

BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

GRUNDY COUNTY

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach connects the needs of Iowans with Iowa State research and resources. We listen, learn, and work with the people of Grundy County for a #STRONGIOWA.

Grundy 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



Economic Development

ISU Extension & Outreach in Grundy County is focused on supporting our local entrepreneurs and industries through various programs. Our office retained the Grundy Center Farmers Market again in 2019 and was able to provide education for both vendors and consumers. We utilized other local businesses to partner on three Family Nights at the Market, as well as providing healthy snack recipes each week with the available fresh produce.



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.

Janelle Koenigsfeld
Extension Council Chair

Christine Tobias
Council Member

Darwin Cannegieter
Council Member

Ryan Bakker
Council Member

Terry Johnston
Council Member

Julie Grunklee
Council Member

Dorothy Sheller
Council Member

John Schreck
Council Member

Bill Noteboom
Council Member

IN 2019

Program Spotlight:

Tri County Ag Marketing

A long standing program in Grundy County is the Tri County Agricultural Marketing group. These programs are held three times a year and are open to all community members. The Grundy County Extension Office partners with offices in Marshall and Tama Counties to offer a year round program designed to educate farmers and livestock producers about best agriculture marketing practices, crop weather trends and current issues regarding agriculture. More than 200 producers took part in these meetings in 2019. Most recently, a meeting was held in December of 2019 and covered in-depth information about Farm Bill updates and changes in programming for the upcoming year. Local Farm Service Agency staff presented regarding deadlines and enrollment options for the coming year. The session also included ISU Extension Family Life Specialists providing information about healthy lifestyle choices and maintaining a healthy mindset during the tough economic times farmers have been facing.

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In 2019, the Farmers Market moved to the Grundy Center Brothers Market parking lot, adding another valuable partnership to the community. Brothers Market offered healthy dinner options during the market, providing patrons opportunity to buy fresh, buy local. The Grundy County Memorial Hospital provided a certified Dietician at the Market throughout the summer, offering yet another way for residents to learn more about local businesses and support the local economy.

Grundy County Extension staff continue to co-chair the Grundy County Community Partners group, meeting with other service organizations in the county to plan programs and services for target audiences and those in need. This group annually organizes the Family Fair in July where families gather to learn about service organizations and businesses in the community.

The Grundy County Barn Quilts continue to provide a tourist attraction and the board continues its quest to reinvigorate the program. In 2018 and 2019 the quilt board partnered with Grundy Center FFA to build brand new Barn Quilt boards to replace some of the existing damaged quilts. From the beginning this project was designed to highlight the rural agricultural heritage of all of Grundy County and allow visitors to enjoy our many specialty and gift shops, enjoy a meal at locally owned restaurants or explore our many parks and historical sites!

Health and Well-Being

In 2019, we again offered childcare provider trainings for individuals or businesses. During these sessions providers are taught the importance of high quality nutrition, skills to improve daily care for children at their in-home based businesses or care centers and interactive activities designed to educate and engage youth under their direction.





Grundy County Extension staff were also members of the Healthy Hometown Community committees, focused on getting residents to move more and eat healthier, alongside several other local businesses and community members.

Again in 2019 Grundy County Extension partnered with Grundy Public Health to offer a Bike Helmet Rodeo at the Grundy Center Farmers Market. Kids were invited to decorate bike helmets donated by Public Health and then received coupons to shop at the Farmers Market, providing not only healthy activity but a healthy snack.

Food and Environment

A large portion of the winter months are spent ensuring farmers are up to date with their pesticide and manure applicator licenses, alongside the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. In Grundy County alone we were able to provide continuing education services for more than 350 producers.

The Grundy County Master Gardeners collaborated once again with the Grundy Center FFA students for a joint plant sale. Through sales of flowers and produce grown by local gardeners, and products grown in the school greenhouse these two groups were able to work together to raise money to put back into local agricultural education in Grundy County. This sale was once again a large success, with several customers from neighboring counties.



Grundy County Extension reaches residents through programming like holiday visual arts, international agriculture programs and our local farmers market. These programs are designed to include research based information and education on a variety of topics.

An exciting opportunity for Grundy County Extension this summer was partnering with Grundy County native, Harlen Persinger, to host the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists Iowa Agricultural Tour. Nine international ag journalists from Australia, Austria, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Northern Ireland and South Africa traveled to Grundy County, Iowa and spent three days touring local agricultural facilities, including small and large scale livestock production, grain mills and niche market Christmas tree and fishery farms. The group also traveled to central Iowa for tours of Ag Leader and local eateries. Grundy County residents opened up their homes to the nine international journalists and spent time introducing them to American food and culture. The event was a huge success, showcasing Grundy County's unique heritage and agricultural roots to not only the international journalists, but also to residents of Grundy County who were able to attend the tours.

K-12 Youth Outreach

The Grundy County Fair was held in July and approximately 200 4-H and FFA exhibitors, along with



open class youth and adults, displayed what they had learned through caring for livestock, cooking, science, art, communication and much more! In 2019, 139 youth grades 4th through 12th enrolled in the Grundy County 4-H program and 78 kindergarten through 3rd grade youth were enrolled in our Clover kids program. These youth attend monthly 4-H club meetings across the county, participate in community service and worked on projects to benefit our communities.

Our staff explored new curriculum delivery methods in an effort to reach more county youth. Andrea Traeger, CYC, has visited area schools with STEM kits and helped bring the SWITCH program to area schools. Students learned about how to change their habits to make healthier choices, including physical activity, less screen time and trying new foods.

Additionally, staff have been busy bringing new technology into the office and creating kits to be used by 4-H clubs, service organizations and community outreach programs. These kits focus on easy-to-teach activities with a STEM focus and an approved educational curriculum.

Our office continued to partner with Ag in the Classroom program in Grundy County for our Farm Chat program. This program provides real-world connections to the Iowa Core and STEM educational areas. Collaborating with Grundy County Farm Bureau, we utilize both ISU Extension & Outreach and Ag in the Classroom

curriculum to educate students about agriculture and local food systems in Grundy County. Each month three Grundy County schools receive hands-on education from the Ag in the Classroom coordinator about the month's topic. The following week, our staff enters the classroom via a real-time virtual tour of a farm in Grundy County. We travel with an iPad and wireless internet to the farm and the classrooms connect virtually. Our staff takes a tour of the farm, all while live streaming back to the classrooms. Students can virtually ride along in the combine or tour a livestock barn, all from the safety and convenience of their classrooms. Sessions are live and allow the kids to ask questions throughout.

A large undertaking each year is our annual 4-H Omelet Breakfast. 4-H members and volunteers cooked a delicious breakfast for almost 1300 members of the community in order to raise funds for 4-H and community projects and scholarships.

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