

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County Futures Task Force Report

July 2008

Developed for the Board of Directors of Cornell Cooperative Extension

Courtesy Copies to:

**The Honorable Maggie Brooks
and
The Monroe County Legislature**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary:	3
Background:	7
Findings and Recommendations	8
Mission and Vision:	8
Program Potential:	8
Governance:	9
Program and Staffing (Findings):	10
Agriculture and Horticulture:	10
4-H Youth Development:	10
Nutrition and Health:	10
Natural Resources and Environment:	11
Program and Staffing (Recommendations):	11
Executive Leadership:	11
Agriculture:	11
Horticulture:	12
4-H Youth Development:	12
Nutrition and Health:	12
Environmental and Natural Resource:	12
The Cooperative Extension System and Other Partnerships	13
Funding	13
Facilities	15
Conclusion.....	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This task force met four times from April through the end of June, 2008. See attached list for task force members.

TASK FORCE CHARGE

1. Conduct a “state of the organization” review of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County (hereinafter “CCE of Monroe County”).
2. Provide opportunity for public input, invited and volunteer.
3. Make certain that CCE of Monroe County Board and Monroe County Legislature are kept apprised of progress and developments.
4. Present a final report to the CCE of Monroe County Board with copy to Monroe County Legislature prior to their May or June meetings that provides recommendations and options for the future of CCE of Monroe County.

GENERAL FINDINGS

CCE of Monroe County is an important contributor to the lives of the citizens of Monroe County, and can have a bright future.

1. CCE of Monroe County should continue and improve successful programs such as the Master Gardener Program and Regional Agricultural Teams.
2. CCE of Monroe County needs to act to correct weaknesses in 4H and nutrition programming, in marketing and public relations and in management, and funding.
3. CCE of Monroe County must adapt to meet the changing needs of Monroe County citizens.
4. The Board of CCE of Monroe County must find a permanent Executive Director as soon as possible.
5. Funding is critical. CCE of Monroe County should set priorities and only offer programs where resources are adequate to do a quality job.
6. CCE of Monroe County must work to take better advantage of its partnership with Cornell University.
7. CCE of Monroe County should actively partner with other county associations where feasible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations should be considered as a total package, with the intent being implementation over a three to four year period to re-establish CCE of Monroe County as one of the premier county programs of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Mission and Vision: This task force generally supports the mission as currently stated by CCE of Monroe County. It is recommended however that the Board of Directors make a commitment to reviewing that mission statement and develop a statement regarding the

organizations vision for what they wish to accomplish, who they are committed to serving and laying out their goals. The recommendations in this report should provide a good starting point for this exercise.

Programming: Program opportunities that match the needs of Monroe County citizens and the mission of CCE of Monroe County include: improving energy independence, creating an abundant and safe food supply, profitable plant and animal production systems, youth and family issues, environmental stewardship and health issues.

Governance: The form of governance for CCE of Monroe County is largely spelled out by statute, with Cornell University, as agent for the state, having the responsibility and authority to approve any changes. This task force makes no recommendation regarding any change.

Staffing and Program areas:

Executive Leadership: This organization needs strong, independent leadership. It is recommended that the board move post haste to fill the position of Executive Director; 30% of the Executive Director duties should be devoted to agricultural program leadership. An additional cost is estimated at \$10,000/year primarily for program support.

Agriculture: Support for the regional agricultural teams should remain, and be strengthened. Additional cost estimated at \$3,000/year.

Horticulture: CCE of Monroe County should take the lead among neighboring counties to develop a regional commercial horticulture team. Additional annual cost estimated at \$61,000 following full implementation of regional program. CCE of Monroe County should maintain its current level of commitment to the consumer horticulture program. No budget addition is necessary for this commitment, as the program generates revenue to support all direct costs.

4-H Youth: CCE of Monroe County should focus on re-invigorating the 4-H club model to include rural, suburban and urban youth. Short-term programs should be used to grow the club program. For example, a partnership should be explored with Springdale Farm to take advantage of that facility and to provide a stronger presence on the west side of the county. Additional partnerships with other public and private not-for-profit youth organizations should also be a priority. CCE of Monroe County should expand its Regional 4H program. Additional annual cost is estimated at \$14,000.

