



Activities / Accomplishments - 2018

- Completing his first year as MVGA's President was Wade Smith, owner of Whitehouse Specialty Crops.
- Our Board of Directors meets bi-monthly at the offices of Palmer Energy on Airport Hwy. (All members invited)
- Committees meet as needed. Over a dozen committee meetings were held this past year.
- Collaborate with the Cincinnati, Detroit, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo Flower and Vegetable Growers Associations, AmericanHort, ONLA, OPGMA, Sirna and Sons and the Farm Bureau sharing industry trends.
- Grant Activity:
 - In October of 2017, MVGA was awarded a two-year \$70,000 Specialty Crop grant to establish the food hub as a self-funding, sustainable organization at the grant's conclusion in 2019. Certifying more growers in food safety was also a high priority. We are currently evaluating our transition from a grant-funded assistance program to a self-sustaining business.
 - MVGA also received a state of Ohio grant in June 2018 to study the feasibility of providing fresh produce generated by local small rural farmers to urban area corner stores located in Toledo, Ohio. The \$15,000 feasibility study indicated there might be enough interest between farmers and corner store operators to develop a weekly program in partnership with the Toledo-Lucas County Board of Health, YMCA, and OSU Extension. Unfortunately, within a few weeks, several of the busier stores opted out making it impossible for smaller stores to cover driver and fuel costs. The program was terminated within one month.
- Business Committee:
 - MVGA's energy program involving the collective purchase of natural gas and electricity continued to provide cost savings for growers. In addition, there are other valuable income streams and benefits totaling ~ \$38,500 in 2018:
 - Energy program (natural gas & electric) generated ~\$20,500 in 2018.
 - Monrovia Nursery program (co-op supplier) contributed \$9,210 to MVGA in 2017.
 - North Branch Nursery program provided \$4,519.37 in 2018.
 - The Food Hub profited \$4,338 in its second year of operation.
- Education/Event Committee:
 - Jan 11, 2018 - MVGA held its Winter Conference at Brodbeck's Greenhouse offering educational sessions, breakout sessions tailored for retailers and wholesale growers. 30 attendees listened to Dr. Garrett Owen, Mich. State Univ. speak on production issues and challenges encountered in 2017. Dr. Beth Scheckelhoff, Ohio State provided a WPS update. 20 Food Hub growers met after lunch to discuss GAP certification requirements for 2018 including food trends.
 - Mar 03, 2018 – 53 members of MVGA and their families attended an Association sponsored Walleye game. Great fun.
 - Mar 13, 2018 – MVGA's Spring Retail Roundtable was held at Wardell's Garden Center. Social Media expert Barb Wilson offered strategies to 22 members involving their website, Facebook, and Pinterest. Other discussions focused on plant sales, trends, and warranties.

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- MVGA's Annual Meeting was held on November 16th with about 80 in attendance. The guest speaker was Dale Arnold, Director, Energy, Utility & Local Government Policy, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
- Marketing Committee:
 - MVGA's website was redesigned to include both flower and food divisions. Emphasizing a customer friendly focus, lists and maps showing all member locations were updated including features on the latest news, retail specials, and grower to grower opportunities. A calendar of events was added.
 - Continued to coordinate advertising efforts with The Blade, Val Pak, and Buzz Book. This year's theme returned to our original byline of "Choose the Very Best."
- Membership Committee:
 - 2018's membership consisted of 44 members, 9 sponsors and 5 complimentary or 58 participants.