



# River Valley District

[www.rivervalley.ksu.edu](http://www.rivervalley.ksu.edu)

K-State Research and Extension News

Knowledge  
for Life

**July 2017**

**Volume 12 #7**

### **BELLEVILLE OFFICE**

1815 M Street  
Belleville, KS  
66935-2242  
Phone: (785) 527-5084  
[rp@listserv.ksu.edu](mailto:rp@listserv.ksu.edu)

### **CLAY CENTER OFFICE**

322 Grant Avenue  
Clay Center, KS  
67432-2804  
Phone (785) 632-5335  
[cy@listserv.ksu.edu](mailto:cy@listserv.ksu.edu)

### **CONCORDIA OFFICE**

811 Washington—Suite E  
Concordia, KS  
66901-3415  
Phone: (785) 243-8185  
[cd@listserv.ksu.edu](mailto:cd@listserv.ksu.edu)

### **WASHINGTON OFFICE**

214 C Street—Courthouse  
Washington, KS  
66968-1928  
Phone: (785) 325-2121  
[ws@listserv.ksu.edu](mailto:ws@listserv.ksu.edu)

Check us out on the Web at:  
[www.rivervalley.ksu.edu](http://www.rivervalley.ksu.edu) or on  
Facebook @ River Valley  
Extension District



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

K-State Research and Extension is an equal  
opportunity provider and employer.

[www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu)

## **DINING WITH DIABETES**

Nutrition and physical activities are keys to managing you type 2 diabetes, but where do you start? The *Dining with Diabetes* program can help. This was designed especially for people with type 2 diabetes. The program will help you learn the skills needed to promote good health. The program will include: tips on planning meals and snacks with delicious and healthy recipes, cooking demonstrations and food sampling, motivation and support by connecting with others who are living with diabetes, ideas for becoming more active, and an in depth understanding of how diabetes affects your overall health.



This 4 session class will be held from 5 to 7 pm on Wednesdays in August starting on August 9th and ending on August 30<sup>th</sup>. The classes will be in the basement meeting room of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank in Washington. There will be food at every class and a registered dietitian will attend one night to answer all of your questions. Cost of the class is a onetime fee of \$25. You can register by contacting any of the River Valley District offices.

## **TANNING BED WARNING**

Almost 9,000 cases of melanoma (the deadliest form of skin cancer) and 254,000 cases of basal- and squamous- cell skin cancer that were diagnosed in 2015 can be attributed to tanning-bed use, according to a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill study. These indoor devices deliver slightly less UVB radiation (which causes sunburn) than the sun, but they expose users to a more concentrated dose of UVA rays that damage cells and suppress the immune response.

While it has been hard to shake the image of bronzed skin being healthy, research continues to show that tanning, whether it be naturally or in the tanning bed, is definitely a health risk. Using sunscreen on a regular basis even in the winter can help decrease your risk for sun cancer.

*Journal of Cancer Policy, Feb 28, 2017*

## **FOOD PRESERVATION CLASS**

Karen Blakeslee from the Rapid Response Center at Kansas State University will be presenting an all-day food preservation workshop at The Branch, 104 South Chestnut, Clyde on Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 4 pm. The class will cover safe canning practices for both the water bath and pressure canner. She will also cover proper freezing and drying techniques. This hands on class will allow you to practice canning and you will go home with some finished products. The cost of the class is \$25 to cover supplies, materials, and lunch. Class size is limited, so register at your local River Valley Extension Office. Your registration is not official until your payment is received.

## HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS AND HEART MEDICATION

If you take medication for high cholesterol or other heart problems, a new study finds that certain herbal remedies pose particular hazards. For example, Asian ginseng, cranberry, garlic, Ginkgo biloba, and green tea can hike bleeding risks for those on blood thinners. Researchers say that there is no clear evidence that supports the use of any of those supplements will promote heart health.

Doctors say that taking supplements with medications is a concern because patients often don't tell their doctors that they are taking the supplements so the physician is then unaware of any potential risks. The other risk of supplements is their loose regulation. Quality and purity of supplements can vary widely. Some have even been found to be contaminated with pesticides, heavy metals, bacteria, fungi, or active pharmaceuticals. It's important to remember that natural on the label doesn't necessarily mean healthy. The best option is to talk to your doctor before adding any supplements to your daily routine.

