

MARCH 2015
Volume 10 #3

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Dust off your walking shoes and form a team for Walk Kansas 2015. The program will help you and others lead a healthier life by being more active, making better nutrition choices, and learning positive ways to deal with stress. **Registration is due March 6, 2015.**

Walk Tall, Walk Strong, Walk Kansas is the theme for Walk Kansas 2015. Walk Tall emphasizes posture when standing, walking, and sitting. Walk Strong emphasizes strengthening muscles. A new strengthening exercise will be introduced each week in the newsletter. Videos will be available on the web site. Walk Kansas encourages any physical activity.

- Form a team of six co-workers, family members, friends, or neighbors. Select a team captain to pick up a packet at the Extension Office. Register your team, collect the registration and fees and return the packet to the Extension Office.
- Each team identifies a goal, or challenge, it wants to reach. Three challenges are offered. **Challenge 1** is the distance across the state (423 miles), and would require each member to reach the minimum guidelines for physical activity, 150 minutes per week. To reach **Challenge 2**, the team must go across and back (846 Miles), or 5 hours per week for each participant. **Challenge 3** takes the team 1200 miles around the perimeter of the state, a 6-hour-per-week goal for each person. Team members set their individual goals at the beginning and try to accomplish them by the end of the 8 week period.
- Walking is only one of the activities that counts. Learn about moderate and vigorous activities that count, and strengthening exercises. Just a reminder – any activity you report should be performed for a minimum of 10 consecutive minutes.
- Team members report progress to their team captain each week and then the team captain reports totals to the Extension Office.
- Participants will receive a weekly newsletter filled with tips on leading a healthy lifestyle, nutrition advice, recipes, and strategies to reduce stress. Each team member pays a nominal registration fee to cover the cost of weekly newsletters and materials. Walk Kansas T-shirts or sweatshirts can be purchased for a low fee.

Call your local District Extension Office to register your team for Walk Kansas. If you do not have a team, contact the Extension Office and asked to be placed on a team with other people who share a desire for physical fitness and health. Call the Office if you have any questions. Get moving and **Walk Tall, Walk Strong, Walk Kansas!** Sign up today!

SUPERTRACKER IS NOW MOBILE

SuperTracker is a food and fitness program to help you track the foods you eat and your physical activity. Now, there's an App for that! SuperTracker is now available on your Apple phone. Create your own personal profile or use the general plan. The program has over 8,000 foods. It can also help you set personal goals and get support from a virtual coach. The best part is that it's free!

For more information about SuperTracker see www.supertracker.usda.gov

THE SCOOP ON SODIUM IN CANNED FOODS

Sodium is a popular ingredient in canned foods. It is primarily used for flavor. How do you know how much is in a can of food? Read the label.

Look on the front of the label for no salt added, low sodium or reduced sodium claims. If buying regular canned foods, many can be drained and rinsed to remove sodium. Draining can reduce sodium by 36 percent. Draining and rinsing can reduce sodium by 41 percent.

Salt and sodium are not the same. Salt is sodium chloride in the proportions of 40 percent sodium and 60 percent chloride. Sodium regulates blood volume and pressure plus many other functions. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/1BIKj3g>

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics designates March as National Nutrition Month® to focus attention on informed food choices and sound eating and physical activity habits. The theme for 2015 is "Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle." The goal is to encourage consuming fewer calories, getting daily exercise, maintain a healthy weight, reduce chronic disease risks, and promote overall health. Learn more about this event and ideas to help promote a healthy lifestyle at www.nationalnutritionmonth.org/nnm/

EAT GREEN IN MARCH!

St. Patrick's Day is not the only day to be green! There are many ways to eat green at every meal.

Breakfast—Add green peppers and green onions to omelets. A side of green grapes brightens any morning.

Lunch—Fresh lettuce and spinach can perk up any sandwich. Dip some broccoli and celery in a zesty dip for some extra crunch for lunch.

Dinner—Tender asparagus adds a punch of green to spring meals. For a dessert, try a fruit cup with green apples and kiwi fruit. It can be easy to eat green!