Nutrition and Health: CCE of Monroe County should make every effort to add a Program Leader position in nutrition and health to develop a strong program focus on obesity and its associated ills. Additional annual cost estimated at \$66,000.

Environment and Natural Resources: CCE of Monroe County should emphasize environmental and natural resource management programming as it relates to current agriculture and horticulture programming, and should add staff capacity to provide leadership and development of an environmental program focus. Potential partnerships with Sea Grant Extension should be explored. Additional annual cost estimated at \$56,000.

The Land Grant System and Partnerships: It is recommended that the campus field connection be strengthened to improve on the state of the art nature of programming. Additionally, special attention should be given to building strong collaborative relationships with other organizations, as appropriate, to more effectively use available resources. Additional costs are estimated to be insignificant.

Funding:

Private: The board of directors should work closely with the Extension Foundation of Monroe County to develop a strategic plan for generating significant additional private support for key program and/or staff. Realistic new annual revenue goals for support of base operations should be established as a part of this plan.

Grants: The board should create and adopt a policy that encourages the development of mission consistent grants by staff. A goal should be set that would result in 25% of staff salaries covered by grant dollars following a realistic phase in period. CCE of Monroe County should develop a Grant Writer in cooperation with other County Associations. The skills and resources of Cornell in finding and securing grants should be used aggressively. Potential new annual revenue following phase in period is \$112,000.

Public Funds: State statute and the public nature of the work of CCE of Monroe County require a reasonable base of public funding. This committee strongly recommends that Monroe County make a commitment to replacing a portion of that base that has been eroded over the past 15 years. New York State and Federal government funds provided to CCE of Monroe County are contingent upon funding provided by the County.

Program-Generated Revenue: CCE of Monroe County must invigorate and expand programs that produce revenue (membership fees, usage fees, nutrition programs), and actively create new services that can be “sold” to government agencies that now must buy outside, or, in most cases, don't offer.

Repair of Base Funding: Current budget projections for 2008 include a \$47,000 deficit to be covered by reserve funds. This \$47,000, to the extent possible, needs to be included as additional funding just to maintain the 2008 status quo for budget year 2009.

Funding Summary: Note: These are estimates for full implementation of all recommendations, based on 2008 cost of organizational operations and projections.

Additional Costs:

Staffing and Support =	\$210,000
<u>Replace 2008 deficit =</u>	<u>47,000</u>
Total =	\$257,000

Additional Revenue Needs:

Private Giving =	\$ 20,000
Grant Fund Development =	112,000
<u>Public or other Funds =</u>	<u>125,000</u>
Total =	\$257,000

Facility: CCE of Monroe County must further evaluate the current utilization of the present facility, including the exploration of optional arrangements with the County, potential additional leasing and/or alternatives to its current facility. This task force encourages the leadership of county government to make a commitment to being part of this discussion.

Priorities: It is recommended that initially the focus should be on investing in program areas of agriculture, commercial and consumer horticulture, and the 4-H programs. There needs to be sufficient resources dedicated to these areas including organizational planning, funding and staffing. The nutrition program should be maintained and if resources are available it should be grown to cover audiences not included in grant funded programs. The nutrition program has the potential to not only meet critical needs in the community, but to generate additional revenues.

Finally, additional emphasis should be devoted to Environment and Natural Resource programming only if additional funding is secured to support such programming.

BACKGROUND

Monroe County has had the benefit of extension programs for over 90 years. In their early history what are now called Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations were known as County Farm and Home Bureau and 4-H Club Associations according to New York State statute (County Law 224). In 1951, Farm Bureau and Extension split into two separate organizations with the New York State Farm Bureau recognizing that long-term interests favored "... an Extension Service wholly independent of any farm organization and ... a Farm Bureau organization wholly independent of any governmental agency." The present version of County Law 224 defines an extension associations as a "... subordinate governmental agency consisting of an unincorporated organization of citizens of the respective counties interested in agriculture, home economics and community betterment...." It also states that such associations are to cooperate with Cornell University for extending "...the educational programs of the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the New York State College of Human Ecology...and subjects relating thereto...."

