



# Morgan County

Riecker Bldg., 155 E. Main St., Suite 320  
McConnsville 43756, 740-962-4854



## 2008 County Highlights

### Strengthening Families and Communities

- **Family Life Education**—Families struggle with a variety of issues today, such as, how to balance work and family, set limits with children, manage the care giving responsibility for a spouse or parent, or maintain a household budget with the increasing cost of utilities, food, fuel, and other basic expenses. Fifty-five individuals participated in programs addressing the above issues. Ninety-one percent of the participants reported they plan to adopt one of the recommended practices to improve behavior management of children, decrease stress related to balancing work and family, to take care of themselves as a caregiver for a spouse, or to attempt better record-keeping for their household budget.
- **Basics to Nutrition**—The Family and Consumer Sciences Extension educator partnered with a local food pantry to offer basic nutrition education programs to individuals and families while their food orders are prepared. Thirty-eight individuals or families participated in the programs designed to increase knowledge of MyPyramid, use the nutrition label to make healthier food choices, eat more whole grains, and increase consumption of fruits and vegetables. Eighty-seven percent of those attending the programs reported they plan to make changes based on the information shared. Seventy-nine percent identified a change they plan to implement, such as, eating more whole grains, reading labels to identify whole grains or sodium content, cutting back on sodium intake, eating more vegetables, avoiding salty and sugary foods, exercising more, increasing fruit consumption, watching fat intake, and changing to low-fat or fat-free milk.

### Preparing Youth for Success

- **Teens Take Charge**—Twenty-four older teens participated in the Morgan County 4-H Junior Leadership program. The county-wide program focused on leadership development, community service, career exploration, and social interaction activities. The Junior Leaders planned the county-wide 4-H club officer training event held on April 22, 2008. They developed the training sessions for each of the officers and one to three members taught each of the sessions. At one of their monthly meetings each member was responsible for presenting a leadership topic or sharing the content of an interview they conducted with a local leader.

The members assisted the 4-H educators in planning the 4-H Awards and Style Revue evening, where they served as announcers, host, award presenters, and photographers for the event.

- **Expanding and Growing Youth Leadership**—Sixteen 4-H members ages 14–17 participated in a two-day leadership conference held at Burr Oak State Park Lodge. Participants learnt about “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” as outlined by Patrick Lencioni in his book by the same title, and explored their own personality type and how it impacts their ability to lead and work with others. Participants began the process of writing a leadership resume and identified how the resume could benefit them when applying for jobs, scholarships, or college admission. Diversity was identified and addressed as an important topic for leaders to build tolerance of differences. The conference was made possible through an Ohio 4-H Foundation Grant.
- **Market Livestock Projects Like Running a Business**—Many youth may not think of their market project as a business, but it can be. A business wants to be competitive, and so do youth; a business wants to learn to be better, and so do youth; a business wants to make money, and so do youth. When our youth take market livestock projects, opportunities are provided so they can succeed. Youth learn how to care for their animal, and develop responsibility and organizational skills. They also develop budgets, learn how to select an animal that will grow and show well, and learn how to market the animal so it will make more money. An emphasis has been placed on our youth to improve marketing skills and some of that can be attributed to the continuing success of the Morgan County Junior Fair Livestock Sale. In 2008, a total of 358 lots of animals averaging \$700 per lot were sold, bringing the sale total to \$252,722, an increase of 12% over 2007. With the help of the community, exhibitors, Junior Fair Sale Committee, and Junior and Senior Fair Boards, the livestock sale was again a tremendous success.

### Enhancing Agriculture and the Environment

- **Pesticide Training for Youth and Adults**—In January, 15 producers attended a pesticide recertification course that is required every three years. As a result, 87% can now calibrate application equipment, 93% dispose of pesticide containers properly, and 87% use pesticide

management practices to protect water quality (the remainder plan on adopting these practices as a result of the training). In addition, 14 producers attended a training class desiring to obtain a private license and 16 junior and senior agricultural education students attended two classes on pesticide training. The total number of Morgan County residents taking a pesticide test was 32. Those with a license can develop broader job responsibilities and enhanced resumes by gaining a greater understanding of the affects of pesticides and how to use them in a safe and judicious manner.

- **ATV Safety for Work and Pleasure**—Eleven presentations were made in May, June, and July to over 350 youth and adults on how to be safe around ATVs at home and on the farm. Topics such as how to safely ride and operate the equipment, and proper age requirements were addressed. The goals of these programs are to educate residents of the dangers of ATVs and other similar equipment. In addition, riders need to think safety prior to and during the use of these machines, so that we may reduce the number of residents seriously injured or killed each year.
- **Seventh Annual Ag and Livestock Field Day a Success**—In August, 85 people attended our annual Field Day at the Tim and Freda VanHorn Farm. The Field Day included a tour of pastures and a new water development, and cattle herd. Presentations included a fencing demonstration, advanced breeding options for cattle producers, and the outlook of the economy. These discussions are designed to help local producers be more competitive in a difficult environment.

## Advancing Employment and Income Opportunities

**Promoting Morgan County**—The goals of establishing a tourism presence in Morgan County are:

- to support the local economic development efforts, which include tourism, by working with the Chamber of Commerce and ED office,
- to work with those individuals and businesses in the community working in the industry by promoting the county for tourism and,
- to establish a self-sustaining tourism office in the county.

While the first two items are ongoing, the third (and most important) came to be in 2008 in organizing the first Morgan County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB).

Working with a group of interested citizens, the OSU Extension Tourism program assistant facilitated the formation of the MCCVB. Included in this effort was the writing,

by the OSU Extension Tourism office, and passing by the Board of County Commissioners a county-wide lodging tax. This 3% tax, as determined by the Ohio Revised Code, is to be used for the promotion of the county for tourism. Secondly, this same group met bi-monthly for six months resulting in a written set of bylaws, a contract with an accountant to complete the 501(c)3 application, a membership campaign for the CVB, an elected Board of Trustees and a five-year operating budget for the organization. The group, plus OSU Extension Tourism, continues to meet monthly and is working on a marketing and branding campaign, a new county travel guide, and a policies and procedures manual for the MCCVB.

From 2006 to 2007 the county, through the OSU Extension Tourism office, saw a 4.6% increase in sales volume that is attributed to tourism translating to approximately 181 jobs.\* The MCCVB and OSU Extension Tourism anticipate continued growth in tourism sales especially with the added income for marketing supplied by the lodging tax. While the MCCVB will assume a greater decision-making role in regards to marketing, OSU Extension Tourism will transfer to more direct contact with specific projects and educational programs, such as hospitality and marketing trainings, community development projects, and establishing a relationship between local and regional tourism and other Extension programs. The partnerships established and fostered in these efforts have allowed Morgan County to be competitive in the local, regional, and state tourism market.

\*data taken from *The Economic Impact of Tourism in Morgan County, Ohio* prepared by Tourism Economics, 303 W Lancaster Ave., Wayne, PA for the Ohio Department of Development, Division of Travel and Tourism, July 2008.

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Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension  
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868