming:** The UW-Extension Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) staff made 2,898 direct teaching contacts with 1,403 learners in Lincoln County during the 2010 program year. Of these learners, 10% were preschoolers; 11% were youth, age 6-11; 1% were youth, age 12-17; 62% were parents of infants/children; 5% were adults without children; and 3% were senior adults. Seventy-two percent of the learners were females and 96% were White. WNEP staff used a variety of teaching strategies: 65% of teaching contacts were reached with multi-session group classes, 7% of contacts in single session group lessons, and 28% of contacts with learn-while-you-wait education. Eighty-five percent of contacts were reached with a nutrition/dietary quality topic, 9% with a food safety topic, 4% with a food resource management topic, and 2% with a food security topic. Agencies partnering with UW-Extension in 2010 to provide nutrition programming for their clients include the Lincoln County Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, the Merrill and Tomahawk Head Start Programs, Washington Elementary, the Lincoln County Commission On Aging, Jenny Towers, the Lincoln Health Care Center, the "After the Bell" Program at Prairie River Middle School, the Merrill Food Pantry, and Haven.

- **Education on Farmland Preservation Options:** The impact of the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative that was enacted in 2009 was explored in a workshop attended by 80 Lincoln and Marathon County community leaders and citizens that UW-Extension cooperated in developing in facilitating. Fifteen people from Lincoln County, representing town and county government attended the workshop where they learned how the changes in the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program will impact county and township comprehensive plans and possible opportunities and challenges for promoting agricultural investment in some areas of the county while limiting it in others.

- **Planning For Lincoln County's Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources:** Extension Agricultural Development Educator Tom Cadwallader completed facilitating the advisory group charged with the task of updating the Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources element of Lincoln County Comprehensive (Community) Plan and drafted a revision to the element. Working with Art Lersch they also facilitated a group of business and community leaders as they began revising the Economic Development of the plan. Both elements are in the process of being integrated into the Plan.

- **Merrill Area Poverty Simulation:** Bonnie Rudie, recently hired part-time Family Living Educator, was part of a team that organized a "poverty simulation" for the Merrill area. The simulation was well attended and received positive feedback. A poverty group was established as a result and this group is working on various ideas to assist those in poverty; their first goal was to address transportation issues affecting Lincoln County's low-income.

- **Coalition Focuses on reducing underage alcohol and other drug use:** Amanda Kostman, 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor; Debbie Moellendorf, 4-H Youth Development Educator and Bonnie Rudie, Family Living Educator continue to work with other members of the Lincoln County Drug Free Coalition to carry out their mission. The mission of this coalition is to bring various sectors of the community together to reduce the use/abuse of alcohol and other drugs by youth and over time by adults. Membership and efforts of the coalition include several Lincoln County departments (Health, Sheriff, Social Services, UW-Extension) as well as both school districts, Lincoln Health Care Center, police department from both cities, churches, community organizations including Tomahawk Together and HAVEN, Lincoln County Family Resource Center, parents and youth. During the past several years, Extension staff have assisted the coalition in utilizing the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration "Strategic Prevention Framework" (SPF) to identify, develop, and implement environmental strategies to reduce the use/abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among youth and over time among adults. An individual does not become involved with substances solely on the basis of their individual characteristics. They are also influenced by a complex set of community factors, such as institutional rules and regulations, community norms, mass media messages, and the accessibility of substances. Environmental strategies incorporate prevention efforts aimed at changing or influencing those community level factors. During 2010, Extension staff provided training and other resources to coalition staff and members in implementing coalition efforts, worked with other members of the coalition to provide parenting education; assisted with the "Parents That Host Lose the Most" campaign; provided leadership for continuing the Merrill Social Norms project, conducting the 2010 student, parent and school staff surveys in both Merrill and Tomahawk and beginning the Tomahawk Social Norms project; continued coordination of an alternative medicine disposal system for safe disposal of unused medications; and continued to provide support for securing funding through a $125,000 state two-year implementation grant through September 2011. In addition, Extension staff member's involvement in working with Tomahawk Together, a community coalition, to provide educational programs and activities focused on the reduction of alcohol and other drugs among youth has resulted in Tomahawk Together becoming involved in the coalition to expand coalition efforts in the Tomahawk community. Thus making this a true countywide coalition.

