

K-State Research & Extension provides research-based information to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future.

Extension Education: Here to Provide Help and Hope in 2020

As our 2019-2020 program year draws to a close, we see only a fragment of how the coronavirus pandemic has left its mark on society and changed everyday life. Time will one day provide us a more accurate review of this historic time, revealing the painful toll the virus has taken on families, workplaces, economies on every scale, and our personal psyche. There are opportunities as well, and in the midst of it all, is hope. **We continue** Extension's mission to provide education. **We adapt** to find new ways to reach and teach our customers, and **we hope** along with our fellow Americans.

I am a "clipper" of articles that I find meaningful. During the pandemic I have looked to skilled communicators for messages that conveyed hope. My reading includes messages from the Federal Reserve, GraceMed's *State of Grace*, the Topeka Capital-Journal, and Smart Meetings to name just a few. I found powerful messages of hope in each. One author shared that, "*Hope and fear are opposites. It is essential to dwell on hope and resist the temptation to live in fear. Hope is the lens that gives us courage. Real hope is a frame of mind that always believes that goodness will prevail.*"

K-State Research and Extension is dedicated to a safe, sustainable, competitive food and fiber system, and to strong, healthy communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis and education.



As Extension educators, you can count on us to continue our grassroots nature and to listen to the needs of our communities. We do so by electing 24 members to local program advisory committees that guide educational efforts in Community Development, 4-H and Youth Development, Family & Consumer Sciences, and Agriculture & Natural Resources. Since no entity can be everything to everyone, we structure our work around five grand challenges of Water, Global Food Systems, Health, Community Vitality, and Developing Tomorrow's Leaders.

We are grateful for the support we receive from county commissioners and Kansas State University that enables us to work together to improve the quality of life and standard of living for Shawnee County residents.

The staff with K-State Research & Extension — Shawnee County is proud to serve our county and work as a team in direct education, as well as facilitating the work of hundreds of volunteers who carry out our mission and greatly extend the impact of our programs.

**View our program
impact video at
www.shawnee.ksu.edu**

Agriculture Remains #1 Driver of the Shawnee County Economy

Leroy Russell
Agriculture Agent
lrussell@ksu.edu



Kansas and Shawnee County has a strong agricultural and agribusiness base that serves as the number one driver of our economy. Shawnee County has 847 farms totaling 201,662 acres in farm ground. The average farm size is 238 acres. This is a 3% increase in the number of farms, a 4% increase in acres, and a 1% increase in farm size from last year. This is the first time in many years there has been an increase in these three numbers.

Agriculture, food, and food processing has a direct output of approximately \$1.83 billion and supports 9,108 jobs or 7.63% of the work force in Shawnee County. Shawnee County has two K-State Research farm locations in the county that plant nearly 30 test plots each year to test seeding rates, cover crops, varieties, compaction of soils, fertilizer rates and timing, planting dates and chemicals used with the ultimate goal to increase production and efficiency.

Since 1950, Kansas crop production per acre has doubled for grain sorghum, soybeans, and wheat, and has increased more than four times for corn. Production of corn increased from 29 bushels per acre to 128, grain sorghum from 21 to 60, soybeans from 13 to 30, and wheat from 18-38.

Over 100 farmers and ranchers attended the spring Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation series meetings. One hundred percent of the participants gained knowledge, with 100% ranking the programs as excellent or very good. The group collectively represented farm businesses

with 20,378 crop and hay acres, 9,534 acres of pasture, and management of 1,519 head of cattle/calves.

The class topics were Lease Laws and Fencing Laws for Land Owners and Tenants, Pond Maintenance: Aquatic Problems Blue-Green Algae/Fish, Forestry Maintenance, and Weeds in Crops and Pastures. All participants reported learning recommendations that will be reflected in changes to their operations. Producers shared:

- ◇ *"I plan to clear trees off around pond dams and control algae."*
- ◇ *"I plan on doing regular weed control with both mowing and herbicides."*

Pictured below is a test run in Shawnee County by Shawnee County Parks and Recreation to determine if blue-green algae can be controlled by putting barley hay bales in ponds or lakes. This story and video from K-State Research & Extension is available online at

www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2020/10/blue-green-algae-research-with-straw-bales.html.



