

# 2015 County Highlights

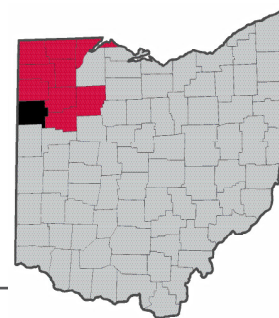
## Van Wert County

### Maumee Valley Extension Education and Research Area

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#### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Recipients of the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) learn how to stretch their food dollars through classes offered by OSU Extension. Program assistants offer interactive classes on diet quality, physical activity, food safety and food resource management. In 2015, the Van Wert County SNAP-Ed program provided education programs to 1,844 participants at local schools and agencies. Participants learned how to prepare nutritious meals and snacks, stretch their food dollars and incorporate physical activity into their day. Of the 1,844 participants, 1,251 were youth and teens from local schools and the YWCA's Summer Food Program.

#### ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Van Wert Entrepreneur Development Council held the Fourth Annual Business Plan Challenge, awarding more than \$4,000 to four new businesses.
- Van Wert County Extension participated in the first OhioMeansJobs Reverse Job Fair in Van Wert County. Twenty-eight job seekers attended the fair, and 13 found jobs as a result of the businesses with which they met.
- Van Wert's 1,600-acre Mega Site was JRS certified in April 2015. The Site is currently available for development.
- Van Wert County Extension developed a marketing video focusing on the Mega Site and the utilities and infrastructure in place for a new industrial manufacturing facility.
- The Van Wert City Revolving Loan Fund loaned more than \$252,000 to four new businesses and one expanding business. The loans helped with building and equipment purchases, minor interior remodels and capital expenses.
- AEP Ohio granted \$10,000 to create and implement a marketing and business development plan focused on the Mega Site with effects rippling to the Vision and Van Wert Industrial Parks.

- Van Wert County Extension participated in AEP's Community and Economic Development Academy (CEDA). They met with site consultants to conduct a mock site visit, and they submitted practice RFIs. They also got feedback on what to do to better market Van Wert County. The program ended with a \$10,000 award to execute the implementation plan created from the consultants' feedback.
- Elmco Engineering broke ground on a \$1 million facility expansion. The expansion will add 15,000 square feet, and it will create 10 new jobs and more than \$500,000 in payroll.
- Van Wert County Extension conducted a three-hour Starting Right for the Student program with over 75 Van Wert High School seniors. The program offered information on ways for students to start their own business after high school graduation.
- Van Wert County Extension participated in a social media workshop that trained five small business owners on the use of social media marketing.
- Van Wert County Extension conducted a countywide needs assessment, which showed that employment and economic growth was the most important issue for the next 20 years.
- Van Wert County's unemployment rate reached its lowest point, 3.6 percent, since the 1990s in August 2015.

#### PREPARING YOUTH FOR SUCCESS

- Five hundred Van Wert County youth are members of Cloverbuds of Van Wert County. Youth take part in 25 local clubs focused on social skill development, community service and personal project work in over 200 different 4-H projects. Members indicate 4-H has had a major impact in their lives:
  - "Ohio 4-H has made me responsible through the dependence of animals on me, which has helped develop my time management skills. The responsibility of feeding the animals twice a day and walking, bathing, and grooming the animals has shown me how to manage my



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time wisely and has shown me what it is like to work hard. It has also given me interview skills that I have already used and will continue to use throughout my lifetime.”

- “Through activities sponsored by 4-H, I have made a countless number of friendships that will last a lifetime. Engaging in livestock projects has taught me life lessons such as responsibility and determination, and 4-H has also given me the opportunities to volunteer and help out my community. If it wasn’t for my involvement throughout the last several years in 4-H, I would not be the person I am today.”
- Approximately 120 youth campers, teen camp counselors and adult volunteers developed skills at the Van Wert County 4-H Camp while canoeing, playing sports and putting on skits for their peers.
- One hundred fifty-three youth participated in livestock Quality Assurance Training in 2015. Topics included transmitting diseases, calculating dosages, feed handling and processing, and Drug Use Notification Forms. There were zero reported cases of drug residue at the 2015 Junior Fair market livestock program and only one returned Drug Use Notification Form.
- More than 150 youth were schooled through 4-H CARTEENS in 2015. CARTEENS focuses on driving safety for first-time traffic offenders. Three youth assisted in facilitating sessions with help from the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

## ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Agronomic research has had a significant public return on investment. Crop and livestock research coupled with Extension education has generated greater than a 40 percent rate of return on investment. Agronomic studies carried out in Van Wert County in 2015 included the following: western bean cutworm survey; wheat headscab disease survey; and data collection on the impact of western corn rootworm on corn production after the introduction of rootworm-resistant corn hybrids. An agriculture and natural resources student assistant was hired for the summer to help with conducting the field surveys and research. Her position was supported with a \$5,000 grant from the Van Wert County Foundation. In total, the ag research and surveys were supported by grants totaling \$14,500 to cover costs of the projects.
- Master Gardener Volunteers completed more than 400 hours of service to the community in a variety of programs. This equates to \$7,548 worth of services provided to Van Wert County residents. The Master Gardener Volunteers also teamed up with 4-H Clubs interested in gardening to teach youth about plants, vegetable gardening, plant health issues and integrated pest management. A new class of 10 Master Gardener Volunteer interns received their training in spring 2015 to further the efforts of the current Master Gardener Volunteers.
- Fifty-six farmers and small business persons undertook the three-hour Pesticide Applicator Recertification program in 2015. Participants gained information about pesticide use, including the proper use of fumigants and protection of livestock buildings from destructive insects.
- One hundred twenty-six farmers received Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training in 2015. This training is in response to the phosphorus water quality issues that have recently come to light with the harmful algal blooms that have damaged tourism and safe drinking water quality in Lake Erie and other bodies of water in Ohio. The training will lead to changes in practices and changes in attitudes.
- Eight hundred twenty-one youth received agriculture and natural resource training from the OSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources educator in three educational programs: More Than Just Cows and Plows; Natural Resources Fourth Grade Field Day; and Ohio’s Experience With Emerald Ash Borer (presented to biology classes at Van Wert City High School). These educational programs met STEM requirements and introduced new subject matter to youth.
- The OSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources educator is the full-time, lead editor of the Buckeye Yard and Garden Line (BYGL) newsletter. BYGL is delivered via email to 2,580 subscribers every Thursday afternoon. The number of people who directly received all or parts of the BYGL each week from BYGL subscribers in 2015 was 147,670.

**Van Wert County receives \$47,330 in federal funding for nutrition education for low-income people, thanks to Extension’s local-state-federal partnership.**