- **Network provides support for Afterschool programs:** Many young people find themselves without supervision on weekdays between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m. In 2009, the Afterschool Alliance conducted a national survey to learn how many children in kindergarten through 12th grade are in afterschool programs and how many spend their time unsupervised. In Wisconsin, one third of children are responsible for themselves afterschool, and they spend an average of seven after-school hours per week unsupervised. The study also found only 11 percent of Wisconsin children attends an afterschool program, and 31 percent of the children not in afterschool program would likely attend if one were available. High-quality afterschool programs provide safe physical and emotional environments, support positive relationships with adults, promote youth voice in decision-making and encourage learning. Wisconsin 4-H brings university research and a positive youth focus to afterschool programs with enrichment-oriented curricula and projects. 4-H works with providers to improve the quality of existing programs through trainings, consultation and on-going professional development. In 2008, the 4-H Youth Development educator, Debbie Moellendorf, facilitated the creation of the Lincoln County After School Network where she hosts quarterly meetings to provide a forum for staff involved in before and after school programs to share resources, knowledge and training opportunities. For the past four years, Debbie has secured funds (received $1,016 in 2010) through the MetLife Afterschool training grant coordinated by the State 4-H Youth Development program area to support the network meetings as well as to providing funding for staff to attend additional trainings, such as the Wisconsin After School Association Annual conference and Tools for Afterschool: Building Capacity conference. A total of 13 different after and before school staff and volunteers (youth and adults) were provided with training and/or resources. By continuing to work together, sharing resources and knowledge, members of the Lincoln County After School Network are conducting quality before and after school programs that reach over 662 elementary and middle school youth in Lincoln County. Members of the network were asked to complete a feedback form to share how the network has benefitted them as staff and their programs. The following are a few of the comments received: "We have added some of the activities to our master list of enrichment activities to use in future sessions after school, especially the parachute games. We have also ordered some of the books and resources shared." (respondent from

one of the new programs that began in 2010-11 school year); "It is a great way to share ideas and information. Taking the information back to our building is also helpful to our planning group to make our program better. This is definitely needed for our community."; "My after school program consists of two staff members and it is very helpful to be able to brainstorm with staff from other programs, hear how they handle the challenges that come up."; and "Great opportunities to network! Get a lot of great ideas."

II. Leadership Development

Extension leadership development programs run the gamut from formal to informal, and from training community leaders to training leadership for on-going organizations Extension advises. Extension leadership development programming helps to create necessary capacity for people to act as community leaders.

- **Adult 4-H volunteer leadership:** 4-H adult volunteers (193) received resources and training from 4-H Youth Development staff through face-to-face trainings, one-on-one consultations, web-based resources and newsletters in 2010. These adult volunteers carried out the roles of club organizational leaders, project leaders, activity leaders and resource leaders to supplement the work of Extension professionals in providing educational opportunities for 1,012 young people throughout Lincoln County. In a recent survey of Wisconsin 4-H volunteer leaders, volunteers indicated they contributed an average of $41 on supplies and spend around eight hours a month volunteering. With a conservative value of $10 per hour, that volunteer service is worth $185,808 to Lincoln County. However, most volunteers surveyed considered their effect on youth to be their most important contribution. Gloria Lukes, a volunteer in Lincoln County, found her greatest impact as a respected role model. "When my daughter was in 4-H, we would have kids over all the time," she said. "I was the adult young people could come to with questions, and I enjoyed talking with them about whatever they needed." Her volunteer experience also led to many strong friendships with youth she helped along the way. "To this day, I still hear from young people I met and worked with. It's nice to see how they've grown and hear about their awards and accomplishments." In addition to the impact on youth, volunteers surveyed also responded that volunteering with Wisconsin 4-H contributed to their own personal growth and enrichment. For 35 percent of volunteers, working with 4-H contributed to their sense of community and social capital. Nearly a quarter of volunteers said they gained new skills in public speaking, leadership and organization while developing more confidence. Each 4-H volunteer brings special skills and expertise to their work, helping 4-H Youth Development staff provide quality programming for youth in more areas. Volunteers involved with 4-H devote time and energy to the program, and their impacts – from increased confidence to strengthened communication skills to new talents and interests – are visible on the youth they work with.