<http://food.unl.edu/fnh/green-stpatricks-day>

TOP HEART-HEALTHY DIETS

If your New Year's resolution is to eat healthier, where do you start? It seems everyone has their own opinion on this topic. If you need a diet plan, there are two that rank at the top. In 2014, the U.S. News and World Report ranked several popular plans. The top two were the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan at number one and the Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) diet as number two. The DASH diet is for those with high blood pressure and can help prevent heart disease. It is designed to help reduce blood pressure levels with weight management, physical activity, and diet. The TLC diet helps control cholesterol through the food you eat. Learn more about the diet plans above and more at www.womenshealth.gov/publications/ourpublications/factsheet/heart-healthy-eating.html

LITTLE CHANGE IN FAST FOOD NUTRITION

Fast food is a popular choice for a quick meal. But, over the years (1996-2013), little has changed in the nutritional content. Research published in *Preventing Chronic Disease* shows average calories, sodium and saturated fat have stayed constant. One exception is the decline in *trans* fat in fries. This may be due to legislation to reduce, or ban, *trans* fat in fried foods.

Fast foods studied included fries, cheeseburgers, grilled chicken sandwiches, and regular soda. They included various sizes of these foods. The foods came from three fast food chains.

Only minor fluctuations were found in calorie content, saturated fat, and sodium during this time period. Similar items between chains could vary widely.

For example, a small order of fries were 110 calories to 320 mg of sodium difference between chains.

A cheeseburger meal from the three chains could fulfill 65-80 percent of a 2,000-calorie daily intake. Sodium content made up 63-91 percent of the recommended daily intake.

Read more about these studies at:

www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/14_0202.htm

www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/14_0335.htm

TOP FOODS FOR POTASSIUM

It is recommended that adults consume 4,700 milligrams of potassium each day. But most barely eat half that amount.

Here are some good food sources of potassium.

- 1 baked sweet potato—694 mg
- 1 baked white potato—610 mg
- 1/2 cup white beans, canned—595 mg
- 8 oz. plain nonfat yogurt—579 mg
- 1/2 cup winter squash, cooked—448 mg
- 1 medium banana—422 mg

Learn more about potassium at: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/potassium.html

PURPLE HERITAGE COLLECTION JARS

Purple canning jars! Need I say more? For 2015, Jarden Home Brands is bringing back the “IMPROVED” series of jars first introduced in 1915. This is the third and final year for the colored limited-edition jars. The previous colors were blue and green. These jars come in pint and quart sizes. They can be used for canning and many other projects. As a reminder, while these are safe for canning, they should not be used for food preservation entries at the county fair or state fair as the color will make it difficult to see the food. Source: www.freshpreservingstore.com/

TIME TO TEST PRESSURE GAUGES

To ensure safe food processing with a pressure canner, dial gauge units must be tested yearly to verify accuracy. Presto Industries offers a testing unit that is used by many Extension offices to offer this service. The following brands of pressure canners can be tested with this device:

- *Presto
- *Maid of Honor
- *National
- *Kwik-Kook
- *Magic Seal
- *Cook Rite



ALL AMERICAN PRESSURE CANNER GAUGE

The All American Pressure cooker/canner is a weighted gauge canner. The dial gauge is on the lid for *reference only!* The gauge helps the user know when the canner is pressurized and when the pressure has dropped to zero to remove the lid safely. The gauge should be within +/- 2 psi of what the weighted gauge is set at when it jiggles. If the gauge is more than +/- of what the weight is set at when it jiggles, the dial gauge should be replaced. Source: www.allamericanchefsdesign.com/admin/FileUploads/Product_58.pdf

Dial gauges on All American canners cannot be tested with the Presto gauge tester!

NEW BALL BOOK FOR 2015

The Ball Blue Book is a “go to” source for many home food preservation enthusiasts for over 100 years. The 37th edition has a new look and 75 new recipes. In the 200 pages are over 500 recipes for canning, pickling, dehydrating, freezing, and much more. These tested recipes help consumers preserve food safely for later use. Learn more about this new book at www.freshpreservingstore.com/blue-book-guide-topreserving/shop/633468/

CHILD SAFETY

Small parts and small children don’t go together! Whether you have a small child living or visiting, make sure your home is kid-safe! A practical guide to use to distinguish how small is small, use the width of the cardboard toilet paper roll or the combined width of your index finger and ‘pointer’ finger. A young child can quickly put into his/her mouth any object that is that small or smaller. Be especially careful of small magnets and the popular button batteries found in greeting cards, remote controls, flashlights, etc.

