

Kent COUNTY *Detail*

July/August 2008

Administration



County Leadership on National, Regional, and State Boards

Recently, a number of Kent County elected and appointed officials have been elected to leadership positions on National, Regional, and State boards. County Treasurer Ken Parrish was installed as the President of the National Association of County Collectors, Treasurers and Finance Officers (NACCTFO); Deputy Aeronautics Director Phil Johnson was elected as President of the Great Lakes Chapter of American Association of Airport Executives; Commissioner Harold Mast was installed as President of the Michigan Association of Counties; and County Administrator Daryl Delabbio was elected President of the Michigan Association of County Administrative Officers.

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Cooperative Extension

Gypsy Moth Update

The Kent/MSU Extension Office will be hosting a meeting for public officials on **Monday, September 8, at 6:30 p.m.** at its facility at 775 Ball NE, Grand Rapids, that will feature a presentation by an MSU entomologist regarding the cyclical nature of gypsy moths. There will also be time allotted for questions/discussion. As part of the information distribution, there will be a PowerPoint presentation that will be duplicated and burned to a CD for each public official to take back to their local unit. County staff has also looked at the options available to create a coordinated response if that is something that is warranted after it is determined how many communities might want to participate.

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4-H in the Urban Community

The Kent/MSU Extension 4-H youth development program continues to provide opportunities for youth in rural and urban areas of Kent County. Our urban program continues to grow, remaining fresh and relevant each new year. The capstone event of the year for our after-school efforts is the Grand Rapids Public Schools Collaborative Youth Fair which just celebrated its sixth year. This is a wonderful example of the growth of 4-H's involvement. The Collaborative Youth Fair, which is a partnership between MSU Extension, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Campfire USA, Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation, the United Methodist Community House, and the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids, gives students in after-school programs a focus in their learning and allows them to showcase their various talents.

The 2008 Grand Rapids Public Schools Collaborative Youth Fair expanded once again this year to 28 schools, up from 23 last year. These include: six middle, three K-8, and 19 elementary schools. Held again at Ottawa Hills High School, the Fair was a great success. Participation grew in 2008, with 1,393 projects that were judged and many more that were put on display. This is a 204% increase from last year. More than 850 students and their families were in attendance while over 100 volunteers and staff worked to make a great youth development event. Everything about this year's Youth Fair was better than the year before: the projects, performances, the participation, entertainment,

volunteers, and especially the students involved.

Aside from the Collaborative Youth Fair, 4-H is involved in the urban community with relevant programs that all youth enjoy. These are: In-Touch Science, Running Club, Cooking Club, and Rocketry Club. In Kent County, 4-H impacted the lives of 10,025 youth last year, with 50% residing in an urban area. As we continue to commit efforts to reach our urban youth, we have expanded to other communities bordering and near Grand Rapids such as Wyoming and Byron Township.



A project at the Grand Rapids Public Schools Collaborative Youth Fair

For more information about the Kent/MSUE 4-H program or if you are interested in volunteering opportunities at the 2009 Collaborative Fair next May, please call or e-mail Morgan Gudiño – Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, 336-3265 or gudinom@msu.edu.

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Patients from Spectrum-Kent Community Enjoy Special Evening in the Grand Ideas Garden

June was a special month in the Grand Ideas Garden located at the Kent County MSU Extension office on the corner of Ball and Bradford. The Grand Ideas Garden is an outdoor setting for horticulture education designed and built through donations and efforts of Master Gardeners, community partners, the local green industry, and work of Kent/MSU Extension staff.

Dozens of people gathered in the garden in June to host more than twenty special needs guests from Spectrum Health Kent Community in an evening of fun and good will. This is the second year that Kent/MSU Extension Master Gardeners have co-sponsored the evening with the hospital which was designed to give their physically impaired patients a sensory time in the garden. A cadre of trained health care professionals joined the hospital guests who were taxied over on Spectrum mini-busses.

Education and fun snacks were provided by the MSU Extension volunteers, and this year, Casa la Parrot brought eight colorful Macaws to entertain the crowd. As the gently cascading water slid over the massive rocks in the Grand Ideas waterfall, people mingled from the neighborhood and took in the heavenly hues of hundreds of different plants and flowers. The evening was enchanting and will be remembered by many for a long time.

