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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OSU Extension offices throughout Ohio will implement teleworking options for staff amid current coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak concerns

Columbus, OHIO – Governor DeWine recently issued a state of emergency for the state of Ohio, and along with the Ohio Department of Health, has implemented a variety of strategies to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). To do our part in reducing risk to Ohio State University Extension employees or clientele, we have implemented a teleworking plan effective immediately, and all OSU Extension offices will be closed to the public until further notice.

This mirrors The Ohio State University’s decision earlier this week to close university buildings and facilities on all of its campuses to “critical services” only (such as law enforcement and public safety; hospitals and health services; facility utilities; and a few others).

While our physical offices will be closed, we are committed to continuing to conduct our work as fully as possible. Our employees are prepared to telework and are ready to serve their local clients and communities. In recent years, OSU Extension has invested in the technology needed to facilitate effective teleworking for our organization; and we will utilize our resources during this challenging situation to remain engaged with Ohioans. Clients, stakeholders, and other community members should continue to connect with any OSU Extension staff member via phone or email as usual.

Reopening of any county office facilities will depend on decisions from the governor and the state of Ohio, as well as The Ohio State University. The exact date when normal operations are expected resume in county Extension offices is unknown at this time. Until then, OSU Extension office staff will be working remotely and will remain accessible and available via email and phone. The health and well-being of our stakeholders, event participants, and employees is of utmost importance.

Each OSU Extension office has developed a business continuity plan that outlines how Extension staff will operate during situations such as the coronavirus outbreak. All staff will continue to work and serve local clientele through normal office hours (as previously determined by each county), and they will remain accountable for program management needs.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Please note that most Extension-planned activities from now through April 20 are now postponed, scheduled to be held virtually, or cancelled. If you have not already been contacted about an event or activity in which you were scheduled to participate and you have a question, please check with your local contact for that event.

Thank you for your cooperation and collaboration related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Ohio State University remains committed to the health and well-being of our community; and OSU Extension remains committed to serving our communities in each county as this situation evolves. These are unprecedented times, and we sincerely appreciate your flexibility and support.

If you have questions, please contact your local OSU Extension office.

Ross County 740-702-3200

You can also visit extension.osu.edu/lao for office phone numbers and a direct link to each office's website and staff directory. If you reach voice mail, please leave a message with your name and contact information, and you will be contacted as soon as possible. For information on the coronavirus and how to prevent its spread, or learn how the state of Ohio and The Ohio State University are working to keep our communities safe, visit:

Ohio Department of Health

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/>

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home/resources/How-You-Can-Prevent-and-Prepare>

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

The Ohio State University

<https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/features/coronavirus>

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Ohio State University Extension

We create *opportunities* for people to explore how *science-based knowledge* can *improve social, economic, and environmental conditions*.