



May 2010

**MICHIGAN FLORICULTURE
GROWERS COUNCIL**

P.O. Box 544, Dewitt, Michigan, 48820-0544 • phone: (517) 420-7142
fax: (517) 669-3354 • e-mail: MFGC5@comcast.net • web site www.mifgc.org

For Immediate Release

MFGC OFFICERS REDEDICATED TO INDUSTRY ISSUES

Paul Karlovich from C. Raker and Sons has stepped up to serve as President of the Michigan Floriculture Growers Council (MFGC) for another year. Karlovich has been active in MFGC from the beginning and is a well informed and enthusiastic advocate for the floriculture industry in Michigan. Vice President Jim Tuinier from Post Gardens of Battle Creek and Secretary/Treasurer Don Klooster from Klooster Greenhouse of Kalamazoo have also agreed to continue their services. Along with Executive Director, Gale Arent, they are actively supporting our organization and its latest Policy Interests in support of our industry for 2010-11.

2010 MFGC POLICY INTERESTS

ENERGY

- Encourage incentives for energy conservation and conversion.
- Oppose real property taxation for energy-related equipment.
- Seek a fair net-metering policy.

WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

- Continue to monitor water legislation and its impact on growers
- Oppose fees for well drilling and water withdrawal.
- Assess the newly merged Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment's emerging approach to environmental laws.

LABOR & IMMIGRATION

- Monitor legislation on immigration and agricultural labor issues to assess their effect on labor resources available to growers.
- Preserve the labor force for the greenhouse industry.
- Oppose making grower employers responsible for enforcing immigration laws
- Retain membership in the 4-F Initiative (Family Farms Feed Michigan's Future) a coalition of fruit, vegetable and floral producers working to educate lawmakers and the public about agriculture labor needs.
- Support an agriculture worker visa that is effective.

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MEMBER SUPPORT

- Assist and support MFGC Members with issues related to public policy and/or regulation, especially when the industry's interest is at stake.

MSU

- Seek fair appropriations for Michigan Agriculture Experiment Station (MAES) and Michigan State University Extension (MSUE.)
- Advocate for a strategic plan for MSU to better serve the Michigan floriculture industry.

QUARANTINE AND PLANT DESTRUCTION

- Explore opportunities to implement recommendations from the study "Understanding Risks Associated with Quarantine Pests in the Floriculture Industry."
- Work with MDA to develop a sustainable plant-loss recovery plan.

BUSINESS TAX POLICY

- Preserve the agriculture exemption.
- Support removal of the surcharge on the Michigan Business Tax

USDA SPECIALTY CROP GRANT IDEAS

- Develop and distribute 80,000 copies of the Great Lakes Great Earth Directory of retail outlets, in cooperation with Michigan landscapers and Christmas tree growers, with an online digital pdf version including live links to participants' web sites. MFGC members get free listings and discounted ads.

STATE GOVERNMENT

- Joined the "155 Circle" and contribute floriculture information to this project to e-mail legislators about the value of MSU research to agricultural industries.
- Joined with other agriculture groups to sponsor a Gubernatorial Forum on Agriculture, March 19 to meet the candidates for governor and assess their policies toward agriculture.
- Conduct Legislative Candidate Survey to assess legislative candidates' views of greenhouse industry issues.
- Continue to be active and visible with policy makers.

For additional information on the Growers Council, contact: MFGC Executive Director Gale Arent, P.O. Box 544, Dewitt, MI, 48820-0544; phone: (517) 420-7142

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