Louisa 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:

- Strengthening Louisa Development Group & Local Entrepreneurship
- Helping Seniors Stay Independent
- Enrichment Opportunities for all youth including STEM, Leadership, College Readiness & Farm Safety

Partnership with Louisa Development Group

The Louisa County Extension Council and Louisa Development Group Board developed a formal partnership in 2017 to provide for a full time economic development position that will be permanently housed in the Extension Office. This new staff person will partner both with the Communities & Economic Development workgroup within Extension and the local business community to help grow Louisa County.

The aim of Louisa Development Group remains the same: strengthen existing business; build infrastructure to foster entrepreneurship & recruit industry; promote tourism; and act as a chamber of commerce thru activities such as Shop Louisa.

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.

Paul Gieselman
Extension Council Chair

Janet Smith
Regional Director

Aaron Boysen
Council Member

Mark Cooley
Council Member

Marsha Gerot
Council Member

Cherrish Helmig
Council Member

Jamie Holmes
Council Member

Dana Howell
Council Member

Joy Lekwa
Council Member

David Wilson
Council Member
The Sun as our Partner in Learning

It was quite the year for "fun in the sun" as the Louisa County Extension Council invested in solar panels early in the year which now produce nearly 100% of the electrical power used in the office each month.

Over the summer the ISU solar car prISUm traveled thru the county in preparation for the big solar race in Australia. Residents old and young alike gathered to have a look inside and take a spin in the new technology.

Then just before school started in August there was a one day workshop for youth on the day of the solar eclipse. Students learned to make pinhole cameras, watched via the internet as the eclipse traveled across the nation and watched outside in person as it traveled across our sky.

Connecting “Families” Partners

Sometimes its our job to provide information, raise money or teach subjects. Sometimes its just a matter of getting our partners together and letting them learn from each other. Such was the case several times this year as our Families Field Specialist partners worked directly with Louisa County residents to take training to become certified facilitators of the powerful Strengthening Families program (watch for it to be delivered in the county in 2018) Families Specialists also presented “Growing Up Wild” to preschool, daycare and early childhood educators to help them think thru how to get their students more engaged in the outdoors. They taught participants to “Viva Las Veggies,” even sampling different veggies and seeing what it looks like to eat 4 cups of fruits and veggies in a day! They facilitated the “What About Me: My Wellbeing” series with a local employer and have already scheduled to present that again in 2018. And they have facilitated a training so that seniors at the county meal sites can participate in the “Stay Independent” series which focuses on the importance of proper nutrition and exercise as we age.

Partners in Practical Farming

Sometimes a prospective partner approaches us, as was the case when Practical Farmers of Iowa asked us to co-sponsor a one day conference on Chestnuts. A “Backyard Chicken” class resulted from a similar request from the Community Development Center in Columbus Junction.

Are You Looking for a Partner? Think of us!

ISU Extension and Outreach
Louisa County
317 Van Buren
Wapello, IA 52653
319.523.2371

County Extension Staff

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kathy Jolly Vance</th>
<th>Kailey Limes</th>
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<tr>
<td>County Program Coordinator</td>
<td>Buy. Eat. Live Healthy Program Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<th>Whitney Howell</th>
<th>Michele Hemphill</th>
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<td>Youth Enrichment Coordinator</td>
<td>Office Assistant</td>
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