*Consumer Reports On Health, June 2017*

## FOOD SAFETY FOR BAKE SALES

Does your organization conduct bake sales? If so, food safety should be a priority and K-State Research and Extension has an updated bulletin MF3382 entitled "Food Handling for Bake Sales." Stop by any extension office or download the bulletin at: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.k-state.edu/pubs/MF3382.pdf>

## "LOW" DOESN'T EQUAL HEALTHY

Do you think a claim like "low sodium" or "low fat" means a food is healthy? Not necessarily.

Scientists looked at more than 80 million food and beverage purchases over a four-year period made by more than 40,000 households in the United States. Purchases featuring a low-content claim didn't necessarily offer better overall nutrition, according to the research published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.

Although low-/no- fat claims were the most prevalent type of low-content claim, it's really the types of fat in a product (aiming for more unsaturated fat relative to saturated fat), not the total amount, that's most important to consider.

"Look at low-content claims with a skeptical eye," says Lindsey Smith Taillie, PhD, lead author of the study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "These claims are marketing tools that companies use to get consumers to buy more. Check both the nutrition facts panel and ingredients to help you make more healthful choices."

*Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, June 2017*



## PREVENTING DIABETES CAN SAVE YOU MONEY

One in three adults in the United States has prediabetes. Delaying or preventing progression to type 2 diabetes through dietary and lifestyle changes could help keep money in your pocket and protect your health finds a study published in *Population Health Management*.



"Diabetes can be a heavy financial burden on individuals, even for those who are newly diagnosed with the condition," says Tamkeen Khan, PhD, primary author of the study. "We found the transition from

prediabetes to diabetes costs an additional \$8,000 in medical care within the first three years, only some of which is generally covered by insurance."

If you have prediabetes, Khan recommends the National Diabetes Prevention Program. It has in-person and online options and focuses on healthy eating, weight loss, and physical activity. Program fees and insurance-coverages vary. Details are at: [cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention](http://cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention).

*Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, June 2017*

## WATCH FOR DEHYDRATION IN THE SUMMER HEAT

Becoming dehydrated in the summer heat can happen faster than you think and you might not even realize that you are dehydrated. Water affects all of our biological systems in our bodies. Dehydration can cause confusion and put you at risk for falls. Severe dehydration can lead to a rapid or irregular heartbeat, low blood pressure, fainting, and even death. As we age we become even more susceptible to dehydration because our sense of thirst decreases with age and some drugs like those prescribed for high blood pressure and heart failure help exaggerate water loss from the body. Infections and poorly controlled diabetes can also play a role in dehydration. How can you tell if you are dehydrated? The classic signs are dry mouth, thirst, fatigue, and skin that doesn't spring back after pinching. However, as we age these same symptoms can be caused by many other things. The darker your urine the less hydrated you may be, but aspirin, vitamins, and some fruits and vegetables can also affect urine color.

The amount of water needed to stay hydrated can vary a lot from person to person. Generally, the heavier, taller, and more active you are then the more fluids you need. Try to remember to drink before you become thirsty. Keep a filled water bottle with you to help remind you to drink throughout the day. Other beverages and foods can help. Coffee and tea will also hydrate you. Soups, fruits, and vegetables are also good sources of liquids.

Dehydration is preventable it just takes a little planning and effort on your part.



## EATING AT HOME IS GOOD FOR YOU

This isn't new news to anyone, but eating healthy and saving money are easier if you cook at home. In a cross-sectional survey of 437 Seattle households, cooking at home more often was associated with a higher quality dietary pattern, based on criteria in the US Dietary Guidelines for Americans. "Frequent home-cooked dinners were linked with fewer empty calories (such as sugar) and more whole fruit and leafy greens, all at no extra cost," says senior author Adam Drewnowski, PhD, director of the Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington in Seattle. Families who cooked at home at least six nights a week reported an average overall food cost of \$273 a month per person compared to \$330 a month per person reported by families who cooked at home three nights a week or less. In a year's time, that would be a difference of nearly \$700 a person.

*Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, May 2017*

## IMPROVING FITNESS COULD PROLONG LIFE

We have all heard this before, but yet another study has shown the importance of exercise in our lives. Getting more physically fit may help reduce the risk of dying prematurely. Researchers at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, followed 10,854 men and women (average age of 54) who had completed two doctor-ordered stress tests at least 12 months apart. Starting at a low fitness level but improving to an intermediate or high fitness level by the second test was associated with a 40% lower risk of dying over the next nine years, compared to being at a low fitness level at both tests. Improving fitness is a gradual process. Check with your doctor if you have a health concern, and then devote time to exercise daily. The study was published in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

*Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, May 2017*

## FAMILY TALK

How well do your family members communicate with one another? How much do you really know about your children and how much do they know about you? The following questions can make for an interesting---and thought provoking discussion!

### Kids' Questions for Parents:

- \*What was your favorite subject in High School?
- \*How did you meet mom/dad?
- \*If you could travel anywhere in the U.S., where would go?
- \*What would you really like to do before you are 80?

### Parents Questions for Kids:

- \*What kind of vehicle would you like to drive/own?
- \*If you could meet anyone in the world, who would it be?
- \*If you could be any age, what age would you choose?
- \*What would you really like to do before you're 30?

## FRUITS & VEGETABLES: NO SUCH THING AS TOO MUCH

Eating five servings a day of fruits and vegetables is good, but ten may be even better for your heart, according to a recent analysis of 95 observational studies. Eating five servings of fruits and vegetables daily was associated with a 14% lower risk of heart disease while eating 10 servings a day was associated with a 24% lower risk, compared to zero servings. (A serving is ½ cup cooked vegetables, 1 cup raw leafy greens, or a small piece of fruit) "If you can't fit in 10 servings of fruits and vegetables, it may be worthwhile to at least make sure you eat some of the specific ones we found were associated with reduced heart disease risk," says Dagfinn Aune, PhD, lead author of the research in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*. "That included leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli and cabbage), citrus fruits, apples, and pears. "The review couldn't show cause and effect, but other factors, including over-all diet and exercise habits, were adjusted for.



Making an effort to have fruits and vegetables at every meal and for snacks can make a big difference in the health of your heart. You will also probably see an overall improvement in your diet.

*Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, May 2017*

## RULES FOR BEING HUMAN

As you talk to one another, you might want to share these 'Rules for Being Human' by former Extension Specialist Chuck Smith:

1. You will receive a body. You may like it or hate it, but it is your's for as long as you live.
2. You will never stop learning. Each of us is enrolled in a full-time school called 'life'. Each day will have its lessons. Some you will like, others you will think are irrelevant and stupid.
3. There are no 'mistakes'---just lessons. You will learn as much, if not more, from your 'failures' as you will from your successes.
4. Lessons will never end. There is no part of life that doesn't have lessons. If you are alive, there will be lessons to learn.
5. There is nothing better than 'today'. When 'tomorrow' becomes 'today' you simply will obtain another 'tomorrow'. It too will probably look better than 'today'.
6. Others are mirrors of your own self-image. You will be drawn to others for the positive qualities you believe exist in yourself.
7. What you make of your life is up to you. You will have access to all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you. The choice is your's.
8. You will not live forever. Take time for the important things, enjoy & live each day. Tomorrow may not come.

## HOLDING DOWN VACATION COSTS

Saving to cover vacation expenses is a good goal. But, if savings fall short, should the vacation be cancelled? Plans be modified? Or charge the vacation expenses on a credit card to be paid 'later'?

From a financial management perspective, a vacation should not be a reason to over spend. Running up vacation bills may shortchange savings for an emergency fund, car repair or retirement savings contributions. But, that doesn't mean you shouldn't take some time off or treat yourself occasionally. The best advice, when savings fall short, is to modify vacation plans to match the money available.

Suppose, for example, that you've been saving money each month to pay for a multi-day vacation to a metropolitan area which offers a variety of entertainment options for your family. You realize, though, that the vacation is going to cost more than you'd planned. It becomes necessary to implement some cost-saving ideas:

- \*Opt to be gone for a shorter period of time to save on lodging and meal costs.

- \*Shop for a hotel/motel package that includes continental breakfasts, pool, free parking and/or coupons for savings on attractions or gas.

- \*Check the costs of attractions and admission costs. If one of your entertainment options offers a 'special deal' for a certain day or time, plan your schedule around that activity.