- **4-H Ambassadors:** Eight 4-H Ambassadors increased their decision making, problem solving, planning and communication skills by extending 4-H educational resources to underserved audiences through a partnership with local after school programs with the assistance of UW-Extension 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor. In addition, 4-H Ambassadors promoted 4-H opportunities to youth and families throughout Lincoln County at the after school programs at PRMS, Washington Elementary, Tomahawk school, Jefferson School and Kate Goodrich School, the Lighted Schoolhouse programs in Merrill, during local radio programs, and during the county fair.

- **Working with others:** During 2010, Debbie Moellendorf, 4-H Youth Development Educator facilitated two "Colors Spoken Here – Real Colors" sessions for 56 adults and youth. "Real Colors" is a process that helps participants understand their own personality style and the styles of others. As a result of this understanding, participants discover ways to more effectively involve, teach and interact with other people. Post-session survey results indicated that participants felt the training helped them understand their own temperament and preferred work style, appreciate the differences in temperament and works styles of their co-workers/peers; and would help them work more effectively with workplace teams, community groups and family members.

- **Learning from mistakes - Teen Court:** Lincoln County Teen Court is a specialized diversion program for young offenders administered through the Extension office. Teen court sanctions are designed to do more than simply punish the offender. They encourage young offenders to restore at least part of the damages their behavior caused to the community and/or to specific victims. This program uses positive peer pressure to hold the youthful offender accountable to their peers. The program focuses on educating the respondent to make better decisions in the future. It allows them to keep their record clean and feel they can still be a valued part of the community. The youth respondent and the panel members are about the same age and from the same school which tends to increase demands on offenders to be accountable for their actions. UW-Extension was approached to initiate the

development of a Teen Court in Lincoln County by Judge Glenn Hartley in 2003. Extension facilitated a steering committee composed of adults representing schools, social services, law enforcement, courts, community organizations, county and city officials, private businesses and youth from Merrill and Tomahawk middle and high schools in designing and planning for implementation of a Teen Court. This committee continues to oversee the program. Since the start of the Teen Court program in 2005 the 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor, Amanda Kostman has served as the Teen Court Coordinator. During 2010, Amanda trained 42 youth grades 6-12 from both Tomahawk and Merrill who applied to serve as Teen Court Panel members. Panel members learn communication and life skills, gain responsibility and community pride while doing a service for their community. Thirty-seven youth respondents were held accountable by their peers for first time offences in a healthy restorative environment. As the coordinator, Amanda oversees case management and aids in successful completion of the sanctions that usually includes an educational class, writing an essay or apology letter and completing community service hours as restitution for the offense they committed. These youthful offenders were given a chance to learn from their mistakes, to redeem themselves, repair relationships, and contribute to their community by completing sanctions imposed by a panel of their peers. Thirteen youth and seven adults from various agencies and schools have continued to work together on the steering committee with the leadership of Amanda to oversee, evaluate and direct the progress of the Lincoln County Teen Court Program. Individuals involved on the Steering Committee gain insight on factors that lead to risky behaviors, decision making skills, are involved in their judicial system, and provide a service to their community. Amanda and members of the Steering Committee secured $1,000 through Lincoln County Safe and Stable Families Grant managed through Social Services, $1,000 from the Merrill Noon Optimist Club and $200 from the Merrill Rotary Club to support the Teen Court program in 2010.