Throughout this 90 year history, County government has provided significant funding for the organization as part of a strong and viable partnership of local, state and federal support. This local funding is necessary for the establishment and maintenance of a Cornell Cooperative Extension association in the Monroe County. The past several years have been difficult financially, with county funding for CCE of Monroe County dropping from a high of \$568,500 in 1991 to \$225,000 for budget year 2008. This is a 60% drop in base funding, or, if adjusted for inflation, a 75% drop in purchasing power.

In 2008, Monroe County ranks last among five urban counties in New York for support for Extension. The ranking:

1	Jefferson County (Watertown)	\$5.290 per resident
2	Albany County (Albany)	\$4.558 per resident
3	Broome County (Binghamton)	\$2.316 per resident
4	Onondaga County (Syracuse)	\$0.780 per resident
5	Erie County (Buffalo)	\$0.318 per resident
6	Monroe County (Rochester)	\$0.308 per resident

Recent budget reductions have left CCE of Monroe County with inadequate funding to support its current level of programming, and require new decisions regarding organizational structure, staffing and focus if CCE of Monroe County is to survive and have a meaningful impact with future programming. The decisions at hand will chart the future for CCE of Monroe County, and enable it to focus on key county issues in a strong partnership with county government.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MISSION AND VISION

Findings:

The mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension is:

“The Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.”

The present Mission of CCE of Monroe County as stated in Association’s Constitution is:

“...to provide research-based information and educational programs to address local priority needs in the areas of Agriculture, Environment, Horticulture, 4-H Youth Development and Nutrition, Health and Food Safety”

Recommendations:

This task force generally supports the mission as currently stated by CCE of Monroe County. We recommend that the Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors use input from this task force report in drafting a new vision statement to lead the development of the organization over the next 5-10 years. It should focus on what business CCE of Monroe County is in (i.e. the application of research and experience based knowledge to solutions of real life problems and issues of public importance for the people of Monroe County).

Additionally, as a follow-up to this report, we recommend the development of a strategic plan focused on details for reaching that vision including the how, what, when, and by whom to achieve stated vision.

PROGRAM POTENTIAL

Findings:

It is apparent given the input of both supporters and detractors who participated in the May 15, 2008 public input session that the potential for CCE of Monroe County programming is great, but is not presently being met. The October, 2007 publication of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, Strategic Opportunities for Cooperative Extension presents a number of programming opportunities that CCE of Monroe County could likely impact with future efforts. It is apparent that CCE of Monroe County does not presently have the resources to address all of the issues identified as opportunities in this Task Force report; however developing a further strategic plan with time tables and commitments could facilitate the realization of many objectives and/or goals set out in this report.

Recommendations:

The following are issues that clearly fall under the purview of potential programming, and that CCE of Monroe County should seriously consider as it looks to rebuilds its programming to meet vital needs:

1. Energy independence: focus on local and regional understanding of alternative energy development and energy efficiency.
2. Abundant and safe food supply: strengthening of local and regional food systems to include limited resource families' access to locally produced foods and reduction of food borne illnesses and diseases.
3. Profitable plant and animal production systems: focus on the profitability and sustainability of agriculture and horticulture industries, including consumer programming in horticulture.
4. Youth and families: increase numbers of youth selecting agriculture, science, and math careers; improve financial literacy; teach communication and presentation skills; expand workforce readiness with programs that focus on high-demand skills; and increase civic and social responsibility among youth and adults.
5. Environmental stewardship: focus on management and planning around issues such as water quality, competing land use, and the rural-urban interface.
6. Health Issues: Focus on reducing obesity in children and adults to also impact attendant ills such as diabetes and heart disease.

GOVERNANCE

Findings:

NYS Statute (County Law, State of New York, Section 224) specifically states that Cooperative Extension in concert with Cornell University is to be under the auspices of a “subordinate governmental agency consisting of an unincorporated organization of citizens ... interested in agriculture, home economics and community betterment...” It further spells out that this agency is to be known as a “county or regional extension service association,” and states that its form of organization and administration shall be provided for in a constitution, and “approved by Cornell University as agent for the state.”

Cornell University has the responsibility and authority to approve the form of governance. Governance structures considered by the Board of Directors need to be planned in concert with Cornell Cooperative Extension administrative staff.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that in the conduct of future elections, the board pay special attention to recruiting individuals with special expertise necessary to provide guidance to the executive leadership of CCE of Monroe County. Ongoing needs appear to include someone with communication experience (public and governmental relations) as well as fund development expertise. In addition, the board must make sure there is appropriate board representation of its historic stakeholders such as the agriculture, 4-H youth, and horticulture and nutrition communities.