- \*Balance free or low-cost activities (a picnic in the park, free tour of the state capitol, entertainment at a local festival, etc.) with more costly activities for which admission is charged.

- \*Trim food costs by planning the larger meal of the day at noon, when restaurant prices are often less costly than items on the dinner menu. Choose a smaller serving, share an entrée, opt for drinking water, etc.

- \*Pack non-perishable snacks to take along, rather than purchasing en route at convenience stores or concession stands.

Other ideas for trimming vacation costs include planning a few day trips to places you've heard about but haven't visited. Check out your local community theater performances and/or ball games in the local park. What does your local library offer? Plan a neighborhood croquet, bocci ball, water balloon, volleyball, or horseshoe tournament with a barbeque or potluck. With a little creativity and imagination you can mix up the normal routine, getting a needed break at little or no cost.

## DO YOU MANAGE YOUR TIME OR DOES IT MANAGE YOU?

Managing your time is a highly personal skill. Only you know your peak work hours, your attention span, and your food and sleep requirements. Using what you know about yourself, you can create an effective time management strategy. Avoid pretending to be a morning person if your most productive time is later in the day. If you know you need 7 hours of sleep to function at your best, do everything you can to get an adequate amount of sleep.

As you develop your time management strategy, remember to be flexible. Allow for the unexpected. The only sure thing in your schedule is that the unexpected will happen.

The first step is to make a list of everything you want or need to do for the day. (Do this either the day before or first thing in the morning.) Don't bother prioritizing---just write down everything you can think of. Sometimes, it's good to list tasks for 'things to do' for the next 5-7 days. This can help plan longer projects plus allows more flexibility for interruptions, those things we forget, and those days when we just don't feel like doing some things.

After a list is made, you'll want to prioritize it. Keep due dates in mind but remember that only you know your priorities. It may be difficult to do, but try not to overestimate your capabilities. Avoid leaving projects to the last minute. While we all procrastinate, it's generally the least effective way of getting work done.

If you find implementing time management techniques to be difficult, take heart. It's a skill that takes time to acquire, to practice, to adapt and perfect. Even after time management skills are being used, life happens and changes will have to be made.

## DISASTERS: ARE YOU PREPARED?

Are you ready to take the challenge – the challenge to organize your financial life? Having records organized and up to date, including health insurance and bank information, can help in your day-to-day life, but is especially important in emergencies.

Prepare Kansas 2017, an online challenge to all Kansans and others available through the K-State Research and Extension Facebook page, will provide guidance through steps to be more prepared to handle disasters. That can make recovery from many difficult situations smoother and faster, according to Kansas State University associate professor Elizabeth Kiss.

Disasters can be widespread, like the wildfires Kansas experienced earlier this year, but a flooded basement where important paperwork is stored, or not knowing how to reach family members in case of an emergency can also be disastrous and can make for a more difficult recovery for individuals or families.

This September's Prepare Kansas Facebook Challenge will be interactive, with information and resources to help individuals and families be better prepared, and providing the opportunity for participants to comment and share their own information on what they're doing in regard to personal and community preparedness.

Weekly topics to be covered include Prepare a Household Inventory; Review Your Insurance Coverage; Create a Grab-and-Go Box; and Family Communication.

The address for the prepare Kansas blog is: <https://blogs.k-state.edu/preparekansas/>

## STORING HEIRLOOMS

Whether it's a wedding gown worn this last June, a baptismal gown in the family for generations or a special quilt, most of us have cloth-based items we want to store and preserve for the future. While there are no special treatments or procedures that will guarantee against textile deterioration or damage, there are precautions we are advised to take. Whether the expected storage is long or short term, consider the following recommendations before putting away cloth-based items.

If the item was worn, it needs to be cleaned within several days or weeks. Even if you don't see any spots or stains, perspiration, food, body oils, etc. can leave spots after storage. Sugar stains, such as those from sodas or alcoholic beverages, will likely turn brown and attract insects which, ultimately, result in more stains and holes. Perspiration and body oils left untreated in garments will likely turn yellow and cause permanent damage and deterioration.

Most wedding and some christening gowns, especially if made from silk, acetate, rayon, or wool, are best cleaned by dry-cleaning. Dry-cleaning will remove oil-based stains including greasy foods, body oils, make-up and general soil. Dry-cleaning solvents alone do not remove water-and sugar-based stains. It's wise to tell the drycleaner when dropping off the garment about these stains so that they can be pre-treated with appropriate solvents.