It may be really tempting to dust off that old crib that’s been in the family for years, but make sure it will be safe for the new little one. Cribs should have:

- *A firm, tight-fitting mattress so the baby cannot get trapped between the mattress and crib;
- *Drop side cribs became illegal in June of 2011 making them illegal to sell or donate. (Too many infants died after slipping out of the side rails so cribs that have drop sides should be destroyed. These new standards are so stringent that consumers who still have a drop side crib are advised to destroy it and buy a new one.)
- *No missing, loose, broken, or improperly installed screws, brackets, or other hardware on the crib or mattress support.
- *No more than 2 3/8” (about the width of a soda can) between slats so that a baby’s body cannot fit through the slats.
- *No corner posts over 1/16” high so a baby’s clothing cannot catch.
- *No cutouts in the headboard or footboard so a baby’s head cannot get trapped.

Cribs for babies only need three things: your baby, a mattress, and a snug fitting sheet for the mattress.

ALL STRESSED OUT?

When you’re managing the everyday responsibilities of work, family, home and community responsibilities, it’s easy to feel stressed. Add to that the extra pressure of special occasions and life quickly becomes out of balance. To help keep stress under control, try:

- Turning to physical activity or exercise
- Take care of yourself (eat regularly, reduce caffeine and alcohol, drink more water, sleep)
- Avoid expecting perfection of yourself or others
- Get away for a while. If it’s impossible to get away physically, do so mentally
- Relax and SMILE! By putting on a happy face---even when you don’t feel like it—both your tension and the tension of others will be relieved. Remember, ‘this too shall pass’ and avoid taking yourself too seriously

There is nothing you can do to totally eliminate stress from your life...and you wouldn’t want to. Stress can be beneficial when it is used constructively and when it is under control.

LIVING WITH CHRONIC DISEASES

Do you live with the pain, discomfort, frustration and fatigue of a health condition that won't go away? River Valley Extension and Neighbor to Neighbor are partnering together to offer "KOHP" (Kansans Optimizing Health Program) on Tuesday afternoons, March 10 through April 28, 3:30-6:00pm at Concordia's Neighbor to Neighbor. KOHP is a six week series of classes designed to help participants manage the ongoing health challenges of chronic diseases such as arthritis, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. Family members are welcome to attend, also, to better understand the emotional, physical and social problems associated with chronic health conditions. For more information and/or to pre-register, contact Sister Jean at Neighbor to Neighbor 785-262-4215 or Pat at the River Valley Extension office in Concordia, 785-243-8185 by March 3, 2015.

THE CHALLENGES OF BEING MIDDLE-AGED

Individuals in midlife are often the strength of their families, their work-places, and their communities. Because they are so competent, their experience and talents are highly valued. While their life experiences enable them to offer leadership and support to others in the professional world, there may be conflicting challenges on the homefront. Adults in the 'sandwich generation' often have older family members who now need extra assistance and adolescent/teenage children who still need physical, emotional, and/or economic support.

Higher divorce rates, larger numbers of single parents, and the increasing cost of living, coupled with unemployment have contributed to greater numbers of adult children having financial struggles. Some families have reacted by the parents making their adult child's house payment (or rent) or opening their home for the adult child to move back in. If an adult child shares your residence, be clear about:

- 1) activities or behaviors that are prohibited in your home and the consequences if this is not followed
- 2) responsibilities and obligations of the adult child

If the adult child is a parent, decisions must be made on the grandparents' role in parenting the child(ren) Who is responsible for setting limits and disciplining the child(ren)?

When parents continue to provide financial help to adult children, be clear about repayment. Is the money a gift or loan? Discussions at the onset will help avoid future misunderstandings and problems that may arise.

SENIOR CONSUMER FRAUD PROGRAM

May 1, 2015 1:30-3pm
Apollo Towers Dining Room
330 West Court, Clay Center
Presented By: Adrian Serene
Kansas Assistant Attorney General

THE CAREGIVER JOURNEY

Rosalyn Carter has said that there are only four kinds of people in the world- those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers. It is estimated that approximately 66 million Americans age 18 or older have acted as unpaid family caregivers for an adult or child in the past year.

Caregivers can receive a variety of benefits from taking on the caregiving role, but the experience can also bring challenges and strain. This program will help caregivers manage stress and find local resources for assistance. This is a leader training and public meeting. Everyone is invited. There is no fee. Presented by Deanna Turner, District Agent on Aging.