\$1.83

Billion

Value of agriculture, food, and food processing each year from Shawnee County.

4x's

Corn production has increased from 29 to 128 bushels per acre since 1950.

100%

Of program participants reported knowledge gained to help them improve their farming/ranching operation.

9,108

Jobs in Shawnee County are supported by agriculture.

Improving Lives Through Horticulture

Ariel Whitely-Noll
Horticulture Agent
arielw@ksu.edu



Response Line Calls Continue Through Pandemic

In 2020, Shawnee County Extension Master Gardeners answered 624 calls on the Extension Master Gardener Response Line. In April, I trained 41 new and experienced Shawnee County Extension Master Gardeners in how to manage client calls through a virtual Response Line.

Garden Hour Webinars Engage Kansans

The *K-State Garden Hour* webinar series is hosted by K-State Research and Extension horticulture staff from across the state. Since launching in May, these educational programs have engaged 7,955 learners. I have taught, hosted, and moderated these programs throughout the growing season.

Fall Into Gardening Webinars Prepare Gardeners for Seasonal Changes

The *Fall Into Gardening* webinar series taught by Shawnee County Extension Master Gardeners and Extension Staff reaching 193 participants. We were fortunate to partner with our friends at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library to host this webinar series. Topics covered included: Fall Lawn Care, Making and Using Compost, Living Soil, Xeriscape Gardening and Plant Propagation.

Edibles Webinars Provide Gardening Foundation

The *Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs* webinars taught by Shawnee County Extension Master Gardeners and extension staff engaged 123 learners. Topics covered



SCEMG volunteers Wayne Stander, Barb Leeper, and Judi Schultz work in the Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Cedar Crest.

included: Unusual Fruits, Herbs, Vegetables in Containers, Vegetable Pest and Disease Management, and Turning Vegetable Scraps into Food.

Planting Wild Webinars Focus on Conservation

The *Planting Wild* webinar series taught by Shawnee County Extension Master Gardeners and Extension Staff aims to teach home gardeners how to support and safely manage wildlife. One hundred twenty community members registered for this series. Topics covered included: Backyard Bird Habitat, Designing Gardens for Wildlife, Managing Urban Wildlife, and Native Bees.

725

People participated in an Indoor Plants webinar hosted by K-State and taught by Ariel.

67,649

People were reached through our social media efforts just on horticultural topics!

51

Educational articles appeared in the Topeka Capital-Journal this past year.

742

Hours were spent in our 8 demonstration gardens. In 2021, we hope to add QR codes to our gardens.

Eating Smart and Moving More on Limited Resources

Lisa J. Martin, MPH
RD, LD
EFNEP/SNAP-Ed Agent
ljmartin@ksu.edu



Food Safety During Pregnancy

Food safety is especially important during pregnancy, so the Food Safety lesson is provided early in our pregnant clients' series of lessons and is reinforced throughout all of the lessons. Clients are encouraged to set small goals when they complete a lesson, and practicing safe food skills is often a change that clients are willing to make. Two of our pregnant clients were pleased to report that they are no longer thawing perishable food on the counter. Here are all of food safety outcomes:

- 30% wash their hands more often before preparing food.
- 25% clean items/surfaces more often after contact with raw meat or seafood.
- 56% thaw frozen food at room temperature less often.
- 61% use a meat thermometer more often.

Nursing Bench/Breastfeeding Education Display for the Topeka Zoo

Breastmilk is the optimal first food for infants, and exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months of life by health providers and health organizations. In Kansas, only 50.4% of infants are *exclusively* breastfed at initiation and 26.1% *exclusively* breastfed at six months of age. Kaw Area Breastfeeding Coalition (KABC) strives to make breastfeeding easy and accessible where families live, eat, learn, work, and play. Removing barriers will extend duration.

The coalition applied for and received two grants from

the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition and Kansas Nutrition Council to fund the construction and placement of a lactation bench at the Topeka Zoo. Educational materials developed by EFNEP and coalition members will accompany the bench to teach Zoo visitors how animals and humans breastfeed their infants.

