



Medina County

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EXTENSION

2008 County Highlights

Strengthening Families and Communities

- Truant students are heading back to classrooms to avoid unemployment and social costs exceeding \$9 million. Seminars for 45 students and their parents targeted the legal and economic impacts of truancy. A new program for parents of elementary school children also addressed attendance issues early on. Most high-school dropouts, who also are truants, earn \$20,873 a year, with graduates earning \$31,071. Reports showed dropouts with a 52-percent employment rate in 1999, compared to 71 percent for high-school graduates and 83 percent for college graduates. A dropout costs about \$200,000 more in social services and criminal justice costs, as well. Staff also promoted wise money choices for teens at financial and college fairs.
- The communication lines stayed open between inmates and their families after 75 men and 60 women serving between one and six months at the Medina County Jail attended multiple parenting classes on child development. Research shows keeping inmates involved with their families decreases their rate of returning to prison, potentially saving more than \$2.6 million, with daily costs averaging \$110 per inmate. Staying out of jail also avoids further placement of children in foster care. In 2007, the county served 100 children in agency custody, costing about \$932,000.
- In the face of a national recession, new monthly programs at the Brunswick Food Pantry and Office for Older Adults in Medina featured nutritious ways to stretch food dollars. Staff delivered recipes and meal plans to seniors after agencies provided fewer meals. The Family Nutrition Program expanded its locations to 10 sites and helped 1,440 limited-income residents save on grocery bills. Out of 1,418 people surveyed in 2007, 91 percent learned new information and planned to make changes. Healthy eating also helps prevent obesity, diabetes, stroke, and heart disease, the county's top cause of death between 2004 and 2006.

Preparing Youth for Success

- More than 600 4-H volunteers and sponsors donated \$40,000 and 100,000 hours, valued at \$1.7 million, to help young people become productive citizens. The Independent Sector estimated \$17.53 an hour for Ohio volunteers in 2006. More than 1,200 youth ages 5 to 18 joined 4-H clubs, focused on hands-on project work, service and leadership. They completed 5,000 projects

that teach subject knowledge and life skills. Another 3,400 youth joined programs reinforcing drug, alcohol, and violence prevention. Research shows youth belonging to clubs are more likely to earn better grades, set higher educational goals, attend school more regularly, and feel better about themselves. A national survey of 4-H members in 2000 reported the program's impact through learning, mastery, service, and self-determination in a safe environment with caring adults.

- 4-H members teach traffic safety to their peers and cut the number of repeat offenders and costs exceeding \$400,000. Teens who belong to the 4-H group Cautious and Responsible Teens (CARTEENS), taught two-hour sessions twice a month to more than 400 youth offenders. They led activities, moderated discussions, and completed paperwork. American Family Insurance estimated costs, including court fees and increased insurance rates, starting at \$1,000 for minor traffic violations. Additional charges are vehicular damages. First-time juvenile traffic offenders who attend the class and pass a quiz may be considered by the court for a waiver of a two-point penalty assessed to their licenses.
- The county's 232 4-H teens volunteered 9,200 hours, valued at \$161,276, while planning and leading events. Some gained life skills from goal-setting to decision-making as teachers to 128 campers ages 9 to 13. The 28 counselors each received 25 hours of training on discipline, child development, and self-esteem. They later put their leadership, communication, and organizational skills to work at college or on the job. "I've learned to communicate with a variety of ages, to be effective in helping those in need and to be a leader," said Beth Joseph, a 4-H counselor of Medina. Others developed small-business skills while overseeing a milkshake booth and coordinated 1,200 exhibits and livestock shows at the fair. Research shows youth involved in activities are less likely to use drugs, misbehave, drop out of school, or commit delinquent acts.
- 4-H hooked more than 1,200 youth in first and third grades on science. Teachers observed students gaining higher understanding levels of key science concepts in the school-enrichment program through experiments, games, and crafts. Extension staff tailored lessons to meet the Ohio Department of Education's academic content standards for science in three school districts. Themes centered on fish, natural resources, rocks, and erosion.

Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- Twenty-six people received 43 hours of pesticide training, worth an estimated value of \$26,875, to protect the environment and grow crops without weeds, insects, and diseases for higher yields. The figure is based on pest management knowledge, increased production, and the prevention of chemical misuse at an estimated value of \$625 per hour. Farmers can lose \$50 or more an acre, totaling \$5.9 million, in fields invaded by weeds. They managed 118,000 acres of crops in 2006.
- A workshop showed 19 pond owners with overgrown weeds how to cut their expenses in half. They learned how to use aeration and 50 live fish, totaling about \$750, to control weeds in an average, ¼-acre pond, rather than \$1,800 a gallon in herbicides. About one-third, or five pond owners, expressed interest in the new options, potentially saving \$9,000. Topics also addressed water filtration and purification with most ponds used for home water supplies and landscaping. The county reported 371 ponds and 7,384 lakes in 2004.
- Tawnya Simonds of Wadsworth will cut down on grocery costs after picking fresh produce from her garden. She will save \$25 a month after learning how to prepare and plant a successful vegetable garden. The workshop met requests for ways to feed larger families at lower costs. More than 15 people learned how to choose plants for harvest throughout the season, prepare soil, and prevent diseases. Other topics ranged from fertilization to pest control. "Everything I learned will be from that class," Simonds said.

Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

- Chris Fullerton, the owner of CookieChix in Medina, tripled her profits up to \$100 per hour and secured 20 future orders at the Medina Farmers Market, where 15,000 people bought homegrown produce, flowers, and bakery items. Total sales for Dave Eyssen, the owner of Mapleside Farms in Brunswick, have increased 25 percent over six years. They joined vendors earning a total of more than \$45,000, a \$10,000 jump over last year. The market expanded from 10 to 23 vendors, as well as from 14 to 17 days, to meet increased demands for locally grown, fresh goods. Fruits and vegetables, alongside nursery stock and Christmas trees, joined the county's top producer of other crops at \$19.5 million in 2006. "It is like another store," Eyssen said. "The exposure is vital."
- Sales jumped a total of 55 percent for two orchard owners on the Fall Foliage Tour, a two-day event introducing 8,000 people to agriculture. It also assures future business growth. Owner Duane Bostrom of Pick and Save Orchard in Medina expects 80 percent, or 596 people, to return out of 746 people added to a mailing list. Stops promoting agriculture's diversity included greenhouses, parks, and wineries. The county's top industry generated more than \$45.5 million in total cash income in 2006.

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