Benton County Extension Council

Every Iowa county has an elected extension council that guides local educational programming by partnering with staff. From needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, the council represents the issues and people of the county.

We have identified these local issues as priority topics for current and future programming:

- Economic Development
- Food and the Environment
- Health and Well-being
- K12 Youth Outreach

Health and Well-Being

Food and Nutrition
In partnership with the Vinton-Shellsburg School District, we have started a Farm 2 School Chapter. Plans are underway to reach over 300 students with locally grown foods prepared from scratch. We have also had three different taste testing sessions at the Middle and Elementary Schools to allow for student input on items served on the school menu.

Personal Well Being “What About Me”
With the help of our Human Sciences Team, we were able to offer two sessions of a 4-part program on financial, social/emotional and physical wellbeing along with “Time for me” reaching over 15 participants, including one group with special needs. One additional session is scheduled for February 2018.

Economic Development

Community & Economic Development
Benton County Extension was involved in the IBSSS Visioning Team appointed by the Vinton City Council to gather community input when considering the purchase of the Braille School. We have also begun working with Eric Christianson, CED specialist, to assist in the planning and feasibility.

Youth Community Garden
Year seven was another success at our outdoor classroom. We worked with 15-25 kids every Monday after school and added Thursdays in the summer. Our volunteers accrued about 200 hours.

Extension Council Members

We want communities and farmers to thrive, and families and children to be healthy. And eventually we want to turn the world over to the next generation better than we found it.

Shannon Feuerbach  Extension Council Chair
Jim Harken  Regional Director
Brian McNulty  Council Member
Barb Schanbacher  Council Member
Greg Svoboda  Council Member
Jean Schmidt  Council Member
John Holst  Council Member
Matt Marovec  Council Member
Duane Fisher  Council Member
Allison Hicks  Council Member
K-12 Youth Outreach

3rd Grade Ag Day
Held in the spring each year, we help educate 250-300 students. We partner with around 100 volunteers from all three of our Community School Districts, FFA chapters, 4-Hers, Farm Bureau and Commodity Groups at the Benton County Fairgrounds. We also do a follow-up session with each class to enhance the learning experience for all of our 3rd Grade students.

Benton County 4-H
We are very proud of our 4-Hers in the 15 clubs across the county with over 300 members and growing. We also have 2 Clover Bud clubs with 40-60 members. We offered a multitude of trips, workshops, camps and leadership experiences. Please follow us on our Facebook Page for a look at an up-to-date list of activities.

Summer Science Discovery Camps
2010 was the beginning of SSDC and since then we have educated over 1,500 K-6th grade youth in science, technology, engineering and math, all while having FUN. Partnering with 7 towns and their community parks has allowed us to offer 10 camps at the beginning of each summer. STEM topics covered at our camps have included soil, weather, motion, healthy living and biomedical engineering.

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