Once the bench/display is installed, KABC will host a ribbon cutting/educational event to promote breastfeeding.

COVID-19 Coalition Response: Food Distribution Map

The COVID-19 Response and Coordination Coalition was formed to address the emergency needs of Shawnee County Residents--food, housing, utility assistance, and other living expense needs. More than 100 agencies are involved in the coalition including health care, utilities, health insurance, law enforcement, housing, food pantries and emergency centers, transportation, education, and local government.

One project completed by this coalition was an online Food Distribution Map. Shawnee County Extension EFNEP and community partners developed the map to assist the public with accessing food, as well as to assist the local Farm and Food Council with identifying gaps in the food system. Other partners included the United Way of Greater Topeka and Planning Departments for Shawnee County and the City of Topeka. Agencies and clients can enter an address and search for food resources within a targeted area. The map is updated as food resources change. Find the map at https://www.shawnee.k-state.edu/food_distribution_map/index.html.

77%

Of EFNEP graduates made changes to be more physically active.

89%

Of EFNEP graduates are making better choices with their food dollars.

1,500

Seedlings grown by Extension Master Gardeners and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation were donated to 22 community gardens.

Food Distribution Map:

<https://tinyurl.com/food-distribution-map>

Building Community Vitality with Entrepreneurs and Volunteers

Cindy Evans
 County Extension Director
 cevans@ksu.edu



Extension Community Vitality programs connect small business owners to opportunities that make them more resilient and profitable.

- ◆ Shawnee StartUps, whose mission is to encourage and support entrepreneurs in Shawnee County, was a funding partner on loans to Falk Architects and Fire Me Up Ceramics as the business footprint in the North Topeka Arts District continues to expand.
- ◆ Also in NOTO is Donaldson’s Jewelers. Shawnee StartUps selected owner David Horn to benefit from a Digital Boost Camp. This opportunity will allow David to work closely with Sprout Creative for six months to assess Donaldson’s online reputation and then create a marketing plan to drive more customers to the website. Sprout Creative will guide David to create engagement that results in greater e-commerce. Additional businesses will be selected for the Digital Boost Camp this fall.
- ◆ A Lecompton couple is crafting old-fashioned wagons for a “glamping” experience. Shawnee StartUps partnered in a loan to PlainsCraft that helped relocate this business from Lecompton to North Topeka. The wagons are popular for high end RV parks. Now their business is employing a local and expanding labor force and purchasing materials and services from several area businesses. A recent order for 20 of the wagons, valued at \$500,000, is headed to Utah.

Extension also drives greater community vitality by serving as a resource to community volunteer groups in Rossville and Dover. Rossville PRIDE received a Volunteers Impact PRIDE (VIP) grant for \$9,250 to make repairs to the Moravan Lodge, a cherished site for those who settled the area from Bavaria.

Dover PRIDE received a \$1,000 Partner in PRIDE grant to print a promotional brochure promoting rental of the community center kitchen, which is licensable for small businesses.



Community Vitality Specialist Nancy Daniels taught grant writing workshops in Topeka in 2018 and 2019. One hundred nineteen people attended. Community members who learned and practiced grant writing skills through Extension-sponsored workshops were able to secure funding for our community to address COVID-19. One group received \$76,000 for COVID support to at-risk families, and another entity received \$2500 for technology needed in response to the pandemic.

These efforts that support business growth, empower volunteers, and teach skills to secure grants are helping our communities build **Community Vitality**.

3

loans from Shawnee StartUps to start new businesses in Shawnee County

\$10,250

Grants to PRIDE Volunteer groups this year to improve their communities

\$5,654

Funds received through the CARES Act to address COVID-19

Immeasurable

The number of virtual meetings and Zoom calls with customers, volunteers, and KSRE staff as we learned new techniques to share Extension education.

Extension Education Impacts

Financial Wellness

Susan Fangman
Family & Consumer
Sciences Agent
sfangman@ksu.edu



The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate level activity each week. According to *America's Health Ranking's* 2019 report, only 24% of adults in the U.S. are reaching that minimum recommendation. Regular physical activity is associated with many health benefits, including a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. Regular physical activity also is associated with reduced feelings of anxiety and depression.

