DeWitt-Macon-Piatt County Extension Council
Minutes for May 27, 2026
2:00 PM
Piatt County Extension Office

Members present: Todd Henricks, Jerry Edwards, Michael Schroeder, Sarah Smith, Marcie Albrecht.

Guests present: Alyssa Kosek and Liz Resar, Interns at Kirby Hospital

Staff present: Doug Gucker, Sarah Vogel, Caitlin Mellendorf, Henry Craft, Haley Jones, Jamie Boas

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Jerry Edwards.

Introductions: Council members introduced themselves and their institutions.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Read and Approve March 2026 Minutes: Michael Schroeder said to add an "O" to his last name. Todd moved to accept minutes with that change, Michael seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Program Highlight: Doug Gucker, Commercial Agriculture Educator, presented. He outlined programs for his area, including soil health, Annie's Project, farming legacy, Master Naturalists, radio and tv appearances, and individual questions he answers.

Educator Updates:

4-H- Henry Craft (Piatt & DeWitt counties): There are 19 members on Teen Council, a group of junior high and high school 4-H members who are planning events, such as a talent show at the 4-H show this July. Eric Eickmeier has planned and hosted several school field trips to 4-H Camp for students to learn about natural resources and get outside in nature. Henry presented at Ag at the Museum in partnership with DeWitt County Farm Bureau. Several teen teachers join him in presenting on germination. Welcome to the Real World, a financial literacy program, was presented to Blue Ridge 8th graders.

Sarah Smith mentioned the ROE website has resources. She shared about VR goggles that are programmed for youth to explore different careers. She is interested in creating a process with 4-H's financial literacy program and the VR goggles.

4-H- Haley Jones (Macon County): Over 200 5th graders attended agucation at Richland Community College where 4-H taught "Where does pizza come from?" There is a new

partnership with Salvation Army to provide STEM programming with 40-50 kids this summer. Staff is also doing programs with English language learners at Decatur Public School's summer school program. Staff are doing programs at libraries this summer and are looking for judges for the summer shows.

Food & Nutrition- Caitlin Mellendorf: She focused on cottage food programs and non-restaurant food handlers trainings this spring. She targeted a church in each county to train volunteers at churches who may prepare and serve meals. Caitlin offered recipe cards for anyone that can use them at their locations. Michael said he could give them to WIC participants. Sarah mentioned that Mt. Zion Library has a food pantry and a garden that could use the cards. In addition, family and consumer science (FCS) teachers may be able to use them. It was discussed that perhaps the CEO, FFA/Ag and FCS teachers might be interested in having Caitlin do an introduction to cottage food safety with their students as many are interested in entrepreneurship.

Horticulture- Sarah Vogel: Sarah is presenting at her professional association's national meeting in Denver this summer. The statewide program "Community Tree Care" had six webinars and has additional programming planned for the fall. Her local program "Homegrown Harvest," will take place in June and July at a community garden in Decatur. Elementary school kids at Johns Hill started seeds and planted them in the garden. She plans to do monthly programs with the 1st grade classrooms starting in the fall. Sarah reminded the group about a tool kit that community and school gardens can use to get their project(s) started.

Piatt/DeWitt Master Gardeners have welcomed Piatt County Mental Health groups at the community garden in Monticello. There are plans for Caitlin to use the food grown in programs with them later this summer/fall. MG have been doing programs in the rural areas of the county.

Macon Master Gardeners have been doing more educational outreach. They have Willy's Garden Week at the Decatur Public Library coming up in June as well as programs at the Crossing Healthcare Garden.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM

The next meeting is set for Monday, August 31 from 2-3:30pm at the DeWitt County Extension Office located at 1160 State Rte 54, Clinton, IL.