

WHAT WE WANT #STRONGIOWA

2018 IN CHICKASAW COUNTY

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach connects the needs of Iowans with Iowa State University research and resources. We are working with the people of Chickasaw County for what we all want: a Strong Iowa.

Chickasaw 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: Business Development and Training
- Food and the Environment: Women in Ag and Beginning Farmers
- Health and Well-being: Financial Literacy
- K-12 Youth Outreach: Communication and Leadership Development



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.

Megan Baltes
Council Chair

Laurie Tiemessen
Council Member

Ryan Larkin
Council Member

Kraig Tweed
Regional Director

Tonya Klassen
Council Member

Randy Nosbisch
Council Member

Ron Schilling
Council Member

Dan Ashley
Council Member

Adam Zeien
Council Member

Joel Knutson
Council Member

Economic Development

Empowering communities to shape their own futures through research, education, community engagement, economic development, community planning and design.

Chickasaw County Extension and Outreach played an active role in community events by attending Shop New Hampton meetings and participating in downtown open house events throughout the year. Partnerships have been and continue to be developed with local businesses and organizations, such as Mercy Medical Center, Five Star Coop, Learning Connections, New Beginnings Gluten Free Bakery, Chickasaw County Farm Bureau, and many more. We also participated in mock interviews of 8th graders in New Hampton which gave these youth an invaluable experience and feedback to use as they prepare to enter the workforce.

In 2018, we once again offered our office as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site to offer free help to 88 (more than double from 2017) low-and moderate-income Iowans in filling out tax forms to receive EITC. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) augments the wages of low and moderate income workers. In turn, this flow of income makes a substantial economic impact in local communities. The boost provided by the EITC and other valuable tax credits helps many working families pay household bills and meet children's needs. EITC recipients circulate their refunds through the local economy, creating a ripple effect that exceeds the size of the original refund. This money strengthens neighborhoods, assists small businesses, and spurs local economic development. On average, the poverty rate among children would have been one-quarter higher without the EITC. The EITC lifts more children out of poverty than any other program. Low wage workers give up a substantial portion of the EITC benefits when using commercial tax preparation services.



Health and Well-Being

Engaging and empowering people with research-based information and education throughout their lifetimes helps to build strong relationships, families, and communities.

This fall three early childcare professionals completed the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale Training in New Hampton. Completion included attending 8 hours of training plus doing a self-assessment of their caregiving environment and creating a plan for improvements. These professionals have a better understanding of quality child care in family home settings and identified changes they made and plan to make in the future to increase the quality of their own caregiving practices.

Parenting resources were distributed to 83 young families at a Family Night Out, fun activities were demonstrated at a Wellness Fair for 130 participants, and pressure canner lids were tested for free to ensure canned goods are sealed properly for safe consumption.

Money management programs help Iowans with decisions related to spending, saving, and credit/debt management. Several programs were offered in Chickasaw County in 2018 including Conversations on Aging, Finances of Caregiving, Your Money Your Future, \$10 Grocery Store Challenge, and Healthy & Homemade Workshops.

Many staff, including local Chickasaw County Extension staff, attended training on delivering *Journey Through Parkinson's Disease*. Rates of Parkinson's disease are steadily increasing in Northeast Iowa, so the implementation of this program in 2019 has potential for significant impacts on Chickasaw residents.

Food and Environment

Providing unbiased, research-based information and education to agricultural professionals to grow the economic base of Iowa agriculture. Chickasaw County Extension along with industry partners including Farm Bureau, Farm Credit Services, USDA, local banks, cooperatives, and ag commodity groups continue to provide relevant programming for community members.

This year's programming focused on Women In Ag. Approximately one-quarter of Iowa's farm operators are women. That's nearly 33,000 women. And even more women are involved in related agribusiness operations.

Annie's Project was a six-week farm management risk education program designed for women. Topics covered included building and understanding farm financial statements, grain marketing, crop and farm business insurance, farm tax and accounting issues, legal



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liability and employment issues, transition, estate and financial planning. This program brought together 22 women who continue to network and learn from each other.

Women Marketing Grain was another successful program which has helped 33 women gain a better understanding of grain marketing. Many of the women involved in these programs are interested in continuing to meet as a Women, Land, and Legacy group that is planned for 2019.

Other programs included the Food Box Program which delivered fresh, locally-grown foods to our office for clients, Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop, Lawn Care 101, Pond Care 101, and training was provided for 138 Private and 65 Commercial Pesticide Applicators and 4 Manure Applicators. Other popular programs were the Farmland Leasing Meeting and Crop Scout School which brought in 17 and 35 participants, respectively.

K-12 Youth Outreach

4-H Youth Development is designed to empower K-12 youth to reach their full potential through youth-adult partnerships and research-based experiences. The Iowa 4-H program's four priority areas are STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Healthy Living, Leadership and Civic Engagement, and Communication and the Arts. Last year Iowa 4-H reached about 30,000 K-12 youth.

There are 9 4-H Clubs in Chickasaw County which welcome members in grades K-12 and 2 special-interest clubs: shooting sports and legos. Membership in these clubs totaled 170 this past year. Workshops were held throughout the year that focused on project areas such as livestock, creative arts, and communication. A Record Book Workshop was also held to show youth how to complete and organize their project records.

After-school Clover Kid programs were offered in 3 school districts for K-3rd graders, in addition to Explorers Club which was open to 3rd-5th graders in New Hampton on no-school days. Each of these programs provided youth with 2 hours of scheduled activities once a month during the school year.

Other school programs were offered in Chickasaw County that offered a variety of learning experiences to youth in all grades. Water Rocks! is a program that created an awareness of the many environmental issues surrounding water in 125 Chickasaw County youth. Precision Ag Days, Farm Safety Days, and Dairy Story helped give youth a better understanding of agricultural careers, safety issues, and dairy farm operations.

The Citizenship Trip program culminated this year with 3 youth traveling to Washington D.C. with other youth and chaperones from Region 4. This program is open to 8th-11th grade 4-H members and will begin again in 2019.

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