Below are a few programming opportunities offered by the Shawnee County Extension office to encourage residents of Shawnee County to get up and get moving:

- ◆ This spring, 257 individuals participated in *Walk Kansas*, an 8-week, team-based walking program designed to help people develop the habit of exercise and to reach the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Most participants reported meeting, if not exceeding, the recommendations.
- ◆ A *Fall Walk Kansas* program was implemented. Ninety-two participants logged minutes of exercise for four weeks. Each received a weekly educational newsletter and motivational messages to keep moving.
- ◆ Susan teamed up with *24 for Life*, a diabetes prevention program through Midland to offer *Get Moving* classes via Zoom. At the end of the program each of the 30 participants shared at least one way they planned to move more and sit less.

The following quote from a participant in the *Fall Walk Kansas* program sums up the importance of providing op-

portunities to encourage physical activity: *"I am sad the program is over! I feel like I need to keep up my schedule since I have to write those minutes down every day! It keeps me thinking about exercise every day and that is good. It isn't even about the prizes, although I appreciate very much the gift card that I received from the spring event. It means so much to have a place to belong to where you can get support and help. We don't want to go to the gym, so this program has been great."*



Free Tax Assistance in Shawnee County

Susan oversees the Asset Building Coalition in Shawnee County; the coalition represents VITA and AARP tax volunteers, as well as educational, government, and social services agencies. This year, 74 volunteers worked across 10 public sites to file 3,726 federal returns for tax year 2019. Volunteers filed a similar number of state returns. One goal of the coalition is to provide education about tax credits to make sure taxpayers claim all the credits that are due to them. See the boxes below for financial impacts of the Shawnee County program.

\$5,266,949

Federal refunds returned to taxpayers served at Shawnee County tax sites.

758

Returns claimed the Earned Income Credit.

\$838,350

Saved in tax preparation fees (average of \$225 per return).

5,324

Hours volunteered in VITA tax preparation.

Building Tomorrow's Leaders with Help from Local Partners

Candis Meerpohl
4-H Youth Development
Agent
candism@ksu.edu



4-H Camp Was Not Cancelled!

On the 4-H Calendar, June means Rock Springs 4-H Camp! Our camp group was disheartened when Rock Springs determined that in-person camp would not be possible due to COVID-19. We understood that our first responsibility was for the health and safety of our 4-H youth, volunteers and staff. We were still sad to not be ordering busses to take our kids to camp for four days and three nights to Rock Springs Ranch.

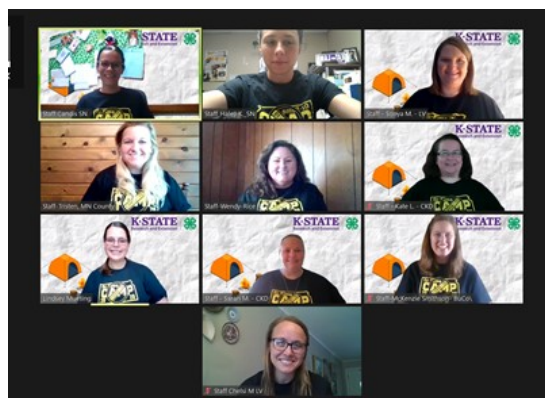
In 2020, 4-H Camp went virtual! Of the multiple camp groups in the state, Oz Some camp group, made up of Shawnee, Saline, Ottawa, McPherson, Butler, Marion, Leavenworth, and Rice counties, was the only group to offer a virtual camp. The extension agents of those counties came together to plan a three-night Zoom camp that lasted three hours each night.

Not only did we have camper registration, but our camp group decided that we would have youth camp counselors as well. The counselor role is an important leadership opportunity for our 4-H youth 14-18 years old. It is also a better experience for the camper to have two older youth to direct them through camp rather than adults.

This ended up being a winning idea as the camp counselors had the same 7-9 youth every night and formed bonds with their campers and co-counselors. Counselors had one additional night of counselor training before camp.

