



Extension Mission: *We teach, learn, lead, and serve, connecting the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.*

Community Development/Strong Bodies

PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO ASSIST
LEADERS, COMMUNITIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS REALIZE
THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

MICHELLE GRIMM, EDUCATOR



Michelle Grimm –
.8 FTE CDI
.2 FTE Strong Bodies
Coordinator

Broadband Community Meetings Recap

Program Overview: An important piece of the Taylor County Broadband Project is educating the public. Community meetings were held to educate residents on broadband expansion progress and inform them about available grants and provider coverage.

Key Activities:

- Community Meetings (4):
 - Locations: Rib Lake, Gilman, Jump River, and Medford.
 - Shared updates on state and federal broadband programs.
 - Provided resources for checking coverage and understanding funding opportunities.

Michelle's Role:

- Facilitated discussions with Grant Bub, Taylor County Broadband Manager.
- Answered questions and connected residents to resources.

Outcomes:

- Increased community awareness of broadband progress and providers.
- Helped residents understand timelines for access through various grants.

RESET Solar Initiative Recap

Program Overview: The UW–Madison Division of Extension continues to work with state specialists on the RESET Program (Renewable Energy Siting & Engagement for Tomorrow) to help Wisconsin communities plan for large-scale renewable energy and energy storage projects.



Key Activities:

- Focus Groups (4):
 - Engaged local stakeholders (government, businesses, nonprofits, residents).
 - Discussed concerns and benefits to large scale solar projects.
 - Identified education needs and potential recommendations for Taylor County in the final report.

Community Conversations (Gilman and Medford in February):

- Collected broader input on renewable energy priorities.
- Featured a special topic: Leasing Land for Solar Projects—covering landowner considerations, contract terms, and long-term impacts.

Recruiting, Retaining & Managing Volunteers

Program Overview: Extension is offering a five-session series designed to help nonprofits build and sustain effective volunteer programs. The sessions will focus on the unique challenges and benefits of working with volunteers, emphasizing strategies to maximize community goodwill and organizational impact.

Key Activities:

- Series Dates:
 - Wednesdays, February 4 – March 4, 2026
 - Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- Topics Covered:
 - When and how to use volunteers effectively.
 - Strategies for recruiting and retaining volunteers.
 - Techniques for placing volunteers where they provide the greatest benefit.
 - Understanding differences between managing volunteers and employees.

Outcomes:

Participants will gain practical tools and insights to strengthen volunteer engagement, expand organizational capacity, and enhance community reach.



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TAYLOR COUNTY

Agriculture

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION, RESOURCES AND
DECISION-MAKING TOOLS TO FARMERS AND
AGRIBUSINESSES.

SANDY STUTTGEN, EDUCATOR



Sandy Stuttgen – Faculty
.8 FTE

Community Connections in 2025

Sandy connected directly with community members 68 times in 2025, answering their questions and concerns in person, in writing, or by email. The conversations covered a wide range of topics, everything from land rental rates and contracts, forage pricing, and herd health, to helping one person find resources for writing her farm business plan and another track down information on a livestock siting ordinance. No matter the subject, Sandy makes sure her responses are clear, unbiased, and backed by solid research, always including sources so people can follow up later if they choose.

Looking forward to January & February 2026

- The Beef Roundup Webinar Series, (began on Dec. 11) features Extension specialists and industry experts from across the country covering topics relevant to today's beef producers. These once-a-month evening ZOOM sessions repeat in Jan, Feb, and March.
- NCWCA Winter Event, Jan 17. Sandy is organizing and will teach 'On-Farm Pregnancy Diagnostics.'
- School for Beginning Beef Production, six-sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, Jan 27 – Feb 12 over Zoom; Sandy is teaching herd health and recordkeeping on Feb 5. Participants will learn about various aspects of beef enterprises, including marketing strategies, cattle health, nutrition, and reproduction and cattle enterprises. The goal of this series is to enhance the economic sustainability of emerging beef producers.
- General Farming Pesticide Applicator Training and Test, Feb 4.
- Save A Calf, Save A Cow – Dairy Workshop on February 11, for dairy producers and dairy workers which is presented in English with English and Spanish slides and interpretation available by request. Sandy will teach obstetrics and newborn calf care.
- Beef Quality Assurance Certification, Feb 16, Altoona. Sandy will co-teach at this north-central workshop.





