

Grow Monroe grows Greece fruit farm

By MIKE MURPHY

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Craig Michaloski, owner of Green Acre Fruit Farms in Greece, has watched his profits grow because more customers are making a point of buying local produce. In fact, many more of his customers now tell him they won't buy any produce unless it's grown locally.

He attributes some of that success to Grow Monroe, a county program run through Monroe Community College's Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute that highlights locally grown produce and local dairy and meat products.

Customers who want to think and act green learn that spending green locally reduces the need to ship foods from faraway locales and boosts the local economy in the process.

"It's imperative to let

people know the benefits of buying local food," Michaloski said.

The program was piloted in September 2008, but last year was its first full year, said Bob King, senior agricultural specialist.

Based on interviews with 20 of the 36 farmers, farm market and stand owners and other businesses that participated in the program, increases in revenue ranged from a minimum of 3 percent to a maximum of 100 percent, King said.

For every dollar spent by a consumer with a local farmer, an amount nearly double that amount is generated for the county economy, King said — in, for example, fuel and the hiring of labor.

Such benefits aren't readily apparent to the average person living in urban and suburban areas of the county, but the "go-green" trend these days has folks actively searching out ways to

On the Web

To learn more about the Grow Monroe program, and to find names of participating farms and businesses, visit www.monroecc.edu/depts/agriculture/.

buy local produce. Through a brochure promoting the program, "Grow Monroe" stickers on produce and other promotional materials, consumers discover they can "literally buy products in their own backyard," King said.

A component of the Grow Monroe program also is a natural fit with first lady Michelle Obama's campaign to improve food quality in schools.

Eventually, Grow Monroe will make it easier for local school districts, colleges and universities to buy local products through flexible purchasing agreements and working with growers on packaging and delivering produce, King said.

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against Morone. He said the indictment may be represented with testimony that is now available. Green said his office could possibly appeal the decision or let it stand. Morone, the former county liaison for the now-defunct Robutrad group, admitted to stealing more than

Robutrad was a Rochester engineering firm the county hired in 1989. The company performed internal maintenance and construction in public works jobs.

"As I have openly said from the very beginning, these were false charges and I am glad the judge, after his thorough review of the facts, dismissed them," said Moore in an e-mail.

Board, was scheduled to go to trial on March 15. He was accused of ghostwriting a political letter to more than 600 Webster-area Independence Party voters endorsing David Malta in the 2007 Independence Party primary.

The letter was then allegedly signed by Christopher Gorman, a Robutrad employee, in fear that if he didn't sign, he would lose