

BUILDING A #STRONGIOWA

WEBSTER 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 Webster County for a #STRONGIOWA.

Webster 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.

Economic Development

Thirty-two students from Iowa State University's Entrepreneurship in Human Sciences class worked with seven businesses in Gowrie to identify business needs and develop a toolkit with a range of competitive strategies. The Iowa State students received real-life experience working with existing businesses, while the local businesses got a fresh set of eyes from the college-aged consumer's perspective.



Businesses took the students' ideas and used them in their marketing plans, website updates, and business strategies. Local businesses in the Gowrie area have grown, and this program assisted the store owners as they continue to make decisions to bring retail shoppers to the area, therefore, keeping the Gowrie downtown strong.



Health and Well-Being

Master Gardener Doug Brightman led the charge of applying for, receiving, and providing leadership for the **Growing Together Donation Garden Mini-Grant**. Donations and funds used from this grant converted an abandoned, city-owned community garden into a donation garden with new, accessible raised beds. Nearly 20



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.

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Extension Council Chair

Jerry Chizek
Regional Director

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Council Member

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Debbie Gray
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Peggy Moody
Council Member

IN 2019



pounds of harvested produce was donated to Fort Dodge's Salvation Army and the Lord's Cupboard throughout the growing season. "As I have become more aware of the need for food, especially fresh produce, which is much more nutritious than canned food, I have shared my experiences with those folks that I routinely come in contact with, which has prompted several of them to contribute their excess produce directly to the Salvation Army," said one participant.

Caregiving presents financial challenges, along with emotional and physical ones. **Finances of Caregiving** is a five-part workshop designed to help individuals and families gather needed information and prepare in advance for substitute decision making, paying for care, protecting the caregiver's financial future, and effective group communication and decision making. Ten families participated in the program in Fort Dodge. All reported gaining helpful information. Most had taken action toward being prepared even before the series was completed.

Food and Environment

Master Conservationist, a seven-week program, was held in late spring with 14 participants. The program took place at different locations within Hamilton, Humboldt, Webster, and Wright counties, providing participants with hands-on interaction showing the diversity of the state's natural resources. Participants are now

able to make informed choices for leading and educating others to improve conservation in Iowa. This program created a group of passionate conservationists that will be engaged in local communities advocating for conservation practices and policies to ensure a sustainable future for Iowa's landscape. One participant noted, "Conservation matters to me because I feel that it is important to be sure that we can pass on an environment that is healthy and diverse and to have soils that continue to be productive for generations." Another said, "Land is fundamental to life as a human. It is also fundamental to my profession as a farmer and farm manager. It gives everything to us, and we must respect it."

K-12 Youth Outreach

Junior Lego League continued its second year as a club in Gowrie. An additional club was developed for youth in Dayton. These STEM-focused clubs involved 32 second and third graders who met after school from January through May. The groups built various Lego designs and worked in teams to complete challenges.

This was the 24th year for **Youth Environmental Agriculture Days**. The program was held over four days at the Wright County Fairgrounds in Eagle Grove. Approximately 600 fifth graders participated from schools in Webster, Wright, Hamilton, and Humboldt counties. This program helps youth develop an understanding of the impact of agriculture upon their environment, their everyday lives, and their health and safety.

Two new **Jammin' Time** workshops were offered to 4-H members by our human sciences specialist. Participants learned the fundamentals of jam making, prepared homemade biscuits, and explored the science behind food preservation. Several 4-H'ers took their jam to the Webster County Fair, and one 4-H'er was selected to go to the Iowa State Fair to share what was learned.

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