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TAYLOR COUNTY

Wisconsin 4-H

TAYLOR COUNTY 4-H HAS OVER 200 YOUTH AND ADULTS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN LEADERSHIP AND LIFE SKILLS.

JULIE DIEPENBROCK, EDUCATOR



Julie Diepenbrock -
.5 FTE

4-H Partnerships

Planning for the growth of the 4-H program in Taylor County, in collaboration with a variety of community partners, requires time, communication, and intentional coordination. The goal is to strengthen and expand partnerships that actively support 4-H programming, so that more young people have access to meaningful learning experiences and positive developmental opportunities across the county.

Julie has been actively developing partnerships across the community. This includes coordinating out-of-school 4-H program times with Huey’s Hideaway Children’s Museum and beginning planning for a Summer 4-H Club at Huey’s. She has also collaborated with the Medford School District and the Gilman Library to offer after-school 4-H activities, such as making mini pizzas and cake-in-a-mug. In addition, Julie strengthened community recognition efforts by highlighting Tractor Supply as the Taylor County Friend of 4-H for 2025. These partnership-building efforts help increase visibility, engagement, and support for 4-H throughout the county.

The Medford Tractor Supply store is participating in the annual Paper Clover fundraiser for 4-H, and their store manager attended the Taylor County 4-H Awards Program to accept the Friend of 4-H Award on behalf of the business. The partnership was further highlighted through a local newspaper article featuring the award presentation and photo.



Julie and Medford Store Manager Stacy.

New 4-H Community Club Meeting

Rib Lake has been without a community-based 4-H club for several years, leaving a gap in positive youth development opportunities in the area. Recently, a number of local families have expressed renewed interest in bringing a 4-H club back to their community.

At the start of Summer 2025, 4-H Educator Julie Diepenbrock partnered with the Rib Lake Public Library to ensure weekly access to engaging 4-H programming for youth in the Rib Lake area. Our AmeriCorps member, Katelyn Schult, and Summer Intern, Samantha Budtke, planned and delivered hands-on activities each week with the goal of cultivating interest in forming a local 4-H club. These efforts resulted in a parent—already involved with the Little Whispers 4-H Club and with three children enrolled—stepping forward to lead the new club. 17 youth and 8 adults were present at the organizational meeting, and 13 youth have already enrolled as members of the Rib Lake 4-H Club (name to be changed soon).



