



Huron County

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2008 County Highlights

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- The Huron County Development Council submitted a grant to the Ohio Department of Development on behalf of Huron and Erie County Commissioners, with support from cities and villages, township trustees, development corporations and chambers, a community college, and local career center. The \$80,000 grant was awarded in October to conduct a feasibility study to determine the true potential and economic effects of a regional airport by constructing a runway at the NASA Plumbrook Station in Sandusky. The study will explore how to manage a regional entity, coordinate economic development partners, and attract new businesses that desire proximity to the NASA Station.
- The Huron County Development Council is part of a nine-county region that was awarded a Training Workers to Advance Grant. The expected outcomes of the project include increased skills and earnings for individuals as well as empowerment for advanced manufacturing employers to remain competitive. Three companies in Huron County submitted and were approved for seven training proposals, that when completed will have provided 556 hours of training for 137 employees. The grant has supplied \$49,432 of the training dollars, which will be matched by \$16,287 from the employers. Several other companies in Huron County are considering requests, and will receive immediate consideration as soon as their applications are received.

Strengthening Families and Communities

- **Master Gardener Volunteer Program**—Because of economic struggles within our county, the Master Gardeners of Huron County are more valuable to the community than ever before. Huron County has 15 newly trained Master Gardener Volunteer candidates to join our 51 current volunteers. Our group anticipates it will donate over 2,000 volunteer hours in the coming year with a monetary value to the community of nearly \$40,000 and a boost to the morale of this area that cannot be measured in dollars and cents. Many gardens, including our County Administration Building, have been beautified by this wonderful group of people. In the future, Master Gardeners hope to provide more educational programming for the public in addition to their gardening duties.
- **Dining With Diabetes**—Diabetes is the 6th leading cause of death in Ohio and approximately 677,184

Ohioans are diagnosed with this debilitating disease. Nine sessions of this OSU Extension Signature Program were held including three series and one reunion session. 100% of evaluation respondents reported their knowledge of diabetes control increased as a result of attending. Evidence of this is clear through a 13% increase in knowledge and behavior scores from pre-test to post-test. All respondents were able to list changes they have already started to make as a result of participation, including improving portion control, exercising more, and using less salt, fat, and sugar. Positive results were reported by 50% of respondents and included weight loss, better blood sugar control, and improved blood pressure.

- **Good Foods for Good Health**—These monthly programs emphasizing nutrition, food safety, and healthy cooking methods are held in partnership with the Norwalk Parks and Recreation Department with over 200 participants annually. Evidence of impact of these programs is clear from evaluation results. Eighty-one percent of respondents are using information learned and report “healthy cooking is not difficult” and “healthy food can taste good.” Eighty-eight percent rate the classes as excellent or very good.
- **Family Nutrition Program**—The 2008 Family Nutrition Program, targeting food stamp recipients, conducted 106 classes in the Huron County area. This program was able to teach nutrition, food safety, and thrifty shopping or budgeting classes to 730 participants. It was then reported in an evaluation that 644 of these participants learned some or a lot of new information and 572 planned to make at least some changes as a result of the program. This information is vital in recognizing that participants have been impacted in some way by this information. There were also over 2,500 indirect contacts with the Family Nutrition Program, either through newsletters, fact sheets, or other promotional materials that contain a nutritional or food safety message.
- The Huron County Development Council began the New Year with their Annual Luncheon Meeting held in the Village of New London. The guest speaker talked about the current market and economic conditions. The annual networking event included 52 members and guests from all of the Huron County cities and villages, private and banking sector, utility companies, candidates for county offices, and all three county commissioners.

Food Safety

USDA estimates the annual price tag of foodborne illness in the United States at \$6.5 to \$13.3 billion in medical costs and lost productivity. OSU Extension food safety training helps reduce this cost. Impacts of food safety programming for Huron County included:

- **The Original Safe Food Handling for Occasional Quantity Cooks** training participants showed a 36.4% increase in knowledge from pre-test to post-test. Eighty-eight percent of respondents listed at least one food handling behavior change they plan to make as a result of participation. The majority of the behavior changes involved time and temperature control and use of thermometers. Other changes related to handling leftovers, washing fresh produce, cleaning, and sanitizing.
- **ServSafe™**—100% of participants in this 20-hour manager level certification training passed the standardized certification test and are certified in food protection through the Ohio Department of Health.
- **Person in Charge Training**—Pre-test and post-test results indicate this six-hour training for food service workers impacts the way they handle food served to customers and school students. The average pre-test score was 74% and the average post-test score was 96%. All respondents were able to list at least one change in practices they intended to make as a result of participation in the training. These practice changes included improved hand washing, cleaning fresh produce, thawing meat correctly, proper thermometer use, and proper cooling.

Preparing Youth for Success

- **4-H Community Club Program**—4-H clubs led by adult volunteer advisors is the heart of the 4-H program. Huron County had 51 clubs with 192 advisors and 1,021 members in 2008. Developing life skills is the overall goal of 4-H Youth Development. Goal setting and following through on commitments are two of the life skills that members gain by completing membership requirements. Ninety-five percent of all members who joined 4-H in the spring were still members at the end of the year. Members completed 94% of all projects in which they enrolled.
- **4-H CARTEENS Program**—4-H CARTEENS is a traffic safety program conducted by 4-H teen leaders with the Ohio State Highway Patrol for first-time juvenile traffic offenders. The goal of CARTEENS is to increase

teen awareness of traffic/vehicular safety. A total of 240 traffic offenders attended a CARTEENS education program during the last 12 months. A parent/guardian must attend with each juvenile. Many parents indicate that this type of program would be beneficial for all teens, before they get their drivers license. The teen participants take the program seriously and report plans to change their driving behavior. For example, “I will not speed and I will always wear my seatbelt.” “I will pay more attention and slow down.” “I will keep in mind the possibilities of irresponsibility on the road to prevent me from doing this again.”

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- **Pesticide Applicator Training**—Pesticide applicators licensed by the State of Ohio have an obligation to obtain accredited training in order to renew their license. Training in proper usage of pesticides helps to protect the environment and the public. A strong pesticide education program also helps to ensure that producers have access to one of their most valuable management tools. Over \$8 million per year are spent on pesticides in Huron County. The proper use of pesticides as a management tool can be credited with at least 30% increase in grain yields compared to no pesticide usage. In Huron County for the crop year of 2007–2008 that equates to an increase in crop values of \$26 million or about \$3.00 return for every \$1.00 spent on pesticides. Because of the obligation of pesticide applicators to the environment and to the community and because of the value of pesticides to agricultural producers, Pesticide Applicator Training is the single most important duty of the Agriculture and Natural Resource educator in Huron County. Over the last 24 months, Huron County Extension has assisted in training 350 applicators to insure that they can maintain a valid license or that they are prepared to take an exam to secure a new license.
- **Livestock Quality Assurance Training**—4-H members taking livestock as projects are livestock producers. Therefore, they must understand their role in raising animals that perform at their highest level and are a safe, wholesome product for consumers. Youth exhibiting market livestock at the fair must complete quality assurance (QA) training. In 2008, 401 youth in Huron County attended QA training. Overall, participants demonstrated a 15% increase in knowledge from their QA pre-test to their QA post-test, indicating knowledge gained in following good health, nutrition, and management practices.

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