- **Lincoln County Home and Community Education (HCE) Community Outreach.** HCE has been affiliated with UW Extension for 75 years. They have a strong relationship with UW-Extension and the collaborative efforts to provide family living programs throughout the county. HCE has been involved with the Wisconsin Bookworms reading program which was changed to the Reading Buddies program this year. The HCE group has worked in this area for the past 10 years. Approximately 58 volunteers read to 200 children in Tomahawk and Merrill Head Start and Parkside Daycare programs. The volunteers read a book and work on an activity sheet each month with the children. The children then take their own book home to share with their family. This program helps these children to be more prepared and ready to learn when they go to kindergarten. In addition to this program HCE is involved in several other outreach efforts including making and distributing almost 400 "walker bags" and "wheel chair caddies" for Pine Crest Nursing Home residents and other residents of local assisted living homes throughout the county; presenting programs on healthy foods and snacks at Jenny Towers and Park Place; and making 200 cloth bags for the National Volunteer Outreach Network (NVON) Conference at Onalaska in 2011. HCE also supports our youth with two $500 scholarships given to worthy county high school students and/or college students. The UW Extension Family Living Educator serves as the HCE advisor and presents educational programs each year to this group.

III. Life Skills Development

Extension programs provide opportunities for individuals to develop life skills which enhance Lincoln County residents' ability for success in their personal and professional lives.

- **Developing skills of success:** In 2006, Teen Court panel members expressed a gap in educational opportunities pertaining to basic life skills available for teen court respondents. During discussion at a Teen Court Steering Committee, Social Services, Haven, Municipal Court, Circuit Court and School Counselors agreed that they also saw a gap in educational opportunities pertaining to basic life skills. As a result, the 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor, Haven staff and School Counselors collaborated to design a program to meet the needs of youth in Lincoln County called Success Skills. The Success Skills program designed to offer Middle and High School youth a variety of educational experiences that focus on giving young people skills to succeed is taught by Amanda three to four times a year . The program includes topics such as Communication, Listening, Healthy Decision Making, Risk Taking, Handling Emotions Appropriately, Anger/Conflict Management and Assertiveness Training, and planning for the future. Youth are referred to this program by Teen Court, Social Services, School Counselors, Municipal Court, Circuit Court, Truancy Court and the Family Resource Center. In 2010, nineteen youth participated in the Success Skills program.

- **Working with Youth (Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program):** Lincoln County nutrition education staff conducted the school nutrition program called "Food, Fun and Fitness" in the kindergarten, third and fourth grades at Washington Elementary. Approximately 140 students in eight classrooms participated in monthly group lessons on nutrition, food identification, simple snack preparation, and physical activity. Learners were taught in a fun, interactive way that included books, games, puppet plays and skits. Many lessons also include taste testing. As part of the program, approximately 90 3rd and 4th grade students received a hand washing lesson that started with a skit featuring a character that makes lots of mistakes, such as sneezing in her hands, playing with her cat, and going to the bathroom without washing her hands, while making a sandwich. After the skit, students brainstormed where the "germiest" places in their school might be and then chose six places to test using Petri dishes. This lesson is a great way to reinforce to kids why they need to wash their hands often, especially after playing outside. One new teacher was so surprised by the results that her students wrote a letter to the principal and custodian to make them aware of how "disgusting" the computer keyboard and mice, stair railings, and door handles were in this test. They requested hand sanitizers be used in the computer lab and even volunteered to spend part of their own recess time each week to help clean the railings and door handles.

