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 Wright County for what we all want: a strong Iowa.

Wright 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:

- Small business management
- Food safety
- Water quality
- Beginning farmers

Economic Development

Six IRS-certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers, with training and support from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Wright County, filed 121 2017 tax returns for Wright County households. The free tax clinics were held at the Wright County Extension Office in Clarion with both Spanish and English speaking preparers available. These low-income Wright County taxpayers avoided tax preparation fees and the risks of refund loans, while claiming a total of $201,222 in federal and state refunds.

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.

Molly Wilson
Extension Council Chair

Cindy Anderson
Council Vice Chair

Heather Christensen
Council Treasurer

Rodney Legleiter
Council Member

Ben Lindaman
Council Member

Katie Meyer
Council Member

Ashley Recknor
Council Member

Rachel Sido
Council Secretary

Grant Woodley
Council Member

Jerry Chizek
Regional Director
Grant Writing 101 was held in August 2018 at the ISU Extension and Outreach office in Clarion. Eleven individuals from different organizations participated in the program. Participants worked hands-on in this training for seeking and writing successful grants for non-profits, local government and schools. The program was taught by Jane Goeken, ISU Extension and Outreach Communities and Economic Development specialist.

Participants responding to the evaluation rated the program excellent, including that it was interesting, educational, applicable and motivational. A majority of the participants said, as a result of this program, they planned to utilize some of the information or materials provided in researching and/or writing grants.

Health and Well-Being

In March 2018, a childcare provider training called Problem Solving with Children was held in Eagle Grove. Participants learned skills on better problem solving with kids, talking with children, using pictures for feelings, teaching about emotions and helping kids solve issues together.

Eighty percent of participants took information learned through this program and implemented it with the children and families in their care. Eighty percent also said they learned either a lot or a great deal from this program. Participants planned to go back and share this with anywhere from 1-15 other early learning or youth development professionals in their workplace and estimated that all children in their care would benefit from what they learned in this program.

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ServSafe is a food safety certification training offered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach to help restaurants meet industry standards and obligations to consumers. In 2018, Holly VanHeel, nutrition and wellness specialist, worked with 11 individuals who completed the training to help them implement a variety of food safety practices to prevent foodborne illnesses, food cross-contamination and to follow proper food preparation and storage.

**Food and Environment**

A Wright County beginning farmer cohort started in 2018. This group of approximately 15 people met monthly (except during harvest and planting seasons). Topics included beginning farmer loans and opportunities, soil fertility and a local panel of farmers who shared how they got started and where they are now.

Master Gardener Alyce Seaba came in April to lead a straw bale gardening workshop. She discussed purchasing the bales, preparing and setup for planting and uses for the straw after the season to a group of 16 participants. Most of the participants reviewed the class as very helpful and took away several new strategies for straw bale gardening, including how to condition the bales, how to handle transplants versus direct seeding, and the technical aspects this type of gardening requires.

A large group of families met in Fort Dodge this past June to talk about farm succession. State specialists and a local attorney led the two-night program, which covered topics such as importance of farm business succession planning, tax credits, working with an attorney, setting goals and implementing your estate plan. This program was a combined offering among Webster, Wright, Humboldt and Hamilton counties.

This was the third year the Ag in the Community program was held in the ISU Extension and Outreach office in Clarion. This series ran monthly from November through April. Different local agricultural businesses and topics were led by various Iowa State University Extension and Outreach specialists and industry professionals. Topics for the 2018 series included getting started in the produce business, results from a land ownership and conservation survey in Wright County, pollinator and bee management, Purple Ribbon Beef in Clarion and why, where and how of integrating prairie strips on corn and soybean farms in Iowa. These programs gave the opportunity for business owners and professionals to show their presence and accomplishments in the Wright County community, as well as giving local citizens an opportunity to learn about what is happening in local agriculture and how they can help and implement ideas themselves.
K-12 Youth Outreach

Wright County 4-H presented at the Clarion-Goldfield-Dows Middle School STEM Day on March 23, 2018. At the 4-H session, youth learned about the engineering design process and became Amazon engineers to package a Pringle chip to withstand three unknown challenges to their structure. After learning about the engineering design process, youth were given paper and a yard of duct tape to protect their Pringle from a fall, direct impact and heavy rainfall. Youth then learned if their Pringle survived any of the challenges. Youth also discussed why Amazon wants to protect their packages, how to improve their engineering designs for next time, and other engineering fundamentals. Nearly 60 youth, including two teachers, were excited to become engineers to create strong packaging!

About 100 youth learned about the quality care of animals at two workshops in Wright County and a multi-county event workshop at the Youth Beef Conference. 2018 was the first year that youth participated in Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA). All youth who exhibited beef, dairy cattle, goat (meat/dairy), poultry, rabbit, sheep and swine at a county fair were required to complete YQCA training annually. At the workshops, youth learned about the food supply chain, food safety, animal well-being, youth leadership, how to be a role model in the animal industry, and how to communicate with the public.

Wright County 4-H offered seven day camps throughout the summer of 2018, which targeted both Clover Kids (Kindergarten through third grade) and 4-H age groups. Sixty-five youth were involved in the day camps. At camp, youth focused on each of the 4-H program priority areas, including communication and the arts, STEM, healthy living, and leadership and civic engagement. Youth were excited to learn new games and activities, and many reported that those activities continued to be a favorite upon returning home. Camps presented included Expand My World, Camera Corps, LEGO Leaders, Acting Out, Active Outdoors, Bubble Mania, and Lights, Camera, Cooking.