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

**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
- Health and Well-being
- Food and the Environment
- K12 Youth Outreach

**Economic Development**

ISU Extension and Outreach in Grundy County is focused on supporting our local entrepreneurs and industries through various programs. A unique partnership was formed in 2016 between the Grundy Center Chamber of Commerce and Grundy County Extension to retain management of the Grundy Center Farmers Market. In 2016 the market retained 25% more vendors than the previous year. Several new small businesses were able to expand their operations through the Farmers Market, making it a new drop-off spot for pre-orders and an effective avenue of new sales for the remainder of their inventory.

Extension also continues as a Co-Chair for the Grundy County Community Partners group, meeting once a month 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 where families gather to learn about service organizations.

The Grundy County Barn Quilts continue to provide a tourist attraction to Grundy County and in 2016 management of the program has been transferred back to Extension. In 2016 the project enjoyed a facelift with new members on the Board and new painting planned for existing Quilts. From the beginning this project was designed to highlight the rural, agricultural heritage of Grundy County and bring visitors through to also 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 2016 Grundy County 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. Providers who attend these trainings also earn points toward state certification for daycare providers in Iowa.

Also this year, ISU Extension and Outreach, Grundy County hosted a Finances for Caregivers program in Grundy Center. Six families attended a five-week course designed to teach participants tools for taking care of themselves including reducing stress, changing negative self-talk, communicating feelings and needs to others, setting limits and asking for help, dealing with emotions such as anger, guilt, and depression, and making tough caregiving decisions.
ISU Extension and Outreach, Grundy County focused strongly on building partnerships and offering non-biased, research-based information to our community. As a result of said partnerships, our office was asked to present to a group of more than 150 bank employees in Grundy County regarding identity theft. ISU Extension and Outreach family finances specialists prepared a program regarding identity theft and spoke to this large group of Grundy county residents and business employees about the dangers of theft, ways to safeguard your identity and how to be sure to secure client’s information.

Grundy County Extension Program Director Shari Sell-Bakker presented a program called “Spend Smart Eat Smart” to more than 60 people in the year 2016. This program is designed to help participants identify strategies to stretch their food dollar while improving their nutrient density. Participants received calendars to take home and shopping tools to help them save money on food expenses while improving the nutritional quality of their meals.

Food and Environment

A large portion of the winter months in Grundy County are spent ensuring farmers are up to date with their pesticide applicator and manure applicator licenses, in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Land Stewardship requirements. In 2016 Grundy County Extension was able to provide continuing education services for more than 340 producers.

The Grundy County Master Gardeners partnered with the Grundy Center FFA students in 2016 for the first annual joint Plant Sale. Through sales of flowers and produce grown by local Master Gardeners and products grown in the school greenhouses these two groups were able to work together to raise money to put back into local agricultural education in Grundy County. This sale was such a large success, with visitors from several counties, that the groups will again work together in 2017 to provide locally grown, quality products to Grundy County while supporting youth education and continuing education for adults.

Jesse Randall, ISU Extension & Outreach Forester, visited Grundy County twice in 2016 to present to groups regarding windbreaks. Landowners learned about tree diseases impacting old windbreaks, options for new windbreaks, proper tree spacing, planting, pruning and watering of new trees. Grundy County NRCS was also able to partner on one of these workshops to provide information about cost share programs available!

A long standing program in Grundy County and surrounding areas through Extension is the Tri County Agricultural Marketing group. This group meets four times a year and invites all community members who may be interested. Grundy County partners with Tama and Marshall County Extension office to offer this year-round program designed to educate farmers and livestock producers about best ag marketing practices, crop weather trends and current issues regarding agriculture. In 2016 more than 206 producers took part in these four meetings.

A program that began in 2015 and extended into 2016 was the Cover Crop Conservation workshop at the Grundy County Fair. Grundy County Extension partnered with local NRCS staff, Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District and Iowa Farmers Union to provide a half day meeting to educate about cover crops and livestock usage, herbicide considerations, aerial seeding and new overseeding machinery. Participants from eight counties and two states numbered more than 100 in 2016 and remained steady in 2016 for this event, held in conjunction with the Grundy County Fair here in Grundy Center.
partnering with Grundy County Farm Bureau on this project, we are able to utilize both Extension and Ag in the Classroom curriculum to educate students on agriculture and local food system in Grundy County. Each month 210 third grade students in Grundy County receive hands-on education from the Ag in the Classroom coordinator about the month’s topic. The following week, Extension staff enters the classroom via a real-time, virtual tour of a farm in Grundy County. Extension staff travels with an iPad and wireless Internet to the farm and the classrooms virtually connect through a program called Google Hangouts. Extension staff provides curriculum, in coordination with Farm Bureau, for the farmer and takes a tour of the farm, all the 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 security of their classroom. Sessions are live and allow the kids to ask questions throughout the visit.

K-12 Youth Outreach

The Grundy County Fair was held in July and approximately 200 4-H and FFA exhibitors, along with open class adults showcased what they had learned through caring for livestock, cooking, recipes, pursuing interests in science, or honing their skills in art and communication.

Additionally, Grundy County staff explored new curriculum delivery methods in an effort to reach more county youth. Andrea Traeger, CYC, co-hosted “early out” days at libraries in Grundy County, offering STEM based education to youth of any age.

In September of 2016 Extension began a program called Farm Chat. This program provides real-world connections to the Iowa Core and STEM educational areas. By

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November 2016