- **Working with Adults (Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program):** Lincoln County nutrition educator, Debbi Warren, reached an average of eleven low-income, older adults at Jenny Towers and another twelve adults participating in a community support group with the Lincoln Health Care Center with a series of monthly nutrition lessons. Participants have learned how to alter their traditional recipes to be healthier, how to increase whole grains in their diets, how to incorporate new low fat foods or use low fat techniques in their food preparation, and many other topics. They also learn about the latest nutrition news and how it might impact them and hear food safety tips. After a lesson on label reading, 11 seniors were evaluated for their ability to determine which of two foods was the lowest in calories by simply looking at the label. Before the lesson, 55% (6) class participants were able to make the right choice. After the lesson, 91% (10) were able to do so. Additionally, 91% (10) of participants stated that they were thinking differently about using the Nutrition Facts on the food label as a result of today's class. In another evaluation given at the last lesson of the series, 100% of the 12 participants responding stated that they had already tried something that they had learned in a previous lesson. One participant commented, "I read labels more often now. It makes it so much easier to tell the difference between which products are truly whole grains and which are just pretending." Other participants commented that they use more herbs and spices in place of salt in their cooking, they now look for ways to cut the fat or sugar in their old recipes at home, and they try to include dried beans into one meal each week.

- **Youth gain life skills through participation in 4-H programs:** 4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. In a recent survey of Wisconsin 4-H volunteers, those surveyed responded that they help 4-H youth cultivate new skills, build confidence and encourage excitement for learning. Half of the volunteers surveyed said the youth they worked with gained skills in leadership, organization and persistence. Youth also developed new social skills and friendships as well as stronger community connections. During the 2009-10 4-H year, there were 493youth and 196 adult leaders involved in seventeen community and three after school 4-H clubs located throughout the county. An additional 609 youth were reached through a 4-H youth development sponsored programs such as special interest programs, camps or school enrichment programs. 4-H Youth Development staff provide leadership for this program by training adult and older youth volunteers, serving as advisors to committees and boards, providing resources to clubs and assisting with organization of educational opportunities offered.

- **Sustainable Communities Training:** Lersch designed and taught two introductory sessions on sustainable communities in the cities of Merrill and Tomahawk. A total of 37 people learned about and discussed how increasing sustainability at the community level can and should be rooted in bolstering local business and community institutions. They also became more aware of how Wisconsin municipalities are leading the nation in the effort to achieve local sustainability. Through evaluations, nearly everyone who attended indicated a more advanced understanding of sustainable community concepts after as compared to before the sessions.

- **Youth Financial Literacy:** In the latter part of the year, Lersch designed and taught based largely on Junior Achievement materials four financial literacy sessions to 30 Merrill area Junior High students. The students learned how to evaluate career choices, how their choice of work affects their ability to afford things, how to create a household budget, and how to deliberate and make important long-term financial decisions.

- **Providing Safety Education:** The 16th Annual Safety Day Camp was co-sponsored by Ministry Good Samaritan Health Center (GHSC), Lincoln County Farm Bureau, Merrill Area Park and Recreation Department and UW-Extension. Debbie Moellendorf, 4-H Youth Development educator, has served as a member of the Lincoln County Safety Day Camp committee for this event since it began. The 2010 camp provided seventy-five children between the ages of 8-11 with a day of learning on important areas to prevent injuries. Topics included: electrical safety provided by Wisconsin Public Service Path to Ground, bullying taught by staff from Haven, small animal bite prevention given by members of the Paper City Kennel Club, risks of smoking and AODA taught by the Lincoln County Health Department, water safety presented by the American Red Cross, fire safety presented by the Merrill Fire Department, and lawnmower safety presented by Shawano County UW Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the ATV safety session that was scheduled had to be cancelled that day. To fill in this session, older 4-H youth who served as counselors for the day, led art activities and assisted youth in writing thank you letters to our veterans. These older 4-H youth also organized activities and games to keep participants engaged during the registration period, activity breaks, during lunch break and at day's end while waiting for parents. In addition, they served as group leaders for small groups that rotated through the sessions offered. These older youth were prepared for their role during a training session conducted by Amanda Kostman, 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor and Debbie. Presenters along with other organizations provided take home materials for youth at the end of the day so each participant had the opportunity to continue learning after the camp. Over 80% of the youth participants rated all of the sessions they attended during the camp as excellent to okay with less than 20% indicating that sessions needed improvement. All participants were able to identify at least one new thing they learned at this year's camp. For example, "how to use a fire extinguisher", "how to be safe around other people", "not to swim alone", "how to approach a strange dog", "I learned how to be safe with all of the things they showed us", and "how to stay safe during multiple events." The purpose of this annual event is to teach 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders from throughout Lincoln County the importance of safety in their homes, on the farm, and in their neighborhoods. This is an opportunity for children to learn valuable information that may one day save their lives.