PROGRAMS AND STAFFING

Findings:

Agriculture and Horticulture: The work of the three regional agricultural teams (Fruit, Vegetable, and Dairy/Livestock/Field Crops) and Horticulture are the only program areas that remain strong, based on public input and previously identified concerns. Except for the work of these teams, there is currently no agriculture programming because staff are not available to focus on the development and delivery of programs in that area. The Task Force further recognizes the excellence of the Master Gardener's program, and CCE of Monroe County's support of volunteer efforts. Citizens from throughout the county use the diagnostic lab heavily and feel that the lab and the Master Gardener Help Line are vital to providing access to unbiased science based information.

4-H Youth Development: 4-H, while strongly supported by Monroe County citizens, is criticized for not providing sufficient focus on the 4-H club model. The future of Monroe County is dependent on what youth do, or don't do today. In parts of the county this presents a real and growing problem - for parents, teachers and legislators. The Cooperative Extension system has a proven program, the 4-H model, which can be effectively deployed here in Monroe County with the further development of a cadre of willing, capable, trained volunteers. CCE of Monroe County not only must re-build and re-invigorate 4-H to meet the needs of past and current stakeholders; it must rethink what 4-H could do for city and suburban kids. There are many non-agricultural aspects of 4-H that would provide an effective avenue for development of suburban and city youth. Such a commitment would deliver high value for a need that is real, and of pressing importance.

Nutrition and Health: The Cooperative Extension system nationwide has a long history of effective work on nutrition and corresponding health issues. When the food stamp system received funding for education related to nutrition, it turned to Cooperative Extension here in New York as well as many other states, to contract for the educational component of their work called "Eat Smart New York" ("ESNY"). ESNY funding received by CCE of Monroe County, in addition to funding received to conduct the "Expanded Food and Nutrition Educational Program" ("EFNEP") are limited to programming for specific limited resource audiences, in the case of ESNY, to food stamp recipients, and EFNEP, to low income families. CCE of Monroe County is presently in jeopardy of losing funding for these two programs due to the lack of a nutrition and health program leader who can give leadership to these two programs.

In addition, obesity and related issues such as diabetes and heart disease are presently at alarming proportions, including within Monroe County. There are existing opportunities for additional funding for programming to address those issues, locally through the Greater Rochester Health Foundation, and nationally through organizations like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Federal Government. CCE has not been able to pursue these, as funds are not presently available to support nutrition staff outside of the EFNEP and ESNY programs. A nutrition program can pay off for Monroe County by reducing Medicare and Medicaid costs.

Natural Resources and Environment: Monroe County is unique in the fact that it has special needs related to land use and environmental issues. There are obvious issues related to land use and the rural urban interface that come with being both a major metropolitan area, and a major producer of agricultural goods. Additionally, being a part of the Great Lakes Basin brings with it special responsibilities for water quality, watershed and shoreline management. A portion of the current agriculture and horticulture programming at CCE of Monroe inherently impacts some of these issues. Additionally, CCE has expertise at the campus level that could be applied to programming in each of these areas, if CCE of Monroe County had staff capacity to provide leadership and development of an environmental program focus.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations focus in part on staffing and programming to enable CCE of Monroe County to more effectively address issues of importance. This committee recognizes that resources are not currently available for everything included here. As the board develops its strategic plan, it must set priorities and focus on those program areas that are most important in the short run, and then include plans for phase-in of additional programming as funding is identified.

Executive Leadership: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County requires a strong and independent Executive Director to provide effective and politically neutral leadership. The individual in that role serves at the pleasure of the Board and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Director in Ithaca. This person must have a proven ability to get things done. In addition to general administrative skills, the individual must possess skills in leadership and visioning for the future, as well as strong communication skills related to government and public relations and marketing. Additional skills needed include problem solving and alliance-building. An independent search committee dedicated to finding a person with sufficient level of experience, knowledge and the above stated skill set should be convened as soon as possible for this selection and hiring.