March 24, 10:00am Concordia Extension Office
April 14, 2:00pm Belleville Extension Office

POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

Thursdays, April 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30th
9:30-11:00am

Colonial Acres, 350 Washington, Washington, KS

**Sessions Led by K-State Research and Extension
River Valley District Agents,
Patricia Gerhardt and Deanna Turner**

Are you helping a parent, spouse, friend, another relative who lives at home, in a nursing home, or across the country? *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* is an educational program designed to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a loved one. The classes give caregivers an opportunity to talk with other people taking care of family or friends.

The series of five how-to sessions includes Taking Care of You; Four Steps in Identifying and Reducing Stress; Communicating Feelings, Needs and Concerns; Communicating Effectively in Challenging Situations; Learning from Emotions; and Mastering Caregiving Decisions. The educational programs provide tips to encourage and assist the caregiver. Some caregivers continue to provide care for many years to their loved ones with a chronic disease.

The classes will be led by K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences District Agents, Patricia Gerhardt and Deanna Turner. Powerful Tools for Caregivers was previously taught in Concordia last fall. Participants reported that it was helpful to talk to other caregivers.

Registration is required to ensure program materials for each participant, but there is no charge for the classes. Please register by March 26th to the River Valley District Extension Office in Washington at 785-325-2121; Concordia at 785-243-8185; Clay Center at 785-632-5335 or email Deanna Turner at dturner@ksu.edu or Patricia Gerhardt at pgerhardt@ksu.edu There is no fee for the class. Sign up today!

KEEPING OLDER FARMERS SAFE

Agriculture, one of the nation's most dangerous occupations, is blessed to have a large number of senior farmers. While their experience and work ethics are hard to beat, both the farmer and the farmer's family need to recognize age-related risks and have the willingness to modify expectations and physical activity accordingly.

It's normal for muscle strength and mobility to decrease with age. This can result in farmers compensating by adopting unsafe work practices or taking unsafe shortcuts. Slower reaction times intensify hazards and possibly cause injuries that otherwise would not happen. Vision and hearing losses are fairly common as a person gets older. Farmers typically work in situations that do not have adequate light (ex. fields at dusk; barn stalls at night) and/or work without protective eyewear. In addition to normal hearing loss as one ages, farmers suffer from more noise-induced hearing loss. After years of exposure to loud machinery and/or confined livestock, an older farmer may not be able to hear the warning signs of an approaching hazard. Age-related medical conditions can also determine how safely an older farmer can complete work tasks. Arthritis and rheumatism affect joints which can make it harder to safely climb on and off machinery and get out of the way of angry livestock. When fingers, hands, arms and shoulders are involved, it becomes more difficult to quickly manipulate tractor and machinery controls.

To decrease the risks around the farm (and keep our treasured farmers healthy and around longer), the following steps can be taken:

Increase light levels in the shop, barns, other buildings and around the farmyard in general.

Decrease the chance of falls by adding nonslip surfaces to walkways and steps. Make sure there are secure handrails where needed on steps and stairs.

Monitor over-the-counter and prescription medications that may affect the ability to safely drive and operate machinery.

Limit tractor operation to daylight hours.

Use tractors with rollover protection and machinery with safety shields properly installed.

(Source: Iowa Extension)



DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Sharpen your driving skills! Prevent an accident from happening. Lower your auto insurance premium too. Enroll in the upcoming one day Defensive Driving Course offered at the River Valley Extension District Office, 322 Grant Avenue in Clay Center. The class will be Monday, March 30, 9am-4pm. The cost is \$15 per person and the registration fee is due by March 20th. In order to have a class, a minimum of 15 people have to sign up.

Many defensive driving tips will be presented by Trooper Ben Gardner from the Kansas Highway Patrol. The class is very helpful and enjoyable to take. It is completed in one day. Participants can bring their lunch with refrigeration available or go out for a one hour lunch. Breaks and snacks are provided. Participants do not drive or take a test. Several insurance companies recognize the benefits of defensive driving classes and provide a 5-10% premium discount to graduates of this course. The certificate received is effective for three years. All ages of drivers can sign up for the class.

If interested in participating and for more information, pre-register to the Clay Center Extension Office by calling 785-632-5335. The registration fee is due by March 20th. Checks are payable to *AAA of Kansas*. Sign up today! If the weather is bad, the class will be rescheduled.