- **Safely Applying Agricultural Chemicals:** Approximately 80 area farmers took part in pesticide applicator training sessions offered by UW-Extension in 2010. These sessions are required by any farmers wishing to apply restricted use pesticides and Extension takes the lead role in conducting the training that is required for certification.

- **Building Family Capacity to Cope:** Family Living educator Bonnie Rudie also collaborated with agencies in Tomahawk to start two parenting classes in 2011. The classes, which extended into February of 2011, were attended by 17 parents and children. Participants indicated that they had learned better forms of communication, anger management techniques, how to teach children problem solving and to think for themselves, and how to think through responses rather than reacting on purely an emotional level. Other parenting classes began in early 2011.

- **Harrison Hills Road Meeting:** At the request of the Lincoln County Zoning Department, Lersch designed a process for and facilitated a meeting of property owners struggling to find common ground on how to make improvements to the private road where they live. Concerns mentioned during the meeting included individual property owners making changes to the road that adversely impacted neighbors' land, erosion along the road, and difficulties emergency vehicles have travelling the road. As a result of the conversation, a property owner deemed as the most neutral resident volunteered to coordinate future meetings of the group. Although progress is slow according to the group's leader, residents continue to work together on the serious issues identified at the initial meeting.

- **Financial Counseling as Farms Weigh Many Opportunities and Challenges:** Extension helped twelve area farmers deal with a variety of financial decisions in 2010 as agriculture and the general economy continues to go through some financially turbulent times. Four of them led to new farms being created, three were reorganizations because of financial issues and five were farm expansion or modernization efforts.

- **The "Heart of Wisconsin Grazing Conference"** was very successful in 2010. Approximately 120 area farmers and agricultural advisors attended the conference that is jointly conducted between Cadwallader and Lincoln and Marathon County Conservationist, Paul Daigle.

- **Teaching about Sustainable Farming Systems:** Approximately 100 students from the UW-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources attended classes on sustainable farming systems taught by Lincoln County Extension at the Lincoln County dairy farm of Mike and Jill Braunel. The Braunel Farm has hosted these classes for eight years. The classes focus on the environmental and financial sustainability of grazing based dairy systems.

- **Robots on the Dairy Farm:** In 2010 Extension began working closely with an area farmer that installed two robotic milkers and blended the technology with a managed grazing system. We began collecting farm financial numbers and labor statistics and will continue on in 2011. The blending of these technologies continues to push our knowledge of the variety of systems that can be blended together. It is Extension's goal to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the system so the knowledge can be share with others.

- **Tomahawk Business Development (Road/Bridge Construction):** At the request of the Tomahawk Regional Chamber, Lersch designed the process for and led discussions amongst a large group of businesses owners struggling to cope with road construction that is impeding access to their stores. New ideas that came up at the meetings in the effort to boost business and that are being implemented include more personalized radio ads, more detailed and consistent construction updates being delivered to business owners and their employees, and efforts to make detour and business open signs much more evident.