When handling older garments, do so with special care. Antique cotton or linen fabrics can sometimes be laundered by hand at home using special cleaning products. Very delicate items should be supported by a fiberglass screen. Use the screen to lift the wet fabric and dry flat in the bathtub. Avoid ironing, fabric softeners and starch if the garment will be stored. Beware that some adornments will not survive cleaning (including drycleaning) and/or storage.

To package cleaned garments at home for storage, use a large, deep acid-free box (not cardboard). Items made from cotton, linen, or rayon should not be stored long-term in cedar chests/closets because the acid of the cedar will weaken the fibers. Place crumpled tissue at folds and in the bodice and sleeves for shaping. Remove fabric-covered metal buttons, rubberized dress shields and foam padding. Place acid-free tissue over the garment and add the lid. (The lid should have slits to allow for air circulation.)

Small textile items may be stored flat or rolled on tubes which have been covered with acid-free tissue or clean cotton sheeting. Roll without tension and be careful to prevent wrinkles or folds from forming. Avoid storing textile in attics (too hot) or basements (too damp). The best place should be dry, away from exterior walls, 60-70 degrees, and away from smoke and sunlight. (For many of us, this means storing under the bed.)

Even with proper treatment, some garments will yellow with age. Consider this a 'patina of age' that reflects the history of the garment. However, with tender loving care, the beauty of heirloom textiles will be preserved so that they may be enjoyed by future generations.

(Reference: Ohio Research & Extension)

## MEDICARE BASICS WORKSHOP

Do you have questions about Medicare? Discover answers to your questions at one of the upcoming Medicare Basics Workshops. Two workshops will be held in the District at Belleville and Washington.

**Washington- Tuesday, August 6,  
6:30-8:30pm  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
200 West 4th Street**

**Belleville- Wednesday, August 9  
6:00-8:00pm  
Public Library Meeting Room  
1327 19th Street**

All men and women in the area who are nearing age 65 or soon to qualify due to a disability or who are helping family members with insurance and financial matters will find this program beneficial. Medicare eligibility, how and when to apply, what is covered in Medicare and how to fill the gaps will be discussed. Programs will be explained that are available to assist low income individuals.

Marsha Rogers, Judy Uphoff, and Deanna Turner, River Valley District Agent, will present the program in Belleville. Deanna will teach the Washington program. Marsha, Judy, and Deanna are Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas Counselors or SHICK Counselors and help people throughout the year with their Medicare and health insurance needs so they can make informed decisions.

K-State Research and Extension River Valley District and the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (Belleville) are sponsors of the programs.

Please pre-register if you are interested in attending the Washington program by calling the Washington District Extension Office at 785-325-2121. To register for the Belleville program, call the Belleville District Extension Office at 785-527-5084. If it is Fair time, leave a message if we do not answer. You can also send an e-mail to Deanna Turner at [dturner@ksu.edu](mailto:dturner@ksu.edu) or call her at the Clay Center Extension Office, 785-632-5335, for more information.

## ENERGY SAVING TIPS FOR THE HOME

- ⇒ Contact your electric supplier to get an energy audit or attic report card conducted to identify potential savings.
- ⇒ Plug air leaks around foundations, windows, doors, outlets, and even where electric and water lines enter the walls from outdoors or attic spaces.
- ⇒ Use technology such as programmable thermostats
- ⇒ Switch to high-quality LED lights
- ⇒ Consider alternative energy sources such a solar or geothermal pumps. Consider lifespan vs payout on these.
- ⇒ Upgrade Appliances to newer models.

Source: Consumer Reports

## SAFER MEDICARE CARDS IN THE FUTURE

New Medicare cards will offer greater protection to more than 57.7 million Americans. New cards will no longer contain Social Security numbers, to combat fraud and illegal use. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is readying a fraud prevention initiative that removes Social Security numbers from Medicare cards to help combat identity theft, and safeguard taxpayer dollars.

The new cards will use a unique, randomly-assigned number called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI), to replace the Social Security-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) currently used on the Medicare card. CMS will begin mailing new cards in April 2018 and will meet the congressional deadline for replacing all Medicare cards by April 2019.

