

Wetzel County Annual Report | 2016

Putting Knowledge to Work!

West Virginia University Extension works to provide “solutions in your community” through key program areas including agriculture, environment and natural resources, 4-H youth development, food and nutrition, health and wellness, financial planning and home gardening. These research-based programs and services are available to all residents of Wetzel County thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners – the Board of Education and County Commission.

Highlights

We held a safe and successful Wetzel County 4-H Camp. Volunteers provided campers with a week of fun and inclusive activities. This year, volunteers completed several trainings prior to camp, totaling 170 plus hours.

The Energy Express summer literacy program returned to Wetzel County after over a decade. We built a strong partnership with Wetzel County Schools and were able to provide two sites in the county at Short Line School and Paden City Elementary School.

In partnership with the Wetzel County Farmers Market Association, we trained new vendors on marketing practices. We developed a data collection tool for the market to track trends. This led to another successful market season with at least five new vendors.

4-H and Youth Development

In 2015, we celebrated 100 years of 4-H camping!

- 155 youth attended county 4-H camp.
- 125 were active members of a community 4-H club.
- 175 students participated in a budgeting and career program.
- 30+ volunteers were fully vetted according to WVU policy.
- Of the 40 children in the Energy Express program in our county 63% showed positive changes in letter-word identification, reading fluency, passage comprehension and broad reading.
- Low-resource children have been found to have lower vocabulary levels when they enter school and continue to be behind other children throughout their school years. Children who participated in Energy Express in our county, and who read and practice reading skills in the summer, will enter the new school year better prepared. The better prepared students are to learn, the more likely they will

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- graduate from high school and pursue college training.
- Bullying and other acts of exclusion limit all citizens from fully participating in society and often result in incidents of depression, suicide, and violence. As the 4-H camp in our county makes changes to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities, all members of the community benefit from full participation of its citizens.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- 45 soil tests were performed.
- We partnered with Upper Ohio Conservation District to provide information on forage testing for local farmers.
- 58 youth completed the Animal Husbandry and Quality Assurance Program.
- 50 participants in Livestock Sale at Town and Country Days totaling \$73,3324.15.
- As Wetzel County producers compete in local food markets, more of the food dollar stays in the county or in West Virginia. In addition, buying local, fresh produce has benefits related to healthy eating and nutrition.

Community, Economic and Workforce Development

- 44 citizens involved in leadership training programs.
- Wetzel County Chamber of Commerce involved in leadership and planning programs.
- \$7750 in grant money raised for community projects.
- The Wetzel County Commission has made a significant investment into the 4-H Campgrounds by building three large cabins. This will not only support the 4-H program, but many other youth and community programs in the county and region. These will greatly increase the use and income for the 4-H Campgrounds.

Families and Health

- Nutrition education encourages youth to try a variety of healthy foods. 414 youth were reached in 2015.
- 78% (up from 47%) like vegetables post-program.
- 74% (up from 52%) like fruits post-program.
- 100% tried at least one new healthy food during the program.
- According to a report by the West Virginia Governor's office in 2013, if West Virginia is to successfully reverse high health care costs and poor outcomes, it is going to require specific changes in the healthcare system that address high-cost health conditions and improves the

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overall health and healthcare of West Virginia families. Our county's Family Nutrition Program plays an important part in improving overall health by training youth to make healthy food and activity choices early in their lives which will lead to better health outcomes over time for them and their families.

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