

A note from Dean

Northwest Ohio Greenhouse Cluster Becomes Maumee Valley Growers: The Cluster Board of Directors on October 13, 2005 unanimously voted to brand the NW Ohio Greenhouse Cluster as *Maumee Valley Growers*. Maumee Valley Growers is a name both growers and customers can easily identify and relate to. It also clearly identifies the geographic region where Cluster growers are located and where the advertising program and promotion activities will be centered. The Maumee Valley Growers logo and taglines will be rolled out at the NW Ohio Wind Power Seminar, November 18, from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. at the University of Toledo's Lake Erie Research Center, 6200 Bayshore Road, Oregon (Attached). You can pick up ready-to-reproduce copies at the meeting or by contacting Judy McFarland or John Snyder at Thread Inc., 419/887-6858.

Why Do People Buy at Their Local Greenhouse? Thread Inc. surveyed 224 potential customers and found that while price is important, quality is the most important factor influencing where they buy bedding/flowering plants. These consumers believe that the best quality is found at their local greenhouse. The Maumee Valley Growers logo and taglines will be used to promote the connection between the local greenhouse grower and high quality bedding and flowering plants to both experienced gardeners and those just getting into gardening. You'll be getting a lot more information about how to use the Maumee Valley Growers logo and taglines in conjunction with your own advertising to tell your customers to get the highest quality; buy locally grown plants.

Giving Back to Your Community Many of you donate plants and other support to local community groups and don't get any recognition for your generosity except for a thank-you note. The Maumee Valley Growers' buy local campaign will emphasize that you are a part of the local community and actively support projects that benefit everyone. We're looking for stories about how you support your community that can be used in our regional promotional campaign. Let John Snyder or Judy McFarland know so you can get some well deserved recognition and increase sales.

Do You Burn Propane? A subgroup of the Cluster Board of Directors is looking at various options to help growers with energy costs. One possibility is combining propane orders from growers in a small area so that the group will have more bargaining power with suppliers. If you burn propane and would like to explore coordinating your order let me know: 517/231-0112.

Floriculture in Northwest Ohio is a Huge Industry As I've visited growers I've been collecting information on the number of jobs supplied by the industry in Northwest Ohio. There are other employment surveys out there but usually greenhouses are lumped together with garden centers, landscape firms and other members of the green industries so you can't tell just how big an economic impact we have. Just to give you an idea, so far I've gotten information from 27 growers who provide 223 full time jobs (including family members) and 443 seasonal jobs. That's a lot of economic clout. I'll update you periodically as I visit more greenhouses.