Agriculture: The Task Force strongly recommends that the Board maintain and build on current support for the regional agriculture teams. Additionally, CCE of Monroe County must have a minimum of agricultural expertise on staff locally. Given the current fiscal situation, it is recommended that the Board combine the role of Agriculture Program Leader with that of Executive Director. The specific time commitment could be determined, but a minimum of 70% Executive Director and 30% Ag. Program Leader would likely be able to meet needs for both roles. Specific expertise within agriculture need not be in production agriculture, but might best be focused on agricultural economic development. Synergy could be gained by working more

closely with members of the regional teams, as well as other agricultural staff in adjoining counties who also have a focus on economic development. It is also recommended that Monroe County take a stronger ownership role by housing a staff member (or members) from one or more teams at the CCE of Monroe County office.

Horticulture: There is strong support for the idea that the commercial horticulture program would, like agriculture before it, benefit from regionalization. Such a move could, over time, lead to fewer out of pocket expenses for individual counties, and ultimately to a higher level of staffing available to counties involved, with specific staff specializing in greenhouse production, the turf grass industry (including production, athletic fields, parks, golf courses, etc.) and the landscape industry. It is the recommendation of this task force, that CCE of Monroe County take the lead among nearby counties to create such a regional program. Potential county participants need not be contiguous, but be able to add value to the program by their participation.

4-H Youth Development: It is recommended that CCE of Monroe County take the opportunity created by the vacancy in the 4-H leader position to re-staff with someone who has a strong background in the development and growth of the 4-H Club program. It is further recommended that working collaborations with other organizations be a focus of the 4-H program. As an example, a potential collaboration should be explored that would result in a stronger relationship with Springdale Farm, to include the potential location, at least part time, of a 4-H staff member at the Farm to help develop the 4-H program on the western side of the county. Additional efforts should be directed at school enrichment programs, (programs such as Ag. in the Classroom, Trout in the Classroom, etc.) with the goal being the formation of longer term clubs as an outgrowth of such short term contact with new youth. The committee also recommends continued commitment to growing and developing the Lake Plains joint program with Wayne County. This committee feels that the staff necessary to support this recommendation includes a 4-H program leader, an administrative support position, and a program assistant or associate position.

Nutrition and Health: It is our recommendation that CCE of Monroe County re-institute a program leader for nutrition and health issues, to provide capacity to provide nutrition programs and services to audiences that do not fit within the restrictions of current programming, as well as to enable it to pursue additional funds to focus on the reduction of obesity within the community. CCE of Monroe County should consider a "Master Nutritionist" program patterned after the Master Gardener program. We recognize that this recommendation would need additional base funding.

Environmental and Natural Resource: We recommend that the board consider the creation of an environmental/natural resources program position to make effective use of the resources within the system for the betterment of Monroe County. The Task Force further recommends that this be done by developing a close working relationship with Cornell University programming to best utilize Cornell's expertise and research.

THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM AND OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

Findings:

The campus research/field program connection is what differentiates the Cooperative Extension system from other local adult and continuing education programs. While present to a degree, that component does not appear to be as strong as it should if CCE of Monroe County is to reach its full potential in Monroe County. Additionally, this direct connection with the resources of the College of Agriculture, the New York State Experiment Station, the College of Human Ecology, and the new Life Sciences Institute at Cornell is what differentiates Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute at Monroe Community College (MCC). The current focus of work at MCC is on a) credit courses related to agriculture (which are not the purview of CCE), b) farmland protection and agricultural security, and c) agricultural awareness and advocacy. CCE of Monroe County's focus is providing non-traditional educational programs backed up by the research function of the land grant university that facilitates technology transfer to issues such as the development of agriculture and horticulture, healthy living, youth development and environmental stewardship. The re-creation at MCC of a system that would approach the value added provided by the land grant system and its national network would be cost prohibitive.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that CCE of Monroe County emphasize re-building the field campus connection to enhance the state-of-the-art nature of its programs. Staff must be encouraged to connect more directly with faculty (at the Geneva Experiment Station as well as in Ithaca) across all program areas to generate a stronger applied research component as part of Monroe County programs.

To make the most effective use of resources allocated, it is recommended that MCC and CCE of Monroe County develop a memorandum of understanding regarding the program focus of both organizations that will ensure the best use of resources and maximum benefit for the people of Monroe County.

