

### Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

In 2017, Riley County Extension partnered with Network Kansas and Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce to host our first ever Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC). The event engaged high school-age youth living in Riley County by allowing them to showcase their business or product ideas. Facing a panel of judges comprised of area entrepreneurs and business owners, students competed individually or in a small team, focusing their efforts in (3) main areas; business plan, trade show booth, and 2-minute elevator pitch. Competitors were rewarded for their efforts with 1st place taking home \$1,500; 2nd \$1,000; and \$500 for 3rd.



The YEC event is both fun and challenging, but the real story here is the space the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge provides, allowing young people to showcase their ideas and talents. Many of the competitors are actively running a small business with the concepts they bring to the YEC event. Others are working on honing their business plans and pitches in hopes of one day soon being in business. It is the drive of the young people engaging in this event that makes it worthy of taking notice. These are the future business owners and CEOs that will be changing the way we look at business in the next twenty years.

In 2018, we will be hosting our 2nd Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge on **Tuesday, March 13, from 9:30 am -12:30 pm at Pottorf Hall in Cico Park**. I would encourage any interested party to come out and interact with our participants. Tradeshow booths will be setup in the main room so community members can make the rounds and speak with our young entrepreneurs.

Sponsored by:



### Preparing for Farm Financial Challenges

Farmers are currently experiencing one of the largest financial downturns since the 1980s. Farm income for Kansas Farm Management Association farms dropped 95% from 2014 to 2015, to just \$4,568. While average farm income was better in 2016, rebounding to \$43,161, record yields are the only reason farm income numbers were respectable. Continued low commodity prices, coupled with drought across much of Kansas, will make 2017 another low income year.

The Kansas Extension Service recognized the potential for farm financial stress when commodity prices dropped in 2014. Since that time, Extension, the Kansas Farm Analyst program, and the Kansas Farm Management Association have been gearing up to help financially stressed farmers, primarily through use of the FINPACK farm financial analysis software package.

In December of 2016, the group trained to use the FINPACK software hosted a pilot workshop in Manhattan to discuss the farm financial situation and to introduce FINPACK to producers. Seven families completed the in-depth financial analysis in January of 2017. Extension will expand the program in coming months, with five more workshops scheduled in 2017 and 2018 across the state.

Extension and the Farm Analyst program will continue to work with producers one-on-one, as needed, to help them make sound farm financial management decisions.



## “Prairie Star” Flower Program Accomplishments

Which flowers do you select for your flower garden that will thrive, thrill everyone, and benefit our environment? K-State Research and Extension has been providing the answers to these circumstances for 15 years. The 2017 gardening season brings an end to the research program called “Prairie Star” flowers. Over 400 flower varieties have proven that they can grow here. Hundreds of others didn’t perform. Riley County, K-State Research and Extension Master Gardeners have planted many of the flowers that were used in the program, around the County Courthouse Plaza for the public to experience. The best flowers and the poor ones were on display for everyone to make their own selection. Money was saved by planting those flowers that grow locally. “It is great to have a list of flowers that I can use when I go shopping.” from SH “I have never seen an ornamental millet. It would make a great center piece in my container.” From GE

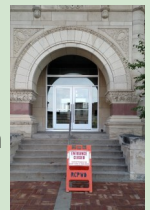


## Water Wise Irrigation

Water is a finite resource that can’t be wasted. Plants require water to function. Natural rainfall supplies the majority of the required moisture. An in ground irrigation system is an efficient method to provide water when necessary. Most irrigation controllers run on a set time and don’t account for plant moisture needs. The Riley County Courthouse Plaza has about 65,000 square feet of area under irrigation. One inch of moisture provides plants needs per week. When an irrigation event takes place, it would require about 43,000 gallons of treated city water. Cost is \$130. This money can be saved by turning off the clock when the plants have adequate moisture.

## Courthouse Plaza Landscape

Foundation repair and closure of two entrances provided opportunity to address an aging landscape around the Riley County Courthouse. Several plantings were removed to make repairs. The new entrance needed to be enhanced to provide an inviting access into the courthouse. Some trees were becoming less desirable and a plan to direct foot traffic to sustain function and pride in the government complex was put in place. Ideas for solutions were sought from six K-State landscape design students and five local design businesses.



A committee was formed to identify the best solution from the designs and make a recommendation to the board of County Commissioners. The Commissioners accepted the committee’s report and have approved funding for the project.

## A Healthy Food System Makes a Healthy Community

Riley County Extension has been involved with many community efforts, including coalition work. Recent efforts have included partnership with the Flint Hills Wellness Coalition (FHWC) surrounding food system discussions. The vision of the FHWC is to create a healthier community for our residents through policy, system, environmental, and personal change. How we produce, buy, eat and throw away food in Riley County impacts our economy, our health, our environment and our local culture. Since March, a Taskforce under the FHWC has thoroughly analyzed the food system, brought stakeholders together for insight and discussion, and drafted a mission, vision, goals, by-laws, and resolution for a city and county appointed Food and Farm Council.

The goal of a Food and Farm Council is to create a local food system that supports healthy living in our community. Potential areas a Food and Farm Council may work on include reducing food insecurity and food waste in the community, increasing access to healthy foods, and supporting local farmers. In the Manhattan community we are in the final steps of having a jointly appointed city and county Food and Farm Council approved. Riley County Extension is excited about this partnership and the potential to see positive improvements this council may bring to our food system. For more information on current work of the FHWC please visit: <http://www.flinthillswellness.org/>.



On September 28, the Flint Hills Wellness Coalition convened with over 55 individuals and organizations to talk about improving our local food system. Attendees learned more about the local food system, the benefits of a Food and Farm Council, and heard from local producers and restaurants owners.

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

Riley County

110 Courthouse Plaza, Rm B220  
Manhattan, Ks 66502  
(785) 537-6350