



## NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - STATEWIDE IMPACTS

Week Ending 4/3/09

- ◆ Tourism Extension at NC State University is proud to announce the launch of their new website! The Tourism Extension website is designed to benefit NC Cooperative Extension Agents and other professionals working throughout North Carolina. The overall purpose of the website is to provide useful information on a variety of tourism-related topics, to identify additional resources, and to provide a forum to share current news and information related to tourism and Extension within North Carolina and beyond. Be sure to save this site in your favorites and visit often as new information and resources will be added on a regular basis. **Visit the new Tourism Extension website at <http://www.ncsu.edu/tourismextension/>.**
- ◆ Cooperative Extension 4-H has worked diligently with the Cherokee Preservation Foundation to identify leadership needs in youth and adults through a lengthy strategic planning process. Leadership needs were identified by convening of all youth serving agencies in the community and by surveying community members. **Cherokee Reservation Cooperative Extension then submitted a grant which was funded for \$141,000.** This grant supports the hiring of a full-time Youth Council Program Manager, as well as funding to support various leadership activities. During 2008, this program manager was hired and directly supervised by the 4-H program. The Cherokee Youth Council has gained strength and recognition within the community and has been identified as a major leader in environmental projects. The Youth Council went before Tribal Council and became officially recognized as a youth serving entity. The Cherokee Youth Council has the full support of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
- ◆ Diversification of farming enterprises is important for today's farmers to help minimize the effects of business cycles. With the continued concerns of contaminated foods played out in the news media, establishing a quality local food system is desired. The Agricultural Agent in Guilford County worked with two farmers to establish strawberry operations. **Combined, the impact was in excess of \$80,000 of additional gross income. Additionally, it helped to attract customers for their ongoing local produce sales and increased those sales by a combined \$20,000. Fresh, quality, local, sustainable food was provided to the local citizens and benefited these growers in excess of \$100,000.**
- ◆ Greenway trail systems provide healthy recreation, community links, and economic development opportunities, while protecting water quality and open space. In 2008, NC Cooperative Extension worked with *Gaston 2012* to initiate a county-wide trail planning effort. Cooperative Extension helped organize and facilitate 3 workshops with over 100 citizens to gain input into Gaston County's participation in the regional *Carolina Thread Trail*. Cooperative Extension also educated 80 elected officials at local commissioner meetings and an Extension-sponsored elected officials workshop. **As a result, *Gaston 2012* received a \$50,000 greenway planning grant, the Thread Trail plan in Gaston County was completed, and local communities are in the process of adopting the trail plan.**
- ◆ In Nash County, 73% of the county's residents are overweight or obese according to 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Data. Obesity contributes to many health-related conditions and potentially premature death for Nash County employees. Collectively, NC Cooperative Extension, Nash County Health Department and the Wellness Coordinator of Nash County addressed this problem for Nash County employees. The educational program *Families Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less* provided 14 classes, instructing participants on healthy eating habits that would help them achieve and maintain their goal weight. Participant surveys indicated they are now more physically active, eating smarter and healthier. Participants are consuming appropriately sized portions as a result of the program. **A total of 88 pounds was lost by nine individuals, contributing to healthier Nash County employees.**

- ◆ Although NC Cooperative Extension in Jackson County didn't host a "Biggest Loser" contest, there were some successful results from five series of *Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less* classes. Approximately 40 people completed the 3-4 month program with a majority of the participants increasing their knowledge of the importance of consuming more fruits and vegetables and whole grains, eating more meals at home, consuming appropriate portion sizes, and increasing their physical activity. **One-half of them saw a decrease in their blood pressure and waist circumference. Nearly 350 pounds was the collective weight loss for the participants.**
  
- ◆ Affordable housing has become a crisis in this country. The sub-prime housing market debacle and collapse demonstrates the need for affordable home ownership opportunities for low to moderate income citizens. To address the issues of affordability and home ownership opportunity, the Durham County Family & Consumer Science Agent worked with the Durham Housing Authority to provide financial literacy and planning classes to citizens seeking to qualify for first-time home buyer funds available through H.U.D. **After diligently completing the series of Home Buyer Workshops, 20 Durham residents qualified for new home loans totaling \$1,800,000, with 7 home buyers successfully closing on new home loans totaling about \$630,000.**
  
- ◆ Senior citizens and others on fixed incomes struggle to pay for needed medicines. To help Medicare beneficiaries find solutions to acquiring affordable medications, Durham Extension SHIIP (Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program) volunteers consulted with 341 citizens about choosing appropriate Medicare drug plans that would meet their individual needs. **Not only did Medicare beneficiaries who were counseled find applicable drug plans, the plans selected saved an aggregate amount of about \$170,500 in excess drug costs for Medicare recipients.**
  