Before camp, everyone got a camp care package with all of the supplies for our nights together. Youth got to dissect an owl pellet, build a picture frame, learn about Kansas wildlife, play minute-to-win-it games and paint rocks as a part of a service project. Campers also got a camp shirt as a part of their package. We had 149 campers and 41 camp counselors sign up. We used breakout rooms to form housing units, and for most of the camp activities, youth got the instructions in the big camp group, then did their activity with their housing unit.

For evening activities, we welcomed the family of the campers to join in. They danced with their youth at our camp-wide dance, helped paint rocks, and enjoyed making living room camp tents. 4-H is a family activity, and if you are doing camp in your living room, why not involve the whole family?



We had rave reviews from campers and parents. We know it was not the same as Rock Springs 4-H Camp, but it was a chance to connect with youth from other counties. In a summer where so much was cancelled, I am proud the Oz Some Camp Group still offered a camp experience for our 4-H youth!

2,017

Volunteer hours spent on the Shawnee County 4-H program Oct. 2019 - Sept. 2020.

12

4-H Clubs in Shawnee County.

4x

More likely to give back to their communities than their non-4-H peers.
*Tufts Study of PYD

8

Number of Shawnee County youth who received the highest achievement award for Kansas 4-H, the Key Award.

Judi Salyer has been a longtime volunteer for our partner, Topeka Common Ground, Inc., working alongside our SNAP-Ed Garden to Plate Community Gardening efforts. She made it her mission to approach numerous businesses to obtain seed donations for 2020 and promises for additional seeds at the end of the season for the 2021 Seed Fair. When the Seed Fair was cancelled due to COVID-19, she courageously donned her face mask and maintained her 6-foot distance to deliver seeds to Harvesters, Catholic Charities, and Habitat for Humanity so they could distribute the seeds to interested gardeners. Judi was also determined to see that Community Gardens would receive seedlings. While the state was under the Safe-At-Home order and KSRE could not meet face to face, she staged three drive-through, no-contact distributions, and personally delivered seedlings to TARC, KNI, and the Capper Foundation. Thanks to Judi's dedication and persistence to KSRE's Garden to Plate program, more than 1500 seedlings and thousands of seeds were distributed to promote gardening during this unprecedented time of uncertainty and food insecurity.



Karen Perkuhn served on the 4-H PDC and Shawnee County Extension Council for eight years representing Family & Consumer Sciences (2008-2011), and 4-H and Youth Development (2016-2019). She served on the Executive Board all eight years, and through those terms served two years as Secretary, two years as Vice-President, and her last year (2019) as Board Chair. Karen has served several years on the Shawnee County Extension Education Foundation and currently serves as President. She has volunteered as the adult treasurer for the 4-H Events Council for eight years. Karen has been a sponsor of the 4-H Exchange group for 16 years, helping plan the many experiences for Shawnee County youth to visit 4-H families in other states, as well as hosting those families in Shawnee County. Karen is a selfless volunteer and has shown through her leadership how much she cares and advocates for the mission of Extension.

Courtney Davis has been named the **Kansas Volunteer of the Year for 2020**. Courtney has volunteered with the Riverside 4-H Club for the last five years. She has helped with awareness events like Berryton's Night Out event and has assisted in the club's fundraisers. Courtney also helps with the Dairy Goat project and is the county superintendent for Dairy Goat for the Shawnee County Fair. Courtney shows interest and compassion for all 4-H youth. She celebrates their successes like she would for her own children. Courtney is genuine and her enthusiasm is contagious.



Dan Glotzbach has been named the **Kansas 4-H Lifetime Volunteer of the Year for 2020**. The Lifetime Volunteer Award recognizes persons who have volunteered ten or more years with 4-H. Dan has been a volunteer with the Rossville Rustlers 4-H Club for the last 16 years, serving many roles for the club, including Club Leader. He supervised youth at county camp and has helped wherever needed at the county fair. Even after Dan retired as a Community Leader he did not back off on his dedication to 4-H. He has continued to be constantly involved in 4-H, both in the public activities and in a behind the scenes, quiet way.



Shawnee County K-State Research and Extension
www.shawnee.ksu.edu



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