CMS started an outreach campaign to help providers get ready for the new MBI. They are taking steps to protect seniors from fraudulent use of Social Security numbers which can lead to identity theft and illegal use of Medicare benefits. CMS wants to be sure that Medicare beneficiaries and healthcare providers know about these changes well in advance and have the information they need to make a smooth transition.

Personal identity theft affects a large and growing number of seniors. People age 65 or older are increasingly the victims of this type of crime. Incidents among seniors increased to 2.6 million from 2.1 million between 2012 and 2014. Identity theft can take not only an emotional toll on those who experience it, but also a financial one: two-thirds of all identity theft victims reported a direct financial loss. It can also disrupt lives, damage credit ratings and result in inaccuracies in medical records and costly false claims.

Watch for your new Medicare card in the mail between April 2018 and April 2019. After receiving the new card, Medicare beneficiaries will be instructed to safely and securely destroy their current Medicare cards and keep the new card confidential.

## LIVING EASIER WITH ARTHRITIS

Arthritis can make even routine daily chores difficult. The following tips may make living with arthritis a bit easier.

- **Alternate Tasks-** Alternate your jobs by using different parts of your body and different groups of joints. You might hang up clothes followed by sitting down to fold clothes.
- **Space Out Your Jobs-** Rather than clean the house all at one time. Vacuum and rest. Gather the trash and rest.
- **Soak Your Dishes-** Let your dishes soak for a few minutes in the sink so no scrubbing is needed.

## SADDLE UP AND BRING YOUR POSSE TO THE FEST OF THE WEST!

Sign Up for the Sunflower Fair

Tuesday, September 19

8 am—4 pm

Salina Tony's Pizza Event (Formerly: Bicentennial Center)

Cost: \$20 Includes Lunch

This event is sponsored by the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging. Many interesting presentations include:

- Educational Workshops
- Informative Exhibits
- Inspiring Speakers
- Health Screening

Meet new friends and visit with old friends. You will learn while having fun!

Pre-register for the Sunflower Fair. Send your \$20 registration by September 8th to:

**North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging  
401 Houston Street  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502**

To register using a credit card please call 1-800-432-2703 or go on-line at [www.ncfhaaa.com](http://www.ncfhaaa.com)

## HOW TO PICK A RIPE MUSKMELON

One of the hardest things to do when selecting a melon is to make sure you are choosing a ripe melon. Deciding when a melon is ready to be picked can be a challenge. Here are some helpful tips and tricks to help you choose a ripe melon.

Muskmelons are one of those crops that tell you when they are ready to be picked. This can help you not only harvest melons from your own garden at the correct time, but also choose good melons from a store. As a melon ripens, a layer of cells around the stems softens causing the melon to detach from the vine. This is called "slipping" and will leave a dish-shaped scar at the point of stem attachment. When harvesting melons from the garden, put a little pressure on the vine where it attaches to the fruit. If ripe, the melon will release or "slip" right off.



When choosing a melon from the store look for a clean, dish-shaped scar. Ripe melons have a pleasant, musky aroma when stored at room temperature (not refrigerated). Hopefully, these helpful tips and tricks help you enjoy ripe melons all season long.

## MAKING COMMUNITIES ATTRACTIVE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

We have discussed the decline of the population in rural Kansas for years and it continues at a pace that has begun to take a toll on many rural communities. I am convinced that we must work together not only on a local but also on a regional level to address ways to reverse this trend. Demographic information tells us that within the River Valley District we have counties that are among the lowest income in Kansas and we have counties that are among the highest percentage of elderly in Kansas. Neither of these demographics bode well for the sustainment of our communities.

So what do we need to do? We must work to make our communities places where young people and young families will want to stay, return to, or move to. Getting this accomplished is much tougher than talking about it, but here are just a few ideas to start the conversation.

**Communications** – Many jobs today are communications based and so it is vital that we continue to support and encourage our communications companies to invest in fiber optics, high-speed internet, and complete cell coverage. Technology is just such a way of life these days and with Internet many people can work from a distance in many jobs.

**On-line Business Presence** – We see in the news almost on a daily basis the closing of “brick and mortar” stores and businesses that can no longer compete with so many sales happening on-line. One way that many small businesses have found to survive is by selling product on-line. Using a variety of Internet and social media marketing tools, these businesses have greatly expanded their sales footprint with little increase in overhead.

