

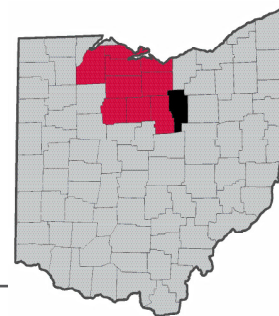
2015 County Highlights

Ashland County

Erie Basin Extension Education and Research Area

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ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Ashland County offered 14 Quality Assurance Training sessions for county youth. The program educated youth on the humane care and handling of livestock, appropriate recordkeeping practices and proper production methods. Almost 500 youth attended these trainings in order to be able to show their market animal at the county fair. Of those surveyed, 98 percent indicated they learned something new, and 95 percent could describe one good production practice they were going to focus on for the year. All youth attending took part in an end-of-session, Jeopardy-like quiz game to test their knowledge of what they had learned. Youth also were instructed on how to properly complete a Drug Use Notification Form. The Senior Fair Board reported 100 percent compliance with this mandatory paperwork at the county fair.
- Six youth enrolled in this year's Tractor Safety Certification program. This training was done as a home study course this year in order to accommodate the large number of youth who wanted to complete this class but did not have open evening times for class meetings. Successful completion of this course enables youth who are 14 and 15 years old to use tractor equipment while working for area farmers. All six young people passed both their written and driving tests and obtained their certification.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- One hundred seventy-nine adult volunteers provided leadership to 30 4-H Clubs and 11 4-H subject matter committees, serving over 760 traditional club members this past year. According to *The Independent Sector Report*, the value these volunteers brought to Ashland County was over \$412,900. Thirty new volunteers were recruited and 98 percent of all volunteers attended a two-hour training which included instruction on recognition and prevention of child abuse and child neglect to remain certified.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) serviced 182 adult participants and had 1,191 direct contacts in 102 classes. Regular classes are conducted at Job and Family Services, Salvation Army, Tri-County Preschool, Head Start in Ashland and Sullivan, Mill Run Place, Essex House, Good Shepherd, and DR Services. All of these sites have requested education on a monthly and sometimes biweekly basis. Interactive classes are offered in the areas of nutrition, physical activity and food resource management. Overall, program participants reported they are increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, as well as making better choices about economizing their food dollars. One hundred percent of participants reported they were somewhat or very confident that they could make at least one positive change in their lifestyle as a result of their participation in this program.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- A "My Hands to Larger Service" grant worth \$150 was received from the Ohio 4-H Foundation for a county 4-H member to use with a community service project. The Cloverbud Reading Adventures project was headed by a junior leader who designed a six-session reading and activity program for 5- to 8-year-old members. At the end of each session, the children could pick out one or more free, age-appropriate reading books to keep. The program attracted dozens of children who received many of the more than 250 purchased and donated books. As a result of this grant opportunity, the Junior Leader is writing a curriculum to be shared with other teens across the state.
- Fifteen 5- to 8-year-olds participated in the five-session Cloverbots program this past spring. Three volunteer coaches led the groups through the LEGO Wonderful Water Challenge using simple LEGO building parts. Group members learned about and explored the properties of water, and studied the ways we use water and how it impacts our lives every day. The groups then designed a



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LEGO representation, illustrating some aspect of what they learned. Two teams of six members each participated in the Ohio 4-H Cloverbot Challenge held in May at the Ohio 4-H Center in Columbus.

- In July, 119 youth attended 4-H Junior Camp, a five-day, four-night event. Teens were responsible for planning and conducting the camp under the guidance of 12 adult staff members. Nineteen youth counselors received a minimum of 24 hours of training and, in turn, donated more than 150 hours of their time to the younger members. Ninety-five percent of the camp counselors said they learned how to better take care of emergencies at camp and how to recognize and understand bullying, and 100 percent could name at least two ways to successfully handle bullying at camp.
- Twelve adult volunteers and two Junior Leaders retained their state certification in seven shooting sports disciplines. A countywide club met weekly from January through April to provide youth with the opportunity to learn shooting sports in a safe and educational manner. Over 80 members took part in this program, and most of them plan to enroll in additional shooting sports opportunities in 2016. Currently, we have over 100 youth interested in joining for the fourth year of the club.
- Forty-six children in grades 3–5 attended one of three science camps held in 2015. Participant comments included, “I love doing experiments” and “I got to be like a real scientist.” Forty-three children led by eight trained counselors attended 4-H Cloverbud Day Camp, an eight-hour, two-day experience for youth ages 5 and in kindergarten through age 8. This year’s theme was “Fitness is Fun” and included active carnival games, and preparing and eating healthy snacks.
- Thirty-three boys and girls took part in one of two Kids’ Cooking Schools put on by the Ashland County 4-H Food and Fashion Board. This year’s theme was “Iron Chef,” and the 15 board members assisted the youngsters with developing a main dish, side dish, dessert and drink from a surprise list of ingredients. Community “celebrity” judges recognized the best foods made in each category. The members and teachers enjoyed this project so much that the theme will be repeated next year.
- Over 50 first-time juvenile traffic offenders attended a 4-H CARTEENS program in 2015. The sessions are led by trained teen and adult instructors, state troopers and guest speakers including EMTs and insurance agents. Teen participant comments included, “I liked learning the traffic laws again because it refreshes your memory” and “The trooper sharing experiences (was) interesting.”
- A total of 23 Junior Fair Board members provided leadership for a successful 2015 Ashland County Junior Fair. During the year, members spent time learning how to work better as a team, how to speak in front of groups, how to organize events, and proper ways of interacting with the public when answering questions or handling complaints. The group instituted several new youth activities at the fair this year which were very well received by the community.

Ashland County receives \$42,722 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.