



Community Vitality the Focus of Tree Planting Workshops

Trees play a vital role in communities since they provide not only beauty but also shade (lower energy costs), improved community appearance, and higher property value. In 2016 and 2017 tree planting workshops being offered by Horticulture Extension Agent Jason Graves and Salina City Forester Steve Blue are focused on improving the community by planting trees correctly. These workshops offer participants a chance to walk local parks and view first-hand what happens when trees are planted incorrectly. They see and learn from past mistakes that have caused premature tree decline and failure. Participants then work together with the instructors to plant trees the correct way in a local park. Trained participants often indicate they are planning to plant trees of their own and this training will enable them to plant trees correctly- which will enhance our community for years to come.

4-H Learning Experiences

4-H learning experiences enhance young people's abilities to grow into tomorrow's leaders and communicators. The structured learning environment combined with encouragement and mentoring allows 4-H programming to play a vital role in helping our youth achieve future success. Recently, 2,600-plus Kansas youth ages 8 to 18 years old — from both rural areas and cities — participated in a study to determine 4-H's effectiveness in fostering positive connections, encouraging responsible decisions, and developing communication and citizenship skills. The Central Kansas District had 53 youth participate in the survey and some of the results include: 93.75% reported comfortable with making their own decisions, have a plan for reaching their goals, and don't succumb to peer pressure; 97.83% reported working successfully with adults and 95.65% are connected to adults who are not their parents; 95.65 reported they gained important skills by serving their communities; all participants reported they can make a difference through community service and treat everyone fairly and equally when they are in charge of a group.

Supporting Global Food Systems and Community Vitality Simultaneously

Central Kansas District Extension serves agricultural producers across Saline and Ottawa Counties. This January CKD hosted more than 130 local producers, agricultural lenders, and allied industry professionals from over 24 Kansas counties at the "*Top 10 Considerations to Navigate a Struggling Farm Economy*" program in Salina. Participants were educated on current status of the agricultural economy, future commodities price outlooks, risk management strategies, and resources to survive and thrive amid the tempestuous conditions. During market upturns and struggling conditions CKD agents walk alongside producers to educate and equip them to make wise decisions in times of plenty and periods of distress. Through one-on-one consultations, periodical newsletters, social media, and educational events our agents help producers do what they do better to feed the world and fuel local community vitality.



Supporting Global Food System Efforts

Proliferating pigweeds that include glyphosate-resistant Palmer amaranth and water hemp have made post-harvest weed control in winter wheat stubble difficult for CKD crop producers. To assist growers in evaluating herbicide treatments, K-State Extension weed specialists suggested five postharvest herbicide treatment protocols designed mainly to control Palmer amaranth and water hemp. These treatments were applied to a cooperating farmers' field near Gypsum and a summer field day was held to evaluate the treatments and discuss weed control options in wheat stubble. Farmers learned that no matter the following crop, the field must be clean at planting time. Growers will now have to apply a herbicide with residual activity and also plan for post emerge herbicide treatments in the growing crop to control problem pigweeds.

Increasing Community Vitality

What is it that extension can do? The programs reach across all areas and agents. One program that has been offered last spring and will be again this spring is Board Leadership a four session program that covers topics to make community boards successful and how you can be a good board member. Topics include: agendas, recruitment, finances, conflict management, and legalities to name a few. Other programs we have done to assist chambers, pride groups, economic development coordinators, committees, and other groups with everything from equipment to facilitation of community discussions. We have worked with K-State Salina on Civic Discussions at noon and the Talk Salina Group. Agents Jason Graves, Leah Robinson, and Carl Garten have worked with Salina's Water Festival Group to educate 600 fourth graders on the importance of water, and why we must protect our water to protect all life.



Senior Health Insurance Education

Central Kansas District provides health insurance education, one-on-one and in group settings, for Medicare beneficiaries year round. In addition to extension staff, six volunteer counselors assist beneficiaries with decisions for the upcoming year during the Open Enrollment period occurring each fall.

- 171 persons were reached through Medicare Basics programs, Medicare Plan Finder classes and Medicare updates during the fall of 2016.

- 908 Medicare beneficiaries received assistance with drug and health plan comparisons during open enrollment. With the assistance of the agent and volunteers, 372 changed drug plans saving a total of \$585,515.68, or an average of \$1,847 per person changing plans.

- 12 persons received help applying for the Low Income Subsidy and Medicare Savings Program to help cover medical premiums, deductibles and copays.

- Beneficiaries reported an increased understanding of terms associated with health insurance, factors to consider when choosing a health or drug plan, and how level of coverage and size of deductible affect the premium paid.

For all Kansans, particularly those living near or below the poverty level, making sound financial decisions related to health insurance can alleviate stress. It can also free financial resources to meet other goals, improve health outcomes, and support community vitality when those funds are spent locally.



Global Food Systems and Health

Consumer interest in locally-grown foods and food preservation continues to grow. Central Kansas District continues to educate individuals to ensure they can enjoy a safe and abundant food supply. One way this is achieved is through our annual food preservation workshop. This hands-on class utilizes the most current, researched based canning and freezing methods available. As a result, class participants learn correct and safe food preservation skills. Attendees reported they felt more confident in their abilities to preserve food at home, learned proper canning procedures, and would be able to provide safe food to their families. The knowledge these participants gained will allow them to utilize the locally grown foods they desire in a safe and nutritious manner.



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