- **Increasing Afterschool capacity:** In addition to providing support to existing afterschool programs, UW-Extension 4-H Youth Development staff have been involved in increasing the number of afterschool opportunities available. These programs often reach audiences who may be underserved in 4-H's traditional community club structure. Below are two methods that local staff are utilizing to expand 4-H afterschool opportunities to youth in Lincoln County:

  For the past 6 years, Debbie Moellendorf, UW-Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator has planned and conducted the "After the Bell" program with members of the steering committee. During this six year period, 341 different youth have been provided with a positive place to go during the after school hours. Many of the youth who have participated have come to the program for all three years they are in the middle school. The "After the Bell" program provides a safe place for middle school students to learn new skills. "After the Bell" operates from right after school to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday at the Prairie River Middle School on days school is in session. During the 2009-10 school year, 97 different youth participated with an average of 18 students attending each day of the program. The steering committee raised $12,744 from various community organizations, businesses and in grants to fund staffing costs (program coordinator and additional supervisor) and supplies (snacks and program supplies) for the 2009-10 "After the Bell – enrichment program. In addition, a grant was obtained by the school district to support the "After the Bell Plus – tutoring program" which partners with the "After the Bell" program in their efforts. Research shows that youth who are supervised and engaged in structured activities during critical after school hours are less likely to participate in high risk activities. For middle school students, being supervised after school reduces by half the risk that they will smoke, drink, or abuse drugs.

  Amanda Kostman, the 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor, secured $2,500 through the "Engaging Youth Serving Communities" grant through the State 4-H Youth Development program area to assist the Lincoln County 4-H Ambassadors in expanding and sustaining five 4-H After School Clubs in the county. An additional $1,400 was secured through the Lincoln County Safe and Stable Families grant to fund a Lincoln County 4-H After School Club coordinator position for the 2010-11 school year to provide coordinate and work with the ambassadors to provide leadership for these clubs. While about 10 youth became members of the after school clubs, participation is not limited to enrolled 4-H members allowing roughly 65 youth participate in 4-H after school clubs each month. Expanding 4-H afterschool opportunities means more youth are able to participate in programs that value enrichment-focused activities and promote positive youth development, improving their afterschool experience as well as their perception of 4-H.

- **Small Business Development (non-agriculture):** Lersch continued to work with numerous individuals wanting to start or expand businesses. Assistance included education about and help with business plan development, advice on goal setting, consultation on strengthening personal financial histories, and conducting effective target market and competitive analyses.

- **Exploring careers in science, technology, engineering and math:** Twelve middle school youth participated in the first ever 4-H Gateway Academy held at Tomahawk High School the week of June 14-18th. The Academy was conducted by Debbie Moellendorf, 4-H Youth Development Educator and Tomahawk staff members Ryan Huseby, Jim Norman and Kay Olson. The academy is designed to inspire middle school students to explore science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and consider career opportunities in these important fields. During the Tomahawk Academy, participants created shelters out of newspaper; designed a toy for children ages 4-7 in a disaster relief shelter using common supplies you would find in this situation; utilized the West Point Bridge Builder website to learn about and then built a bridges using the principles they learned; and built a rocket out of a liter soda bottle. Throughout the week participants also participated in team building exercises and had an opportunity to utilize a variety of computer programs. To learn about local businesses and possible careers where science, technology, engineering and math are used, the group toured Tomahawk Log Homes and Daigle Brothers on the final day of the academy. In their post program survey, all of the participants indicated that they would recommend the 4-H Gateway Academy to their friends. The academy was made possible through funds from the Kern Family Foundation of Waukesha partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Additional partners for the 4-H Gateway Academy included the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) Education Foundation and the Tomahawk school district. In order to host a 4-H Gateway Academy, a school must have a certified Project Lead Teacher who agrees to be involved in the academy. Tomahawk is currently the only school district in Lincoln County who has staff who are certified Project Lead instructors.

- **4-H Summer Camp:** Like other 4-H projects and activities, 4-H camp is centered around the idea of providing youth a fun, hands-on environment to build and strengthen valuable life skills. According to a large research study by the American Camp Association, summer camps positively affect children in the following ways:

  - Children become more confident and experience increased self-esteem.
  - Children develop more social skills that help them make new friends.
  - Children grow more independent and show more leadership qualities
  - Children become more adventurous and willing to try new things.

