Kossuth 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:

- K-12 Youth Development
- Agriculture
- Community Development

K-12 Youth Outreach

ISU Extension and Outreach’s signature program in Kossuth County is our youth and 4-H program. We offer the club experience and build new programs each year to reach more youth. Youth population in Kossuth County continues to decrease from 2,411 in 2000 to 1,717 in 2017 - while participation in K-12 outreach continues to grow. The 4-H club experience maintains participation, while K-12 outreach programming has increased almost 20 percent since 2014.

A new program was created in 2017, called the Technology-Engineering-Collaboration (TEC), uses the Engineering is Elementary! curriculum from the Museum of Science: Boston to fill a need identified from surveys of Kossuth County teachers and administrators. This engineering curriculum taught students about material engineers and the engineering design process. It allowed participants to practice solving problems and encouraged them to ‘step outside their bubble’ and try something new. Students experimented with products to discover how they work, then used that knowledge to construct their own product at the end of the day. More than 225 fifth-grade students in Kossuth County attended sessions led by Program Coordinator Darcie Kramer in September and October. Supplies were purchased through a grant received from Scale Up and the Governor's STEM initiative. Teachers are asking when we will be back with more curriculum!

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.

Jennifer Penning
Council Chair
Ryan Faber
Council Member
Rodney Montang
Council Member
Robert Geesman
Council Treasurer
Julie Larsen
Council Member
Jason Kelly
Council Member
David Laubenthal
Council Secretary
Charles Bormann
Council Member
Nate Kitzinger
Council Member

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
Clover Kids programming allows youth in kindergarten to third grade to develop life skills that are essential for their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical maturation by providing unique, age-appropriate educational opportunities. Clover Kids in Kossuth County helps youth thrive and start them off right.

The Kossuth County 4-H Council is a committee of young adults from the 4-H club program who have dedicated time to support 4-H and our youth here in Kossuth County. 2017’s council voted to expand the age requirements from eighth to ninth through 12th grade, which increased our council by 10 members, totaling 19 for 2018! These council members are role models for our youth and display their independence, mastery, and generosity every time they meet.

Annual regional events and school programming served more than 700 Kossuth County youth. Third graders learned imperative safety skills at Farm Safety Day where more than 40 volunteers taught about electricity, farm equipment, grain safety, and more. Educational Partners for Agriculture and Kids (EPAK), a regional event, focused on modern day agriculture education to our increasingly urban population. Youth gained a strong awareness of the agriculture industry that supports much of this county’s economy. Other events, such as nature camps in cooperation with the Kossuth County Conservation Board, and our annual Lock-In spread our reach to more youth in the county and allow us to encourage youth to “Make the Best Better!”

Agriculture

Women Marketing Grain was held in January through March. The four-week course helped farm women learn market strategies and stay on track for longer-term success. Women that attended also had the opportunity to network with other farm women and agri-business leaders.

Community Development

In 2017 the Kossuth County towns of Bancroft and West Bend hosted a new Extension program, Leading Communities: A Place-Based Leadership Program, aimed to assist leaders in building community engagement. Based on cutting-edge community leadership research, it simultaneously provided participants with community-based skills while meeting the specific needs of the places where they live and work. By building community engagement, small towns can retain or regain their vibrancy.

Deborah Tootle, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community Economic Development specialist, stated the following, “If you don’t have community engagement, you don’t have people interacting, and if you don’t have people interacting, you don’t have people reacting and you don’t have the ability to move forward. A town can remain the same or it can go into decline, but to do better, we’re going to have to work at it.”

Participants built an understanding about the importance of community leadership and learned how to use tools to address community issues and opportunities. “We need to be aware of communities and more engaged,” Tootle said. “We want people to learn how to plan. And not just plan – but develop and implement the strategies they’ve planned.”

Human Sciences

As one of the Human Sciences focus issues in Kossuth County, Childcare Provider training opportunities were promoted by doing a series of mailings to county childcare providers that both informed them of upcoming opportunities region wide thanked these professionals for the important work they do. We took our efforts even further and used social media to show appreciation and spread the word about the important work of childcare providers in our county.

County Extension Staff

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Darcie Kramer</td>
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<td>Meredith Nelson</td>
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<td>Bryan Whaley</td>
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<td>Nancy Clark</td>
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