

2014 County Highlights

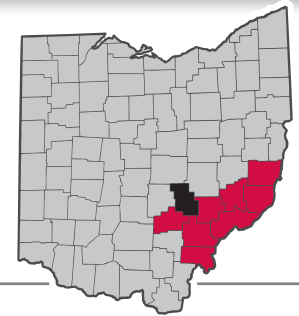


PERRY County

BUCKEYE HILLS EXTENSION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Successful Co-Parenting: Helping Children Cope with Divorce** is a court-mandated program for couples going through divorce or dissolution who have children aged 18 or younger. It focuses on the emotional process of divorce and on strengthening families during this transition. In 2014, 75 individuals participated. Evaluations showed 94 percent agreed or strongly agreed they learned new information; 96 percent agreed or strongly agreed they planned to use information learned; 92 percent agreed or strongly agreed they felt more prepared to co-parent; and 96 percent agreed or strongly agreed this program was helpful.
- **Successful Co-Parenting: Principles of Parenting** is a court-mandated program for nonmarried individuals petitioning for custody of their child or children. This series encompasses the following topics: the challenges of parenting, teaching responsibility, and punishment versus discipline. In 2014, 45 individuals participated. Evaluations showed 93 percent learned something new, and 79 percent planned to adopt one or more of the educational practices shared.
- Extension's **Live Healthy Live Well** program reached over 550 Perry County residents using social media through three six-week online wellness challenges. Twice-weekly emails encouraged respondents to increase their physical activity, improve their diet, purchase local foods and reduce stress. Evaluations confirmed 79 percent of participants adopted one or more of the recommended practices to reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases, and 95 percent maintained or lost weight. One participant reported, "By changing to fruits and vegetables (and by) walking every

day, I had less time for junk food and had lost five pounds after completing the challenge."

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Financial management skills make a difference in how families cope with unfavorable economic conditions—whether they are unemployed, underemployed or experiencing a temporary decrease in income. **Managing Your Money** is an online self-study course designed to assist consumers in improving their financial well-being through weekly e-communications on topics including savings, credit, debt reduction, budgeting, organizing financial records and net worth. Worksheets related to the topics are available to help participants track progress and apply the knowledge presented.

Pre- and post-surveys were used to gather data from 180 participants. When comparing participants' thoughts and behaviors pre- and post-assessment, 45 percent versus 82 percent used specific goals to guide their financial decisions; 43 percent versus 82 percent saved money toward a financial goal; 69 percent versus 80 percent knew where their money was spent; 54 percent versus 74 percent set aside money for emergencies; 81 percent versus 92 percent knew how much debt they had; 67 percent versus 79 percent were working to reduce debt; 56 percent versus 74 percent were reducing spending to match their income; 41 percent versus 71 percent knew their net worth; and 62 percent versus 84 percent could quickly find their financial records. In addition, 97 percent of all program participants



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planned to use the information learned and felt confident to make the recommended changes, and 89 percent planned to make a change within the next three months.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Thirty-eight local producers who currently hold a private pesticide applicators license attended **Pesticide Applicator Recertification**. As a result, 89 percent have improved personal safety practices, improved practices to protect the environment, improved pesticide handling practices and are better informed about compliance and environmental regulations. In addition, 92 percent have increased the efficiency of applications.
- Thirty-four emergency responders and grain producers attended the **Agriculture Emergency Responder Grain Bin Rescue Program**. Participants gained instruction and hands-on experience on proper rescue procedures. Emergency responders received four hours of continuing education credits.
- Perry County **Master Gardeners** conducted youth gardening programs, hosted a plant sale and spoke at invited functions. Volunteers also led programs working with community gardens and provided public horticulture education. Perry County Master Gardeners' eighth annual, two-day Home and Garden Show highlighted over 34 local businesses ranging from home construction to outdoor landscaping.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Positive role models are crucial to the development of young children. Enter **4-H Camp Counselors**. Perry County 4-H prepares counselors through a variety of training opportunities at the county and state levels. In Perry County, 36 4-H teens were selected through a "hiring" process. These teens completed training while building workforce and life skills such as teamwork, communication, leadership and professionalism. Counselors were then responsible for supervising and instructing 167 youth, ages 8–13, throughout a five-day, four-night camp. While serving in this role, each of the 36 teens volunteered a minimum of 64 hours. Based on Ohio's minimum wage, this means an estimated \$16,704 worth of time was donated to Perry County 4-H.
- *My Hands to Larger Service* is not just a statement in the 4-H pledge, but a tenet of the 4-H program. The Perry County 4-H youth development educator wrote and received an **Ohio 4-H Foundation grant** for "My Hands to Larger Service." The grant provided \$150 mini-grants to 21 teens in 14 counties, including Perry. These mini-grants served as start-up funds to conduct service projects, including

beautification projects, making blankets, food drives and special programs for youth, veterans, and the elderly. Mini-grant recipients were required to gather a crew to assist in completing the project, and many sought additional funds and resources locally to expand their projects' reach. Combined, these projects made an immediate impact on thousands, and many will continue to have a lasting impact for years to come. The unintentional impact of this project was that recipients gained life skills such as grant-writing, budgeting and money management, program-planning and follow-through, networking and identifying stakeholders, communication, and teamwork and leadership.

- With an Ohio law in place banning texting while driving, **4-H CARTEENS** can impact positive decision-making amongst their peers. CARTEENS is a peer-taught program for first-time juvenile traffic offenders. The program focuses on distracted driving (including texting), driving under the influence, and Ohio laws and their consequences. This year, 78 Perry County teens along with their parent/guardian were sentenced to attend this two-hour program. In post-program evaluation, 85 percent of teens and 93 percent of parents rated the overall CARTEENS program as good or excellent. Fifty-eight percent of participants indicated positive change when asked if they would think more about their driving behavior after participating in CARTEENS, and 83 percent of parents agreed that the program will help teens be safer drivers.