  A Virginia study suggested that a primary benefit of 4-H Camp participation is related to responsibility. Youth report "becoming more independent and capable of self-care." Adults report: "youth taking care of their own things, sharing work responsibilities, and taking initiative on their own." Camp is another great way 4-H enables youth to learn and practice skills to be productive citizens. Eight older youth counselors from Lincoln County along with Taylor County youth counselors planned the 4-H Summer Camp program to give campers opportunities to build on their life skills, while having fun in a safe environment. Adult volunteers and staff from both counties provided resources and guidance to counselors. Campers stayed in cabins and participated in a variety of activities. All the activities were led by older 4-H youth counselors. Twenty-two campers, eight counselors and four adults from Lincoln County participated in the camp program this year. Eight of the campers whom indicated that they needed financial assistance to cover the registration fee were granted "camperships" to attend camp through a grant secured by the 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor through the Safe and Stable Families Grant managed by Social Services. In the evaluation the campers reported many project skills and interpersonal skills gained during the camp experience. Camp counselors reported an increase in their ability to handle pressure and conflict, a development of their leadership skills, and found that they related to youth better. They also indicated an increase of organizational skills, confidence, learning about different leadership styles and speaking. When asked what was most useful from the training provided, the counselors indicated that the focus on planning, discussion of conflict management, and behavior issues were the most useful. Amanda Kostman, 4-H Youth Development Program Advisor and Michelle Grimm, Taylor County 4-H Youth Development Educator provide training for camp counselors, adult chaperones and overall leadership for camp.

IV. Information Resource for General Questions

Extension educators are often asked by individuals, government employees, nonprofit staff, and businesses/corporations to provide up-to-date, unbiased, research based information on a whole host of topics. Topics as diverse as but not limited to:

- Demographic data, industry information, and trends analysis. The data and analysis is used to help individuals and entities make decisions about how best to fulfill client, customer, or market needs.
- Agricultural market trends in commodities, land and custom farm operations

- Home horticulture
- Food harvesting and preservation
- Sustainable and organic farming practices
- Safe and effective use of pesticides on everything from Christmas trees to corn

➢ **Education Through the Use of Technology:** Amanda Kostman has provided leadership to create an online educational presence for Lincoln County UW-Extension that enhances and compliments our more traditional communication methods (i.e. newsletters, press releases, trainings, workshops). Lead by Amanda Kostman, all staff members have transitioned our prior website to a more informative and interactive site (http://lincoln.uwex.edu/) to meet the expectations of those we serve. While we strive to utilize new tools available through technology we are cognizant of those without access to this technology. In addition to the website we have also developed a searchable newsletter for the 4-H program in blog format at http://fyi.uwex.edu/lincolncounty4h/ which compliments and enhances the website. Both of these sites also have features that allow us to easily share this same information through the current dominant social networking site face book. Lincoln County UW-Extension's Facebook page is located at http://www.facebook.com/people/Lincoln-Uw-Extension/100001859918254 and currently has almost 450 friends (friends are people whom chose to be linked with the page holder in order to keep in contact with the Facebook page). In addition, many of the staff members have developed professional Facebook pages. Amanda provides leadership to keeping our face book page active by publishing daily current Lincoln County UW-Extension programs and providing pertinent educational information that may be of interest to residents of Lincoln County. Our "Facebook Friends" have commented that they have found the information shared timely, useful and valuable. Coupled with our traditional methods of communication, these added tools, create additional ways for Lincoln County UW-Extension to provide relevant, creditable, and accessible information to the residence of Lincoln County.

The Extension office is equipped to respond to the diversity of requests received as a result of the knowledge and skills of local Extension staff along with the access to University resources. Our connection to Cooperative Extension allows us to address the questions and important issues of individuals, families, businesses, communities and the county. In addition, we are often the department resident's start with when they are not sure where to go for the information. Due to the diverse programming and relationships staff have, we are often able to help them or connect them to the proper service provider.