ISU Extension in Franklin County

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Iowa State University Extension and Outreach provides educational opportunities in the areas of health and well-being, community and economic development, food and the environment as well as K-12 youth outreach programs and timely and useful agricultural programs. We meet local needs so that Franklin county residents can be successful now and in future generations.

Jamie Reinke
Extension Council Chairperson

Jerry Chizek
Interim Regional Director

Economic Development

In December, 2014, one hundred and sixty two Franklin County farmers and landowners learned about the new programs authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (commonly referred to as the Farm Bill) at informational meetings conducted by Kelvin Leibold, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm Management Specialist and Heidi Blair, Agricultural Program Specialist, Iowa State Farm Service Agency (FSA). Franklin County producers annually raise over 190,000 acres of corn and over 115,000 acres of soybeans. Producers were provided with general information, "fact sheets", and sources of web-based decision tools to make more informed decisions regarding program payments.

"Meetings included discussions on decisions farmers and landowners would need to make as they considered all their options," said Leibold. "In addition, the timeline for when decisions needed to be made along with information about our online Farm Bill decision tools were reviewed." Franklin County producers were anticipated to receive over $17,500,000 in payments for the 2014 crop year alone.
Health and Well Being

In February, 2015, eleven Latina women participated in a four week series called “Latinos Living Well” at LaLuz Hispana in Hampton. Through this program lead by Nancy Clark, Human Science Specialist—Nutrition and Wellness ISU Extension and Outreach, Latino families learned how to improve their families’ health and fitness during the classes. Using a translator, Clark lead the women through activities that helped them to discover the types of foods that keep a body healthy, how to shop smarter for their families and how to prepare great tasting, healthy foods in class and: how to build physical activity into their and their families’ day. Latinos face higher risks of cardiovascular diseases because due to high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. Latinos also face greater obstacles in accessing healthcare and education about heart disease due to language barriers, lack of educational opportunities and reduced income. Recent statistics for Franklin County deaths (overall) puts heart disease at 45.9%, compared to statewide deaths at 31.9% (American Heart Association, 2014).

Food and Environment

October 2015 the Visioning Committee Franklin County was notified by Iowa Living Roadways that their application in their Community Visioning Program for 2016 was one of ten communities across Iowa that was accepted. The program is open to communities with populations under 10,000, with priority given to communities that lack planning resources within the city government. The committee will be working with Trees Forever, Iowa Department of Transportation as well as Iowa State University Landscape Architecture Extension to identify needs or enhancements in one or more of the following categories: facilities, safety/educational activities for pedestrians or cyclists; acquisition of scenic easements and scenic/historical sites; beautify routes; preservation of historical sites or routes; rehabilitation/operation of historical transportation buildings, structures or facilities; conversion of unused rail corridors to trails; addressing other transportation needs as defined by the Iowa Living Roadways Committee. The visioning committee of Franklin County has 20 members, which represent a cross section of the community: seven youth, city employees, Latinos as well as representatives of the senior citizen community. The group will begin regular monthly meetings in January, 2016 to determine the projects that may be identified for Hampton as well as work with engineers, accountants, designers, marketing and fund raising specialists. Projects must be identified prior to November, 2016 and will be presented at the Iowa Living Roadways annual meeting, along with the other 9 communities.

K-12 Youth Outreach

2015 brought a new 4-H club to Franklin County. Jackie Dohlman, County Youth Coordinator, along with volunteer (and translator) Valeria Vosberg Gonzalez began a Hispanic group with about four youth. The charter group, known as Creative Clovers, were meeting at the LaLuz Hispana community center but soon outgrew the space. At nearly every meeting, one or two friends of members would attend so now the club boasts over 30 Latino youth and meet at the United Methodist Church in Hampton. The Creative Clovers, through a grant offered through US Cellular, had the opportunity to experience a behind the scenes look at the Iowa State Fair. Another unique experience that the Creative Clovers had was touring to the Iowa Speedway, and through STEM, experiencing NASCAR racing as well as the MB2 Go Cart Racing Experience. The 4-Her’s learned how important math, science, geometry and physics were to things that are often taken for granted or overlooked.