

2014 County Highlights

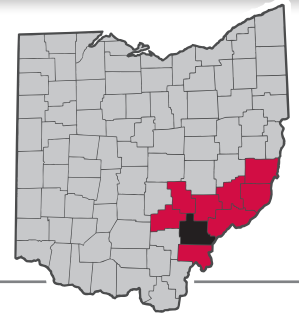


ATHENS County

BUCKEYE HILLS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- **Teen Leadership Development:** Athens County 4-H trained 10 Junior Leaders and coordinated 10 PetPals members. In 2014, Junior Leaders focused its efforts on community service activities and job skill development. In the past, teens have mentioned that this program has helped them with interviewing, social media management and applying for colleges. The office also hosted four teenage interns and one college intern during the summer months. The interns helped with recordkeeping, planning and overall office support. These internships provided the youths with college credit (in one case) and experience in workforce development, with at least two of the youths considering Extension as a job in the future.
- **Athens County Fair Development:** We organized Quality Assurance Training for about 450 youth in 2014. In addition, our office assisted with the Junior Fair Board, a group with about 20 youth. These programs help teens gain experience with public speaking, organizing fair shows, raising livestock and other tasks. In addition, we doubled our participation in Skillathon, which assists youth in learning more about their animals. As a result, more youth were engaged in delving into deeper knowledge about raising their animals for meat or egg production, resulting in more conscientious farmers. This participation also helped youth who participated in Skillathon and the Livestock Judging Team on a state level.
- **Tar Hollow 4-H Camp:** In all, 93 youth (up from last year) ages 8–14, 23 teen counselors and 14 Extension and camp staff participated in 4-H Camp at Tar Hollow State Park. We added an extra day this year, so over five days, campers and

counselors experienced the dynamic of group living; were educated about the importance of communication skills, citizenship, conservation, and the value of teamwork; and participated in recreational activities while building lifelong friendships. When asked, youth stated that the top skills camp helped with were social, leadership, and responsibility.

A total of 30 teen counselors interviewed, and 23 completed 24 hours of mandatory training and planning to prepare for camp. Teens increased their knowledge about team-building, leadership skills, teaching techniques, risk management, youth protection, health, safety, decision-making, communication skills and program-planning.

- **Financial Contributions:** We raised about \$3,200 toward camp through donations this year, and we had about \$3,000 donated by the 4-H committee. Camp counselors this year also attended aquaculture training for a new grant to raise money (\$500) for camp. These counselors also led the programming with almost 100 youth campers at 4-H Camp. Our Tractor Supply Fundraiser raised over \$1,000 for 4-H this year, and we were able to fund a paid summer intern through past donations to the office, which cost about \$2,600. Overall, in addition to commissioner funds, this office raised about \$10,300 toward the 4-H program.
- **4-H Club Development:** In 2014, we trained over 80 advisors on new policies, food safety, child abuse awareness and leadership, all of which can be used in their careers and other volunteer work. These advisors oversaw our 50 4-H Clubs and helped over 690 participating youth complete projects. If each volunteer donates 100 volunteer hours per year (the average) at the current Ohio rate of \$22.14 per



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volunteer hour, this equates to \$177,120 worth of volunteer support to our county's future leaders. Within clubs, members learned parliamentary meeting structure, ways to work together on booth/float projects and coordination of community service projects. We also held an officer training with about 40 youth. The training taught the youth how to perform the various roles in club, which will assist them as they join other organizations when they're adults.

- **4-H Enrollment Data:** In 2014, the Athens County 4-H program had 575 participants between the ages of 8–18 assume responsibility and follow thorough work ethics. In addition, the 4-H Cloverbud program for youth in kindergarten through second grade continued to grow, with 115 Cloverbuds in 2014. Cloverbuds are enrolled in an educational, activity-based, noncompetitive program in a club setting. In 2014, we continued the Cloverbud Day Camp as a full day on the Athens County Fairgrounds, where over 40 Cloverbuds experienced several rotations of arts and crafts, games, a petting zoo and nature. The Cloverbuds were led by fully trained youth camp counselors. There was also a special Cloverbud Advisor Training to increase programming and to train adults on the importance of knowing proper age/learning development. New this year, we also helped over 100 youth in area schools with 4-H school-garden curriculum. Teaching youth about gardening is vital, as they can learn to grow their own food and discover more about the local food movement. We also added an afterschool group, four Cloverbud nature days and a dog training clinic. In addition, we assisted with the new Pumpkin Festival.
- **4-H in the Community:** The 4-H Extension educator worked on boosting the 4-H program throughout the fall and winter, and in October 2014 we hosted our third annual booth at the Athens County Chili Cook-Off. The goal was to show members of the community that 4-H has something for everyone. In this event, we typically advertise Extension to over 50 people. We also represented 4-H for the first time at the local Kidsfest in April, enrolling several Cloverbuds during the event. In addition, the new 4-H educator conducted several presentations, held multiple craft and 4-H movie nights, planned a holiday craft fair and started a new afterschool group. This afterschool group is pivotal in reaching youth who previously have not been able to participate in 4-H. All of these efforts have resulted in new youth already requesting information about 4-H for 2015. Athens County 4-H also partners with the Athens County Dog Shelter, Athens County Farmer's Market, Tractor Supply Company and other community groups to promote 4-H and conduct community service projects. Finally, the 4-H Extension educator has partnered with several Ohio

University classes to promote nontraditional education and teach lesson-planning and programming.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- **New Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator:** In October, Athens County hired a new Agriculture and Natural Resources educator who hopes to vastly increase programming and work with local groups. Prior to this hiring, educators from Washington, Meigs and Hocking counties helped answer approximately 15 calls a week received by the Athens County office. The educators provided prompt calls and feedback, in addition to farm visits.
- **Soil Sampling:** Spending limited financial resources in agriculture to maximize returns is enhanced by soil testing, accurate interpretation of soil test results and implementing in a timely manner. The Athens County office sent away around 80 soil samples for evaluation. Reduction in fertilizer needs (especially phosphorus), too much manure application and insufficient lime application were the primary problems resolved by one-on-one evaluation and discussions.
- **Master Gardeners:** In 2014, 55 Master Gardeners (up from last year) shared the horticultural resources of The Ohio State University with the youth and adults of Athens County. The Athens Children Garden provides a learning laboratory for youth (nine classes with average attendance of 10 children) in summer educational classes, sponsored by the Athens Rec Center. Over 1,000 visitors asked questions of Master Gardeners at their booth at the Athens County Farmer's Market. In addition, two special programs on food safety and canning testing were held in collaboration with a regional Family and Consumer Sciences educator.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Ohio Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed):** The Ohio SNAP-Ed program provided 78 direct education classes on the topics of MyPlate, food shopping, dairy, and vegetables and fruits from October 2013 to September 2014. A total of 585 adult recipients of food assistance and eligible nonrecipients attended the classes. Participants were given the opportunity to apply the educational information presented during activities and a taste-test of healthy, low-cost foods. An additional 1,200 adults were reached with educational nutrition newsletters.

Athens County receives \$27,152 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.