

4-H'ers use GPS/GIS to map Barn Quilts of Sac County

Geospatial technologies captured the attention of 22 Northwest Iowa 4-H Technology Team youth grades 8th through 12th and adults Saturday, January 26, 2008 using their new found Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and GIS skills to map Sac County's historic Barn Quilts.

The technology savvy 4-H'ers used Garmin eTrex GPS receivers collecting the latitude and longitude positions of over 50 historic barns with colorful painted wooden quilt blocks. The 4-H'ers refined their computer skills with an introductory GIS lesson that required using their field notes of barn locations and quilt names. According to NW 4-H Youth Field Specialist, Carol Ehlers, "The 4-H Technology Team's goal was to develop a Geospatial technologies project that would provide useful information for a community that might impact economic growth. The project is valued at \$11,600 if the effort were completed commercially. The 4-H'ers began discussing the project with ISU Extension GIS Specialist, Alan Jensen and GIS Volunteer of Des Moines Newcom Technologies, Inc., Brandon Haas.

Ehlers said 4-H'ers and volunteers have collectively invested over 180 hours in preparing and using GPS/GIS technology. Because of the 4-H Technology Team's work the paper map will soon come to life on the project's web site: <http://www.barnquilts.com/>. This NW 4-H Technology Team project is made possible with the help of Iowa State University's Extension Community and Economic Development Unit; Extension, Science, Engineering and Technology (E-SET) program and 4-H Operation Military Kids, which makes GPS hand-helds and computer labs available to ISU Extension 4-H Technology projects. E-SET, a 4-H Youth Development program, specializes in science and technology education for youth.



"This is an example of a terrific community partnership and a win-win situation for everyone," says Sue Peyton, Barn Quilt committee volunteer. "The county's new tourist attraction needed help with data gathering and processing. The 4-H youth benefit from learning about geospatial technologies and careers in a real-world project, and the county's communities benefits from having these historic barns mapped for tourists using GPS technology."

Sue Peyton
Sac County Barn Quilt Volunteer Coordinator

For more information about this program or other Iowa State University Extension resources, contact the Sac County Office at 712-661-7131. Information is also available on the Iowa State University Extension website at www.extension.iastate.edu.

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