



# LARGEST

## food drive in Ionia County returns

By JON SZERLAG

[jon@sentinel-standard.com](mailto:jon@sentinel-standard.com)

**IONIA COUNTY** — The largest food drive in Ionia County is coming back for the third year, and will help seven food pantries across the county.

Last year, the WION Food Drive collected more than 4 tons of food. This year, organizers are hoping to collect more.

The WION "Food-V" will be out collecting donations of food and money the weekend after Thanksgiving.

"The amount of families struggling in our area is huge," said Penny Beeman, with the Ionia-Montcalm Community Food Network. "If anyone can help a little bit it does work ... to make a big difference. If everyone gives one or two hours (to volunteer) a can or two to donate, it all comes together, and the next thing you know we have 4 tons."

The food drive is looking for volunteers to help collect and unload food. There are also other ways people can volunteer with the food drive; make or donate snacks, help sort food to be dispersed to the different food pantries or volunteer to take monetary donations and shop at local stores.

"That's what makes this work; people don't always have a lot of time to volunteer in big projects that take all year," said Beeman. "This gives the chance to volunteer a little bit, and when adding each volunteer hour up, there will be over 200 volunteer hours before the weekend is over.

"It's one of the biggest events, and food pantries can't wait to get involved. It's easy and simple for everyone to do a little bit."

One of the reasons Beeman finds this food drive has been

such a success, is because it is not just helping out a specific food pantry, but several.

This year's recipients are: Zion Community Food Pantry, Muir Christian Food Pantry, Crossroads Church Food Pantry, West Berlin Wesleyan Food Pantry, Manna's market of Woodland, Portland First Congregational Church and Epic-A Community Church.

"That is what makes this work, people are working together and not competing," said Beeman. "It's not only supporting Zion or Muir, but support everybody by bringing in one can. We are all working together and that is why I support this food drive. It's a mix of different groups, people, and working together to pack a huge need in the community."

The WION Food-V will be on tour starting Nov. 25 at Dr. Harshman's Office, located at 1978 S. State Road, from 10 a.m. to noon; and the Portland Fire Department, located at 773 E. Grand River, from 1 to 5 p.m.

The Nov. 26 locations are: Lake Odessa Police Department, located at 839 Fourth Ave., from 9 to 11 a.m.; Saranac Fire Department, located at 10 S. Bridge St., from noon to 3 p.m.; and Belding Life EMS, located at 1050 James St., from 4 to 6 p.m.

The Nov. 27 locations are Lyons-Muir Fire Department, located at 212 Water St., from 9 a.m. to noon; and the Blanchard House, located at 251 E. Main St., from 1 to 4 p.m.

Donations will be dispersed on Nov. 28 at the Ionia County Intermediate School District, located at 2191 Harwood Road.

For more information, visit [www.i1430.com](http://www.i1430.com), or contact the Ionia-Montcalm Community Food Network at [iccfoodnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:iccfoodnetwork@gmail.com).