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Health Department

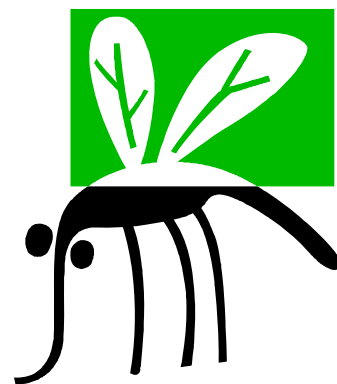
Health Notes

A service of the Kent County Health Department

July 2008: Fight the Bite

The sun is still shining, flowers are still blooming, and backyards and ball fields are hubs of activity for people...and for mosquitoes. Summer weather brings the increased risk of West Nile Virus (WNV), transmitted to humans through mosquito bites. Since WNV came to Michigan in 2002, it has been considered endemic, meaning we expect to see cases of the virus in birds, mosquitoes, and humans each year.

While 80 percent of people who are infected with the virus will never experience symptoms, 20 percent may develop mild illness with symptoms like fever, headache, body aches, rash and swollen lymph glands. Approximately one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness which may be characterized by severe headache,



high fever, stiff neck, muscle weakness, paralysis, and very rarely, death. Persons 50 and over have the highest risk of severe disease.

This summer, you can fight the bite and reduce your risk for infection by taking a few simple precautions:

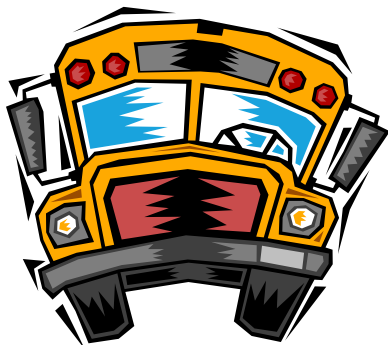
- Use insect repellent that is EPA registered such as DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Apply insect repellent to exposed skin and spray clothing with repellents since mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. Always read and follow manufacturers' label directions when applying insect repellent, as most are not recommended for use on children under two months of age.
- Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and pants whenever you are outdoors, but especially in wooded or wetland areas.
- Drain standing water around yards, decks, and other outdoor areas around the home. Flower pots, pet bowls, clogged rain gutters, swimming pool covers, discarded tires, buckets – anything that can hold standing water – are breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Also, change water in bird baths every three to four days (twice a week).
- Make sure window and door screens are maintained in good condition to keep mosquitoes out of buildings and homes.
- Stay indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening, when mosquitoes are most active.

In 2007, Kent County saw a decline in WNV cases, but it's very difficult to predict what the 2008 West Nile season will bring. Because you never know how a person might react to the West Nile Virus, prevention is key!

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August 2008: Back to School!

The last month of summer is here and before you know it, we'll bid farewell to sweltering temperatures and greet fall's changing colors. With this comes the 2008-2009 school year. Whether you have children at home or not, this is the perfect time to prepare for the changes ahead. Here are a few tips and reminders to help you make way for school days:



- If you drive to work, allow yourself a few extra minutes to get there, as school buses will be back on the street. Their frequent stops can be a source of frustration for motorists, but it is important to slow down and obey traffic laws and speed limits with more children on the street.
- If you are behind a school bus, remember that red overhead flashing lights, possibly accompanied by an extended stop arm, tell you the school bus is stopped to load or unload children. Michigan law requires you to stop at least 20 feet from the front or rear of a school bus at this time. Flashing yellow lights mean be alert and ready to stop.

- Parents who have a child entering kindergarten in the fall will need documentation that the child had a hearing and vision test. Parents can call the Kent County Health Department at (616) 632-7047 to schedule a free hearing and vision screening. It's best not to wait until the last minute.
- Many schools require entering students to have a physical and be up to date on their immunizations. This is a great time for families to schedule appointments with a doctor, and make sure that children and teens meet school requirements, and can start the year off on the right foot!
- Back to...backpacks. Children, teenagers, and adults use backpacks, designed to distribute the load among the body's strongest muscles, for school and work. However, if they are too heavy or worn incorrectly, they can cause injury. When choosing a backpack, look for wide, padded shoulder straps that don't dig into the shoulders. A padded back can protect the body and increase comfort. Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles and may increase curvature of the spine. Also, pack light. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the carrier's total body weight.
- Catch on to healthy habits! Just as the New Year is the traditional time to turn over a new leaf with new resolutions, the new school year is an ideal time to instill healthy habits in students of all ages. Suggestions include getting kids in the habit of making healthy lunch choices, limiting after-school television and video game time, and encouraging kids to move more by playing a sport or engaging in recreation.

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