Hancock County Annual Report 2019

Putting Knowledge to Work!
The West Virginia University Extension Service works to provide solutions in your community through key programs and resources, including agriculture and natural resources; 4-H and youth development; food and nutrition; health and wellness; financial planning; and home gardening. These research-based programs and services are available to all Hancock County residents thanks to the tremendous support of our community members, local organizations, volunteers and local partners, including the Board of Education and County Commission.

Highlights

- WVU Hancock County Extension Service helps lead a tri-state collaborative for regional tourism with a 200-member database from three states and 13 counties.
- WVU Extension Service’s agents in the northern panhandle received the Excellence in Volunteerism Award at the 2019 National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Conference.

4-H/Youth Development

4-H School-based Programs

- Financial literacy programs, including the Build a Budget workshop, Bank at School program and Money Habitudes, were offered to 429 youth and 27 adults at Oak Glen High School, Weir High School, Dr. Barbara A. Matey High School Business Symposium, St. Joseph’s School, St. Paul’s School and the West Virginia Collegiate 4-H Conference.
- Conducted programming with students enrolled at Hancock County Alternative Learning, such as helping Hilltop Horizons Therapeutic Center offer equine assisted learning classes.

Traditional 4-H Programming and Clubs

- Five county clubs continue to provide opportunities for youth development in the county.
- 68 youths attended Hancock County 4-H camp; 20 adult volunteers assisted with implementation.

Energy Express Program

- 85 youths participated in the Energy Express program at two sites in Hancock County. Program evaluation results indicated that students increased their abilities with an average age equivalent gain of 3.1 months in broad reading achievement.
- 13 young adults served as AmeriCorps members for the program and received workforce development training.

Special Interest Programs

- Collaborated with the Weirton Area Chamber of Commerce to plan and implement the Youth Leadership Weirton program for 30 high school sophomores and assisted with the Dr. Barbara Matey High School Business Symposium for high school juniors.
Agriculture and Natural Resources

School-based Programs

- Meet the Plants program, designed to stimulate learning about plant-based products and basic horticulture, offered to 52 third grade students at Allison Elementary.

Local Foods

- Weirton Farmers Market continues to participate in the Senior WIC Program to provide locally grown fruits and vegetables to senior residents in the county. The market now includes artisan products. WVU Extension Service acts as the market advisor, assisting with training for the senior coupon program, helping with marketing and serving as point of contact for the association.

Master Gardener Program

- 14 local volunteers completed the Extension Master Gardener certification program.
- A new Hancock County Master Gardener club was formed in New Cumberland.

Families and Health

School-based Programs

- The Nutrition Outreach Instructor continues to provide evidenced-based nutrition education to 404 third and fourth grade students at Weirton Elementary School.
- Substance abuse prevention programs, such as the LifeSkills Training program and Alcohol 101, were presented to eighth grade students at St. Paul’s School and St. Joseph’s School.

Community Educational Outreach Service

- Held two classes on canning, covering both pressure and water bath methods. Those classes were well received and have led to additional classes on food preservation.
- 10,000 hours of volunteer service were recorded and donations were made to the Hancock County Animal Shelter, U.S. Military and Hancock County 4-H All Stars, among others.

Community and Economic Development

Regional Tourism

- The WVU Hancock County Extension Service office continued to help coordinate a tri-state collaboration that has expanded regional tourism in the Upper Ohio Valley region.
- The Visit Upper Ohio Valley Regional Tourism committee held bimonthly meetings throughout the region in 2019. More than 200 members from the area attended the meetings to give updates on exciting local events, festivals and tourist attractions.
- Key partners from 13 counties across the three states have been working together to promote regional tourism assets and increase tourism capacities. The collaborative established a new website and social media presence to promote this tourism initiative.

Brownfield Development

- Brownfield development is an important area of growth for Hancock County.
- WVU Hancock County Extension Service has served on a regional committee to identify brownfield sites in the region, prioritize sites and apply for funding to abate the brownfield contaminants.
- Once the property is cleared, that opens the door to developing the property for reuse. There have been over six sites in Hancock County identified for remediation and future redevelopment.