- ◆ The current economic status makes it increasingly difficult for county 4-H programs to provide programming to families at little or no cost. Low income families are unable to utilize the educational programs available because of financial restraints. Each year, the Children's Trust Endowment Fund awards grants to support youth programming that will enhance life skills and personal growth. **In 2008, the Endowment awarded \$2,400 to Ashe County 4-H, who submitted three grant proposals. The Ashe County Friends of Agriculture received \$1,300 to host a hands-on fitting and showmanship-clinic for youth. 4-H Ashe Youth Connection was awarded \$800 to host a health camp (in collaboration with Ashe Memorial Hospital, Ashe County High School and Mountain Hearts). The Ashe County 4-H Home School Club received \$400 to develop landscaping at Ashe Family Central. These grant dollars made it possible for youth to participate in opportunities that might not have otherwise been possible.**
  
- ◆ Rising energy costs, cutbacks in flock placement numbers and increased down time are decreasing profits for North Carolina's poultry producers. NC Cooperative Extension partnered with an agriculture lighting company to conduct a long-term trial of new dimmable compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) in commercial poultry houses. In partnership with *Mountaire*, NC Cooperative Extension in Union County selected a typical grower with 4 houses and replaced 2 of his houses' bulbs with the CFLs. In addition, we installed meters on light circuits to accurately measure the reduction in power. **So far, the grower has reduced power usage approximately 1,300 KW hours per house for each flock, resulting in over a \$100 savings per flock at \$.08 per KW hour, or a total savings of \$2,000 per year for the farm.** Bird weights were taken from each house and flock to show there is no effect on growth and performance. This success will encourage others to switch to these bulbs.

- ◆ The Person County 4-H Program understands the importance of youth developing leadership. Through involvement in our County Council, participating in and planning numerous community service activities and attending a variety of trainings at the county, district and state levels, our youth have been increasing their life skills in order to help make them competent, contributing members of society. **This year, we are proud to announce that through one 4-Hers hard work and dedication to the 4-H program by receiving Emerald Level in the Ambassador program, winning a Gold Medal at the State Presentations contest, running for a district office, being inducted into the NC 4-H Honor Club and serving on our United Way Board, she was accepted to Duke University.**
- ◆ In Scotland County, the recent recession has included an increase in both unemployment numbers and the number of food stamps being issued. Families have identified saving money on food purchases as a high priority need. Based on this need, Scotland County Cooperative Extension's Adult EFNEP (Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program) provided classes on saving money on food purchases. Collaborating with the Department of Social Service's Work First Program, EFNEP presented 2 programs: *Get the Best for Less* and *Shop for Value, Check the Facts*. Classes focused on saving money, using coupons, creating a grocery list and how to understand food labels. **A follow-up survey showed 80% of participants are now using grocery lists, coupons and sales ads. One client reported a grocery savings of \$50 per week, which would amount to an annual savings of \$2,600.**
- ◆ Researchers suggest that obesity increases a person's risk for chronic illnesses. Nash County ranks number one having 21% of children 12-18 being overweight. *Friends Unraveling Nutrition* was created for students who struggle with overweight problems. NC Cooperative Extension, the Nash County Health Department and Nash-Rocky Mount Schools teamed together to teach students how to choose healthy foods when eating out, healthy snacking and the importance of physical activity. **According to a pre and post survey from participating elementary students, 73% reported improved health habits, 45% lost 1-4½ pounds, 36 lowered blood pressure to a normal range, 82% reported being more physically active, and 62% had improved concentration and better grades. All participated in HOT FEET, walking one mile a day totaling 125 miles walked. Coopers Elementary was cited in the September 2008 issue of *Health Magazine* as being one of America's Healthiest Schools.**
- ◆ According to the NC Standard Course of Study objectives, second graders are required to learn the life cycle of a living animal and will be tested on their knowledge at the end of the year. Teachers have limited resources and recognize NC Cooperative Extension and Carteret County 4-H as a reliable and valued resource of school enrichment. 4-H supplies incubators and eggs to all schools, a savings of \$3,265. Students are responsible for caring for the eggs while learning the life cycle of a chicken beginning with the embryo, ending with the baby chick. Using the 4-H Embryology curriculum, teachers incorporate math, science and language arts in the embryology project. **This year, 92% of the students were able to identify the stages of growth, development and hatching process, and care for the baby chicks. According to the teachers, the hands-on participation taught responsibility and increased test scores.**
- ◆ Fire Ants are a recent introduction to Gaston County and are proving to be a formidable pest with limited options of control for sensitive areas like athletic fields and schools, where chemical pesticides must be selected and applied carefully to limit adverse reactions. Twenty-eight pesticide applicators attended a fire ant control workshop and pesticide recertification event presented by the Horticulture Agent. Two applicators who work at a Gaston County Public school realized they had been using a fire ant insecticide in a labeled manner that was highly inefficient compared with the suggestions of the Horticulture Agent. Using the same product in a different (though still labeled and legal) manner resulted in product usage and staff time devoted to application being reduced by 90% each. **This constitutes a savings of over \$10,000 in labor and materials, simply by changing the way a product is applied without reducing its effectiveness.**