Leadership Owen County—Impacts the Community

Building the capacity of volunteer leaders within the county is critical for the sustainability of a community’s infrastructure to strengthen families. Our county will be facing substantial grow-related change in the next few years and still wants to preserve the rural character of our community. As new leaders become involved working in the community, there is the need for leadership development to be built in three levels: personal leadership, organizational leadership, and community leadership.

The local Chamber of Commerce and Cooperative Extension Service co-sponsored the Leadership Owen County Program for the 6th year training 23 new individuals to serve in leadership roles. Each month the individuals attended sessions on education, health care, services to children, agriculture, entrepreneurship, government, and industry/utilities.

The Community Service Project for 2012, was the County park and Fairgrounds Beautification (master plan). This plan included raising $2,000 to purchase plants and supplies, developing a plan around the exhibit building, and implement the plan with members providing the labor.

During spring 2013, the Visioneers (Leadership Owen County Alumni) held an event “Living the Dream,” highlighting projects and the impact of leaders in the community since 2002. Approximately 100 leaders from the community and neighboring counties attended the event. Other projects such as the Owen County Fan Fair and Quilt Show, development of the Owen County Tourism Commission, Agricultural Heritage Trail, Quilt Trail, Arts in the Park, and the future developments were illustrated. During 2012, several car groups (Ford Mustang groups from Louisville with 80 participants and a Buick Corporation Test Drive with 20 new 2013 vehicles) used Owen County roads and attractions by eating lunch and antique shopping with each group, thus adding to the local economy (Estimated $ 3015 in sales) as a tourist event for their group.

Eden Shale Farm

After nearly 60 years of operation, in 2012, the University of Kentucky closed the 1000-acre Eden Shale Demonstration Farm due to funding problems. The farm had provided a source of local research-based information to area farmers, and was a source of great pride for local residents. When the farm closed, these local farmers and residents were understandably disappointed and upset.

This year, the Kentucky Beef Network, an organization affiliated with the Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association, took over management of the farm. Kentucky Beef Network and Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association leaders have been very vocal in the appreciation of Extension’s role in keeping farmers and community leaders informed during the process of the management change.

Initial meetings were held in the county, as Kentucky Beef Network began discussing the possibilities with their board. Representatives have spoken to local...
groups numerous times to make them aware of the change.

Extension helped organize a local fencing work day to get local farmers involved, in which 30 farmers participated. Extension has also provided networking assistance, when Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association needed local farmers/business people to help provide some kind of service.

Equipment has been purchased, local farmers have been hired for some contract labor, and cattle are again grazing on the farm. The local cattlemen’s association held a summer field day at the farm, and two weed control demonstrations were held in the fall.

Champion for Food Volunteers

Two Owen County volunteers participated in 40 hours of instructions to become Champion Food Volunteers in-training. This program is a way to teach people more about nutrition, food safety, food preparation, and demonstration. In return, over the next year as they “pay back” 40 hours by volunteers and giving food demonstrations in Owen County and throughout the area. Elizabeth Prewitt and Elaine Kelly have already completed their pay-back and have given a lot more time to their community and local adults as well as youth in the area of food and nutrition.

Recipes for Life: Good Nutrition & Food Safety Practices

Food preparation, nutrition, and mealtime etiquette were taught at home and in the school setting. Due to societal changes, family mealtime is often non-existent.

The county conducted a special school project over the course of a week titled “Recipes for Life”. This project allowed 148 fifth grade students to gather at the Extension Office and participate in a cooking class and demonstrations. The students teamed with the FCS Agent, homemaker club members, and community volunteers for the hands-on project which included recipe reading, cooking, as well as nutritional and health education activities.

During the week, the students prepared their lunch with basic ingredients and cooking techniques as well as comprehensive curriculum on calorie requirements, sources of food, farm to table vegetables, food safety, nutrient information and effects of food on well-being and risk for chronic disease. As a result, the students have stated they utilized the recipes and cooking techniques in their own kitchen and have begun helping their families to prepare meals.

Teachers comments: “The best educational and hands-on experience day of the whole school year.” “This is a terrific program. Students are actually learning about nutrition.” “Students worked together to prepare a recipe and learned nutrition in the stations, love it!” In fall of 2012, this program was recognized as the NEAFCS Southern Region Winner.

4-H Sewing Project

In today’s modern world, most young people lack an understanding and appreciation for how items used in daily life are made, or where these items come from. The 4-H Sewing Club in Owen County was organized to help 4-Hers gain a better understanding of how clothing and other related items are created, as well as promote creativity and critical thinking.

The beginning and more advanced sewing groups each met once a week over the course of eight weeks, to work on constructing a garment or other item. At the end of the eight weeks, the girls modeled their finished projects in front of their families and peers at the Annual Fashion Revue and Variety Show.

The Sewing Club members were required to fill out a Fashion Revue Data Sheet before they could participate in the Fashion Revue and Variety Show. This sheet asked them to describe their accomplishments, skills learned, and favorite/least favorite experiences. The sewers were found to have learned or improved upon sewing skills such as threading a machine, pinning patterns, cutting fabric, and sewing with different stitches. They also learned modeling skills, which was evident by watching their improvement throughout modeling practice to their actual performance during the Revue.

The Owen County Cooperative Extension Service

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