

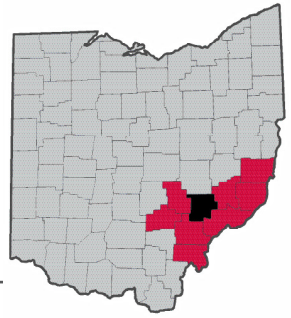
2015 County Highlights

Morgan County

Buckeye Hills Extension Education and Research Area

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Successful Co-Parenting is a court-mandated program for couples going through a divorce or a dissolution with children ages 18 or younger. The program focuses on providing parents with the information, skills and techniques needed to reduce the negative impact of separation/divorce on their children. It also promotes positive adjustment during the process. Evaluations showed that 80 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed they learned new information, planned to use the information and felt more prepared to co-parent.
- Each year, residents in our county are seriously injured or killed around equipment. In the spring, six farm safety presentations were made to over 800 youth in the county. These programs addressed the dangers of farm equipment, ponds and other bodies of water, grain handling, and livestock. In June, a presentation taught 90 adults how to safely handle animals around the farm, including ways to prevent farmers from getting injured. During the past year, six ATV presentations and demonstrations were made to 146 elementary students. The sessions taught proper age and safety equipment requirements and how to safely ride and operate the equipment. The goals of these programs are to educate residents about the dangers of farm and recreational equipment, and to assist residents in thinking about their safety prior to using such equipment.
- The Winding Road brand is the result of a regional approach to economic development based on the potential benefits of communities knowing how to effectively build and leverage their resources for sustainable and experiential tourism development. Morgan County Extension is part of a team that includes representatives from area public lands, educational institutions, government, the arts, businesses and the nonprofit sector. The team works to build a brand that is focused on the natural, historic and cultural assets that are common to the identified five-county region. This collaboration has produced The Winding Road Tour Guide, has offered two National Association of Interpreters trainings, and has held two workshops on regional branding strategies and sustainable development. Three members of the team, including Morgan County Extension, will be presenting in December at the 2015 Gateway Communities Workshop in Berea, Kentucky.
- One of the results of a Hometown Competitiveness grant project, sponsored by the Morgan County Development Office and the USDA, was that local students were not really familiar with their local history and, as a result, did not feel a close connection to the county nor see any reason to stay in the area following high school or college. With this in mind the Morgan County Commissioners Development Office, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Morgan County Extension organized Morgan County Heritage Day: Sharing Our Roots. The one-day festival featured programs by the historical society, the genealogy society, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Rural Action, the local library, and American Electric Power along with area vendors and businesses each highlighting, in some way, a piece of Morgan County heritage. An area scavenger hunt centered around historical markers reinforced efforts to focus on local history. Local youth from 4-H Clubs, the Key Club, and scout groups were solicited as volunteers to assist in the day's activities. We anticipate that this will become an annual event.
- Morgan County Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) provided nutrition education to eligible SNAP clients. Participants learned ways to make their money go further while eating healthful, tasty food. Nutrition education was also provided to eligible preschool through elementary school students through the Balance My Day curriculum. The Balance My Day curriculum is quality, evidence-based programming that aligns with common core state standards. This curriculum was used to provide interactive, hands-on lessons that integrated nutrition and physical activity knowledge with reading, writing, mathematics and science.



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- A total of 2,090 direct contacts were made through SNAP-Ed. Of the 2,090 direct contacts, 67 percent of participants reported that they plan to make at least one positive change in their household or lifestyle. All of the participants reported that they are confident that they can use basic cooking skills such as following a recipe or measuring out ingredients. Also, 100 percent reported that they can buy healthy food for their family on a budget. These efforts were made possible through collaboration with The Department of Job and Family Services, Morgan Local School District, Kate Love Simpson Library, Washington-Morgan Community Action Head Start, Six County, Inc., and Morgan Metropolitan Housing Authority.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- A total of 579 youth participated in 24 organized community clubs in Morgan County 4-H. They learned to be good citizens and to value and practice service to others. Fifty-four caring adults worked hard to establish a positive relationship with the youth and to have a welcoming, safe environment for those youth to make decisions, envision their future, and determine and establish a plan to implement goals. Through 4-H membership and 4-H project completion, these youth developed communication, problem-solving, leadership and interviewing skills.
- A traffic safety program with the potential to impact positive decision making of teen drivers, 4-H CARTEENS is peer-taught to first-time juvenile traffic offenders and one parent/guardian. The program focuses on distracted driving (including texting), seat belt use, driving under the influence, and Ohio traffic laws and consequences. In post-program evaluations, 75 percent of teens and 95 percent of parents rated the overall CARTEENS program as good or excellent. Sixty-five percent of teen participants indicated in a survey that they were likely to change their driving habits following the program.

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Each year, Morgan County Extension plans a Field Day. In August, over 150 people attended the meeting at Clemens Family Farms. The Field Day included sprayer calibration techniques and demonstrations, a tour of livestock handling facilities, hay storage techniques, and water system techniques for livestock. There were also presentations on marketing livestock, feeding options and financial management to help producers become more competitive in a challenging environment.

- Morgan County is in the Appalachian foothills, making most of the land suitable for forest or forage cover. Managing the land can improve utilization for livestock and wildlife, and improve profitability for farmers and landowners. Four programs were provided to educate clientele about managing invasive plants that can affect the quality and productivity of land in this region. Clientele were taught how to identify, manage and control invasive plants through cultural, biological and chemical options.

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- In February, 24 producers attended Pesticide Applicator Recertification, which is required every three years. As a result of these classes, 100 percent have improved personal safety and 100 percent have improved practices to protect the environment. In addition, 18 junior and senior FFA students attended two classes on pesticide training and were tested to receive a license. Those with a license can develop broader job responsibilities, enhanced resumes, and a greater understanding of the effects of pesticides, and how to use them in a safe and judicious manner.

Morgan County receives \$29,919 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension's local-state-federal partnership.