

# Food hub hubbub

By Skip Mendler

Good thing we had our taxes done already... Otherwise, I might not have been able to attend the "Wayne County Food Hub" presentation that SEEDS, our local sustainable-community group, and The Cooperage Project co-sponsored last Tuesday evening, April 15 - and I would have missed out on a very interesting, informative, and thought-provoking discussion.

The first thing that impressed me about the

gathering in the Cooperage that evening was the size and diversity of the group.

I counted about 70 participants, including elected officials, farmers (young and old), local business people, educators, and members of the general public.

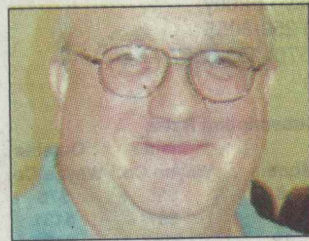
What seemed to unite the group was a simple conviction: Agriculture needs to remain a viable, thriving enterprise in Wayne County.

The other thing that impressed me was the amount of coordination and cooperation involved



in the food hub concept, not just between different agencies but also between different parts of Wayne County's economy and overall society - and the eager willingness all those people showed to get the ball rolling.

The food system, after all, has many stakeholders, and everyone can derive some benefit from anything that makes that system work



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more effectively.

This broad-ranging impact makes sense when you consider what a "food hub" is. As the meeting announcement from SEEDS defined it, a food hub is "an effort to stimulate the economy of our local farming community by purchasing food from our local farmers and producers." A food hub, for example, can help to expand markets - making

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