**Community Infrastructure** – As people look at moving to a community there are a few essentials they will look for. For young families, daycare is of ultimate importance. We used to work to incentivize big businesses coming to town by offering tax incentives. What about the idea of offering child care incentives to entice young professionals to move to town? If you are paying for daycare it seems like a big expense but trying to make a living providing daycare is tough. As a community we must work to support both quality and quantity of daycare. Schools that are well-maintained, have outstanding teachers, and provide quality classroom and extramural activities are a must. Churches that roll out the welcome mat certainly help make our community recruitment easier. The older I get, the more I think about how important the quality of healthcare is. Hospitals, clinics, and long-term care are all a major player in this infrastructure. Parks that have good, safe equipment for children to play say a lot about what a community cares about. Finally, what is our city, county, and state doing to maintain streets and roads. Good streets that are well lit, good sidewalks for exercise, and a low crime rate all are attractive attributes.

**Customer Service** – I have harped on this time and time again. In college economics we learned about competitive advantage. In other words, what do you have that sets you

apart and gives you an edge over the others you compete with? In small-town, small-business your competitive edge is Customer Service! What can you do tomorrow to improve your customer service?

**Dress for Success** – I remember when I was an FFA Advisor years ago how I enjoyed the opportunities to get my students in their official dress. Put on those black slacks or skirt, white shirt, tie, and blue coat and student’s behavior and performance improved and they became more respectful of all around them. If we go to a job interview, we dress like we want the job! I would contend that communities are interviewing each and every day to keep or attract quality people. How about we “dress our community for success?” We must look at our community each day as if we were visiting for the first time and find and expand on those things we do that will work and to improve where we fall short. K-State Research and Extension offers a program called First Impressions where we use teams of volunteers from a “partner city” to take a look at our community and help us identify those strengths and weaknesses. If interested in conducting a First Impressions, give John Forshee a call at the Clay Center office.

Together we can make our communities a great place to live and work!

### ***Poultry Testing Required For Fairs***

All poultry, EXCEPT for waterfowl and pigeons, must be tested for Pullorum-Typhoid and checked for lice before being eligible to be exhibited at a county fair. Birds in the River Valley District can be tested at either location provided below in conjunction with KDA:

- Monday, July 10th  
Washington Fairgrounds  
5:30pm-6:30pm
- Thursday, July 13th  
Belleville Fairgrounds  
8:30am-9:30am

Contact Katelyn at 785-325-2121 with any questions.

### **COUNTY FAIR DATES**



**WASHINGTON**

**JULY 18-23**

**CLAY**

**JULY 19-23**

**CLOUD**

**JULY 25-29**

**REPUBLIC**

**JULY 31-AUGUST 5**

**NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
WASHINGTON, KS  
PERMIT NO. 3**

**RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT  
“2017 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
July 10	5:30-6:30pm	Poultry Testing	Washington Fairgrounds
July 13	8:30-9:30am	Poultry Testing	Belleville Fairgrounds
July 18-23		Washington County Fair	Washington-Fairgrounds
July 19-23		Clay County Fair	Clay Center-Fairgrounds
July 25-29		Cloud County Fair	Concordia-Fairgrounds
July 31-Aug. 5		Republic County Fair	Belleville-Fairgrounds
Aug. 6	6:30-8:30pm	Medicare Basics Workshop	Washington-Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Aug. 9	6-8pm	Medicare Basics Workshop	Belleville-Public Library Meeting Room
Aug. 9, 16, 23, 30	5-7pm	Dining With Diabetes	Washington-First National Bank Basement
Aug. 10	9am-4pm	Food Preservation Class	Clyde- The Branch, 104 South Chestnut
Sept.		Prepare Kansas 2017 (online)	K-State Research and Extension Facebook Page
Sept. 19	8am-4pm	Sunflower Fair- “The Fest of the West”	Salina- Tony’s Pizza Event Center (formerly Bicentennial)
Oct. 9	10:30am	Extension Fall Fling	Clay Center-4-H Conference Center, Fairgrounds

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact John Forshee, Director, River Valley Extension District # 4, 322 Grant Avenue, Clay Center, KS 67432. Phone 785-632-5335.