4-H Volunteers Fill Void to Lead Youth

Due to the recent retirement of the 4-H Agent in Union County many of the 4-H clubs questioned the direction they would head. The 4-H Agent was very much part of the clubs and helped to oversee their success. Who would become the leaders and organize the clubs for the youth. Luckily, all of the active 4-H clubs had parents that were willing to see the clubs succeed. They stepped up to become the volunteer leaders. They schedule the meetings and plan the program. This has led to all of the following clubs remaining active for the 4-H youth:

- 4-H Rabbit Club
- 4-H Poultry Club
- 4-H Baking Buddies
- 4-H Livestock Club
- 4-H Horse Club
- 4-H Dog Club

Master Gardeners

The educational demand for horticulture related information has become more prevalent in recent years. The Union County Extension Office has offered Master Gardener classes for several years. Over 100 participants have completed the program in Union County. These participants then volunteer up to 40 hours or more back to the community. In 2010 a class of 16 graduated from the program. Many of these graduates go on to join the Union County Master Gardener Association (UCMGA).

Several years ago the UCMGA became involved in the Flower Show at the Union County Agricultural Fair. The show, which works with The Garden Clubs of Union County, put on a flower show during the week of the fair, that is a Small-Standard Flower Show that conforms in it’s entirely with the rules of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. that are set forth in “Handbook for Flower Shows”.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Cooperative Extension Service is to provide sound, scientifically based information to South Carolinians and help them use that information to improve the quality of their lives.
Clemson Extension Vital To Agricultural Fair

Union County Clemson Extension joined the Union County Agricultural Fair board in celebrating the success of their 102nd Agricultural Fair. In spite of one of the worst economic times in recent history, and one of the highest unemployment rates in the state, Union County residents and visitors from surrounding counties turned out in record numbers. Union County has one of only a few true agricultural fairs remaining in the state. Sixty-eight exhibitors placed locally grown crops on exhibit, while many others brought in canned goods, sewing, quilting, and baked products. 4-H and youth livestock shows were held each night, including beef (44 exhibitors, from 6 counties, 99 head), dairy (17 exhibitors, from 6 counties, 68 head), goats (43 exhibitors, 10 counties, 54 head), lambs (14 exhibitors, 3 counties 20 head), and horses (14 Exhbitors, in 10 classes), while poultry (157 chickens) and rabbit (12 exhibitors, 20 rabbits) entries remained on exhibit throughout the week.

Homeowners Learn Ways to Protect their Homes From Wildfire

Clemson Extension has been working with a national program to help educate homeowners on how they can protect their homes from wildfires. The Firewise Program teaches homeowners how to protect their homes. Currently educational programs are being conducted that reach out to homeowners. These programs stress changes in landscaping around the home, house construction material, and defensible space. While there is not a sure method to protect your home from wildfire, you can increase your home’s chance of survival. For more information on creating a Firewise home you can visit www.firewise.org.

Hop, Skip, and a Jump.

4-H and the South Carolina Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered together during the summer to offer Veggie Olympics during Camp Clover Bud. Camp Clover Bud is a 4-H summer camp offered to children ages 5-8. Veggie Olympics offers children the opportunity to learn about food and nutrition while actively being involved in activities. A Few Events during the Veggie Olympics included; a potato sack race, fruit loop (a hula hoop game), and a watermelon seed spitting contest. Children learned about nutrition and exercise while having fun during the activities.
Union County Extension Advisory Council Plays Integral Part in Obtaining Funding for Two Part-Time Positions.

On September 15, 2010, Union County Clemson Extension Office had three full time employees retire due to the voluntary retirement program. The administrative assistant, the 4-H coordinator/Agent, and the Livestock/Horticulture Agent positions were left vacant. Union County was severely impacted by the retirement of these three positions. Fortunately, Clemson rehired the Livestock position to cover several counties that had been left without an agent. Unfortunately, due to restructuring and inadequate funding the 4-H position and administrative position could not be refilled. The Union County Extension Advisory Council began looking for answers to fill such a vital role in the community. They formulated a proposal to send to County Council to fill those two positions on a part-time basis. With the help of the County Supervisor and County Council, those positions were approved in November (to be filled in December). Thanks to the hard work of the Advisory Council and cooperation of the County Supervisor and County Council, citizens of Union County should see minimal change in the operations and benefits of the Union County Clemson Extension Office.

5K Day at the Union County Fair

For those not familiar with 5K Day at the Fair, this is a yearly event that is organized through the Union County Clemson Extension Office and partnered with the Union County Fair Association. It reaches over 600 children a year and has been in existence for 10 plus years. In 2005, the Union County Fair won a Fair Program Award from the South Carolina Association of Fairs for the 5K Day program. Kindergarten students from across the county take a field trip during school to learn about the agricultural aspect of the County Fair. Ten minute stations are set up in the barns for classes to rotate through to teach children about beef cattle, poultry, goats, horses, dairy cattle, and agronomic crops (corn, cotton, soybeans, peanuts, and sorghum).

Conclusion of Water Quality Grants leads to Establishment of Enoree Watershed Association

In 2009, Clemson Extension wrapped up two 319 water quality grants that encompassed Laurens, Spartanburg, and Union County. During the grant cycle, Extension held committee meetings to aid in the direction of programming for the education component of the grant. With the completion of the grant, many committee members did not want to see programs of water quality decline due to lack of funding or support. The committee reorganized to form the Enoree Watershed Association. The Association is currently made of up of members from the U.S. Forest Service, Clemson Extension, S.C. Department of Environmental Control, Upstate Forever, City of Clinton and numerous others. The mission of the Enoree River Watershed Association is to form a partnership among diverse community interests to raise awareness of the economic, agricultural, ecological, and recreational importance of the river; and to restore the Enoree River system to the highest practical level of environmental quality.
Clemson Extension to Restructure

Clemson Extension is moving to multi-county service centers to manage state funding cuts of almost 50 percent over the last two years. All county offices will remain open; but some counties may not have a full-time administrative assistant.

A voluntary retirement/separation program this summer left 22 counties without administrative staff. To minimize inconvenience to clients, staff in adjacent county offices will provide services.

In counties without a full-time administrative assistant, agents or volunteers will staff the county office during operating hours, which may be reduced. All telephone calls will be answered from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays, by staff in adjacent counties.

Staff in the adjacent county offices also will assist clients with soil samples, problem plant samples and requests for fact sheets or other information.

The goal is to implement the new structure by the end of October. Actual dates will vary depending on when equipment can be installed to transfer telephone calls to the nearest service center.

Because this is a transition that will not happen immediately, Extension administrators are seeking ways to provide basic support until the service centers are operational.

Service and Business Center breakdown can be found at www.clemson.edu/extension/

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<tr>
<td><strong>Jannie Gist</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Education Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jgist@clemson.edu">jgist@clemson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>864-427-6259 Ext: 116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jeff Fellers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Extension Agent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry/Natural Resources</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fellers@clemson.edu">fellers@clemson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>864-427-6259 Ext: 115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mike Loveless</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Extension Agent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mvlvss@clemson.edu">mvlvss@clemson.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>864-427-6259 Ext: 111</td>
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