Finally, additional partnerships such as the one with Springdale Farm recommended in the 4-H section above should be a priority for CCE of Monroe County, to more efficiently use resources to reach new audiences and enhance program effectiveness. Additional examples include Finger Lakes Community College, especially as it relates to current environmental programming, other SUNY units, the Zoo, (where a current partnership is in development), as well as other departments of county government.

FUNDING

Findings:

In order to act on recommendations in this report, it is imperative that CCE of Monroe County re-build its funding base beyond current levels. The recommendation of this task force is for a three level approach to include private funding, internally generated fee and grant revenue and public funding. Given time, CCE of Monroe County can reduce its reliance on public funding. However, there is clearly a public benefit to the services and programs of CCE of Monroe County, which justifies a base level of continued public support. By law, CCE of Monroe County cannot exist without county based public funding. State statute (NYS County Law 224, Section 8) provides for state matching funds of fifty cents per dollar for the first \$100,000 of county funds, and five cents per dollar for funding above that level.

Private Funding: The Extension Foundation of Monroe County has existed for approximately 23 years. Early in its existence, significant funds were raised to complement public funds for CCE of Monroe County. It is recommended that as part of the implementation strategy by the CCE of Monroe County Board of this report, it re-dedicate itself to working “hand-in-glove” with the Cornell Extension Foundation. Portions of this report should be used to help determine both short and long-term fund raising targets of a significant nature. In addition to the recruitment of appropriate board members as mentioned above, we would encourage the CCE of Monroe County Board and Foundation trustees devote resources to staff support for the fund raising effort. The CCE of Monroe County Board should also call on Cornell expertise to support the growth of the fundraising effort for Monroe County.

Grant Development: Given the public nature of much of what CCE of Monroe County does, and should continue to do, we do not recommend an over-reliance on grant funds as that may have a high likelihood of skewing the mission of the organization. However, there are likely opportunities for grant funding consistent with CCE of Monroe County’s mission which have gone untapped. It is important that in all instances grant funding “match” the mission of the organization. It is our recommendation that the board consider a policy that at some point in the future (suggest 4 years hence) the expectation would be that 20-25 % of staff salaries would be covered by grant funds. It is further recommended that significant progress could be made in this area by a stronger connection with campus faculty that could lead joint grant development or to Monroe County staff being included in grants already being pursued by faculty.

Public Funding: "Public funding is very important to CCE of Monroe County in meeting its mission and goals. It is the intent of CCE of Monroe County to partner, and we highly recommend it partner, on all fronts with Monroe County Administration and the County Legislature to meet the needs of the community/region. To that end CCE of Monroe County should be given the opportunity to review their business plan (work plans) with the Legislature as part of a meeting of the Ways and Means Committee on an annual basis to identify those resources needed to run the business for the upcoming year. We recommend that, consistent with other funding support, program measures or performance measures are part of the review. It is our further recommendation that, consistent with the above, Monroe County government make a commitment to restoring a portion of the base funding lost over the past 15 years.

Program-Generated Revenue: CCE of Monroe County must intensify its efforts to maintain present programs that generate income, and develop new fee based programs, consistent with its mission that fill needs in Monroe County not presently met.

FACILITIES

Findings:

The present facility owned and occupied by CCE of Monroe County provides significantly more space than utilized by CCE of Monroe County, and requires additional management time and effort to meet the expectations that come with being landlord to office tenants. Additionally, the condition of the facility requires attention in the near future, with significant costs involved in bringing it in compliance with accessibility standards as well as taking care of condition issues related to delayed upkeep. The County owns the property underlying the facility, and would become de-facto owner of the building should CCE of Monroe County cease to use it for its business purposes.

Recommendation:

CCE of Monroe County must further evaluate the current utilization of the present facility, including the exploration of optional arrangements with the County, potential additional leasing and/or alternatives to its current facility. This task force encourages the leadership of County government to make a commitment to being part of this discussion.

CONCLUSION

It is recognized by this Task Force that there are challenging times ahead for CCE of Monroe County, but with these challenges come many opportunities. The opportunities are set forth in the above-stated recommendations and are only limited by the vision that CCE of Monroe County sets for itself. There is a long history of Monroe County cooperation with CCE of Monroe County spanning some 90 years and this Task Force strongly believes that “history of partnership” can be strong once again with a commitment and a desire to provide the best service possible to the residents of the county.