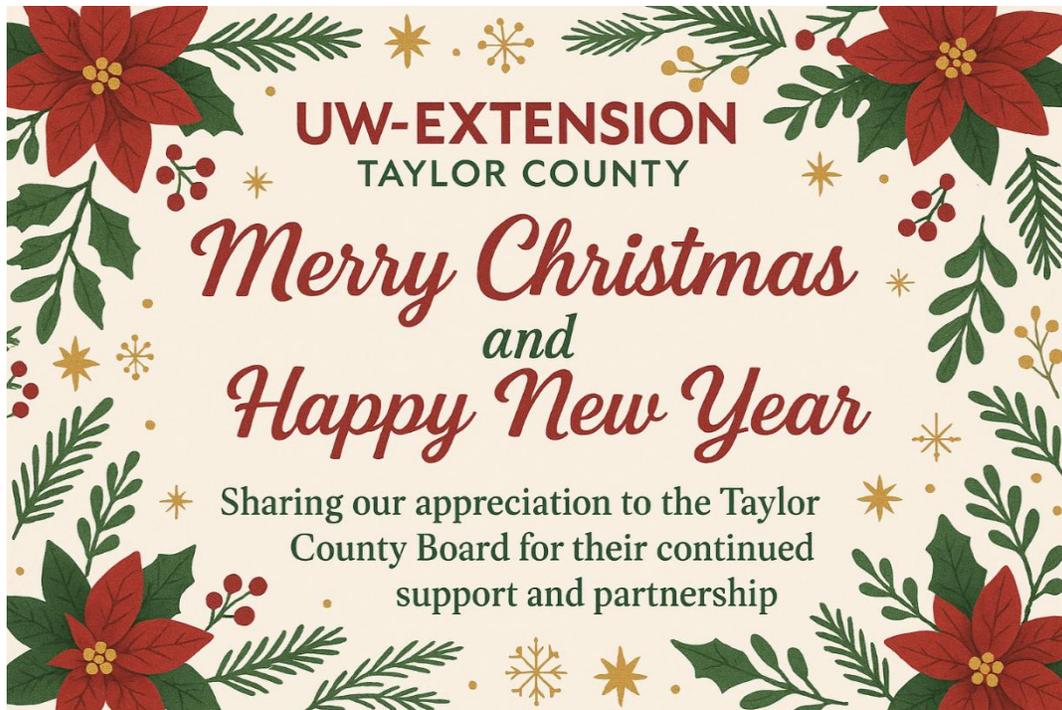


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TAYLOR COUNTY

Extension Taylor County's Primary Partnering Organizations

- Equity Livestock Marketing Association
- Federation of Taylor County 4-H
- FFA Colby High School
- Gilman School District
- Huey's Hideaway Children's Museum
- ICAA Taylor County Food Pantry
- Medford Area Public Schools
- Medford Farmer's Market
- Northcentral WI Cattleman's Association (NCWCA)
- Rib Lake School District
- Taylor County Broadband Committee
- Taylor County Department of Health
- Taylor County Fair Board
- Taylor County Food Resource Group
- Taylor County Public Libraries
- Taylor County Solid Waste & Recycling Committee
- Taylor County Tourism
- Taylor County Unit of WI Towns Association
- WI Beef Council



Julie

Sandy

Michelle

Amber

Kelly



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
TAYLOR COUNTY

Office Administration



OFFICE MANAGER – KELLY PHILLIPS

Support

Beyond administrative duties, Phillips provides on-going support to the educators at the Taylor County Extension Office. During the months of November and December Kelly provided coordination and support for the following programs: 4-H Email Blast, 4-H Newsletter, NCWCA Winter Event Postcard, AG informational emails, Winter Strong Bodies updates and registrations, 2026 PAT Updates, Budgets and Finance review, County Wellness Committee meetings, website and flyer updates. Moreover, she administered a range of services offered, statewide administrative informational zoom sessions, horticulture and agriculture inquiries and research, and general questions that may or may not be related to the services of Extension. Just in the months of November and December, Phillips has assisted over 30 Taylor County Residents via the phone, e-mail, and office drop-ins. She plays an important role connecting community members with UW resources and research.

Professional Development

As Phillips provides strong administrative support, she strives to continue building and developing the needed skills to utilize best practices and resources. She is also committed to supporting other administrative professionals and serves on a statewide committee that organizes professional development opportunities for administrative professionals around the state. Phillips recently attended a meeting with co-facilitators for the statewide administrative professionals to identify needed topics for 2026 and identify leadership roles. Phillips also attended a WordPress 404page via Zoom. Phillips continues to seek the latest and greatest tools to assist in her daily job responsibilities.



AREA EXTENSION DIRECTOR – AMBER REHBERG

(Taylor, Price, Lincoln, Florence, Forest, Oneida, & Vilas)

November and December have been an exceptionally busy period focused on finalizing county budgets across the counties served and completing year-end paperwork. Some counties presented unique challenges, requiring additional meetings and deeper engagement to ensure alignment and successful outcomes. In addition to budget work, efforts are underway to strengthen local programming through key hires. Recruitment is in progress for a Community Development Educator in Forest County and a Health and Well-Being Educator in Florence County, which will enhance Extension's capacity to meet community needs. A significant organizational update occurred during this time: after extensive planning and feedback from county partners, Extension restructured the Area Model, reducing the number of Area Extension Directors from 21 to 19. Taylor County will remain part of Area 3, which now includes Price, Oneida, Lincoln, and Langlade Counties. I will continue to serve Area 3, while a new AED will be hired to lead Area 4. Please reach out with any question or concerns to amber.rehberq@wisc.edu or 715-784-1540.