

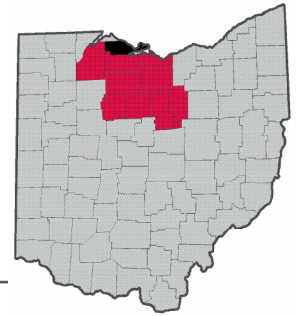
2015 County Highlights

Ottawa County

Erie Basin Extension Education and Research Area

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PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Real Money, Real World, an OSU Extension signature program, offers hands-on training for younger teens to make lifestyle and budget choices that they will face when they become adults. The students were taught four in-class lessons to prepare them for a hands-on simulation. These lessons taught the students how occupation affects income, how decisions have to be made based on available funds, and how checking and savings accounts work. As a supplement to the program, additional sessions were presented on the simulation day. These sessions covered options and opportunities after high school, career pathways and exploration, and saving and funding options for school and the future. Real Money, Real World reached 382 youth in four school districts in Ottawa County.
- The Ottawa County 4-H school enrichment program offered 15 different programs and kits to kindergarten through fifth grade teachers. The programs meet the Ohio Educational Learning Standards for each grade, and they incorporate hands-on learning and skills development for youth. When the programs and kits are brought into classrooms, the students learn in-depth information on the subjects being offered. In the 2014–2015 school year, over 5,000 contacts were made in Ottawa County.
- The Aquatic Visitors Center (AVC) on Put-in-Bay focuses on place-based education of Lake Erie issues and topics in Ottawa County, with an end goal of increasing the stewardship of Lake Erie. The AVC is made possible through a partnership of Ohio Sea Grant Extension and the ODNR-Division of Wildlife. The AVC allows youth and adults to view live Lake Erie specimens under a microscope and in aquaria. Attendees also learn about the historic AVC hatchery, Lake Erie food webs, and sustainable sport and commercial fisheries. Visitors also participate in hands-on science programs. Youth under the age of 16 can borrow equipment and fish for free, often resulting in catching their first fish. In 2015, over 10,000 youth and adults visited the AVC.

According to past survey data, visitors indicated that they were very likely to pay more attention to Lake Erie issues and to support efforts to clean up Lake Erie as a result of visiting the AVC.

- Of the 88 counties in Ohio, only eight of them border Lake Erie. As a result, many Ohio youth might be familiar with the Great Lake, but they might not ever have had the opportunity to experience it in person. In 2015, Ohio Sea Grant partnered with OSU Extension, Cleveland Metroparks, and ODNR-Division of Watercraft staff to put on the five-day Sea Camp on Kelleys Island. Here, 61 youth attendees were able to make their own fishing lures; filet fish; use GPS units; go kayaking, snorkeling, and charter fishing; and operate power boats and PWCs. Youth also learned about sport fishing, sun safety, and aquatic biology and sampling methods. Over 50 percent of participants caught their first fish from Lake Erie, and over 75 percent tied their first fishing lure, cleaned their first fish, and had their first experience using scientific equipment to collect aquatic organisms. Sea Camp on Kelleys Island has fostered personal connections and a sense of responsibility to Lake Erie for hundreds of Ohio teens. Ultimately, Sea Camp fosters in youth Lake Erie literacy by providing hands-on, recreational experiences.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-ED) is funded through a grant from the USDA Farm Bill. The goal is to help individuals with limited resources gain skills in nutrition, food budgeting and food safety. Ottawa County has partnered with agencies in the county to provide nutrition education lessons. More than 1,200 Ottawa County residents participated in one of 165 nutrition classes taught by Extension's SNAP-Ed program.
- During the summer months, Ottawa County Extension partnered with United Way to provide nutrition education at three meal sites for children. The youth were taught the importance of using MyPlate as a guideline for healthy meals



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and snacks. The youth were also excited about making their own MyPlate roll-up after the first lesson, and making a personal fruit pizza after another lesson.

- Money management programs were presented to 30 youth and adults. Sessions covered topics such as spending habits, financial goals, budgeting, and community foreclosure prevention.
- This year, 133 people were reached through health and wellness programs such as the Live Healthy Live Well email challenges and food safety presentations.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Northern Ohio Crops Day continued to address timely topics that impact grain producers' bottom line. One hundred sixty participants learned how new technologies and issues could be affecting their operations and management decisions for the coming crop year. Eighty of the participants received private or commercial pesticide recertification credits, and 25 Certified Crop Advisors obtained continuing educational credits. All participants received the necessary credits for Ohio's fertilizer certification program. The program is sponsored by 17 local ag businesses and the Erie Basin EERA.
- The Sandusky/Ottawa County Master Gardener Volunteers program continues to have a very strong presence in the community. The active roster has over 40 members. Major projects for the year included the ninth Master Gardener Plant Sale, a vegetable demonstration garden at the health department, coordination of the Sandusky County Community Garden Plots, and beautification projects at the Sandusky County Court House and facilities in cooperation with the Sandusky County Juvenile Court's Youth Works Program.
- Homeowner and landowner concerns about property provide constant foot traffic, phone calls and email requests via the Ottawa County Extension office. The daily calls and visits about insect problems; lawn, landscape, and tree problems; property rights and taxes; and many other general topics have been a challenge with no staff directly dedicated to this program area. However, the office has managed to service the clientele by using online OSU Extension resources, state specialists and assistance from the Sandusky County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources educator. This has included extensive work with the African Safari Wildlife Park on educating the managers about hay production, livestock nutrition, weed management and agricultural economics.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Over 170 licensed charter captains and exhibitors attended the 34th Annual Ohio Charter Captains Conference. The Ohio Sea Grant-led program draws statewide interest, typically reaching 20–25 percent of the licensed captains in the state. Partners include the Lake Erie Charter Boat Association and the ODNR-Division of Wildlife. This program increases information flow to the charter industry and educates captains in fishery resource management, business management, laws and regulations, and marine technology. The conference is designed to support the economic benefits to the region via the charter industry while also enhancing stewardship of the lake by those who use the resource the most. Of captains responding to a post-event survey, 66 percent reported increasing profitability, and 96 percent reported improving their operation based on the information presented at the conference.

Ottawa County receives \$39,710 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.