Let Deanna know if there is interest in a class in your area. Evening classes require two nights with three hours of class.

BRUSH UP ON YOUR ETIQUETTE BASICS

Following are some helpful etiquette tips that can be used by everyone:

1. When using utensils, start with the needed utensil farthest from your plate.
2. Avoid putting your cell phone, keys, purse, etc. on the table.
3. Chew with your mouth closed and do not speak with food in your mouth.
4. Food platters, baskets or pitchers should be passed to the right.
5. The salt and pepper should always be passed together.
6. If butter is passed in a dish, place some of it onto the edge of your plate and pass the dish on.
7. If you need to get up during your meal, place your napkin on your chair. Once you are finished with your meal, place your napkin to the left of your plate, not folded but placed neatly.
8. If you would like coffee, place your coffee cup in the upright position; if you do not want coffee, turn your coffee cup down.

PLAN NOW TO PLANT ASPARAGUS

Asparagus is a crop that home gardeners should consider for a number of reasons.

First, this crop is a perennial and with proper establishment and care will survive and provide an abundant crop for many years.

Secondly, as a perennial crop, asparagus will produce year after year with no tillage.

Finally, it is a highly nutritious food that fits well into the USDA guidelines encouraging all of us to consume more fruits and vegetables.

The first step is to select the appropriate planting site. Asparagus should be planted as a perimeter crop in the garden or along the edge of the yard where it will not interfere with other garden tillage. It prefers full sun and so plant in an area of the garden that gets full sun from early morning through at least mid to late afternoon. It does best in a well-drained soil and so site preparation is a must.

It is too early to plant asparagus, but it is not too early to make those plans and prepare the soil in the planting site as this is a critical step in the success of perennial crops.

The first step in site preparation is to take a soil test to determine the level of nutrients in the soil. Taking soil samples is pretty simple and the procedure is outlined at <http://www.agronomy.k-state.edu/services/soiltesting/homeowner-samples/soil-analysis/samplecollection.html>. Soil sampling probes are available for check-out at any RVED office as well as soil sample bags. Bring the soil sample into the local extension office and we can get it sent into the K-State Soils Lab for analysis. Once that analysis is completed we can then make appropriate fertilizer recommendations to start the crop off right.

The next step is to work the soil as early in the spring as possible. Be careful not to work wet soil as clods will form that will take time to break down. After the initial tillage is complete, add two inches of organic matter to the surface along with the recommended fertilizer and till again to blend the organic matter and fertilizer into the planting zone.

You are now ready to plant in the ideal window of March 15 to April 15 for our area. Asparagus can be propagated from seed, but is more often started from 1-year-old crowns. These crowns are planted deeply; about 8 inches deep either in a hole for each crown or in a trench. Space plants 18 to 24 inches apart.

Varieties that are adapted for Kansas include Jersey Giant, Jersey King, Jersey Knight, Jersey Supreme and Purple Passion. These are all male hybrids that will produce three times as much as our old Martha or Mary Washington varieties. Males have a number of advantages over females in that they live longer, emerge earlier in the spring, are more productive and eliminate potential volunteer plants that can reduce the productivity of a planting.

As the season progresses fill in the trench gradually to encourage growth. Competition from weeds in the planting will result in slow establishment, so control those weeds with a shallow hoeing both during and after establishment. Be cautious not to hoe so deep as to damage roots or crowns of the plants. Enjoy many years of nutritious eating!

LETTUCE-TRANSPLANT OR DIRECT SEED?

Although lettuce is most often planted directly into the garden from seed, it can be started from transplants. The advantage is that transplants allow lettuce to mature earlier and escape the excessive heat that can lead to a strong flavor and bitterness.

Lettuce is typically planted in March to early April. Transplants can be set out at the same time as direct seeding. Since lettuce will require four to five weeks from indoor seeding to transplanting, early March is a good time to begin.



To start lettuce indoors, use a seed starting mix and plant shallow. Lettuce is a relatively small seed and requires light for germination, so it may not germinate or emerge if planted too deeply. A nice thing about lettuce being a cool season crop is that soil media temperature of 60 to 68 degrees will encourage germination. This temperature is much

easier to achieve in our homes than for some plants that might require some supplemental heat to be warm enough to germinate. However, one must watch the media temperature carefully, as seed can enter a thermal dormancy if germination temperatures are excessive.

Once the plants emerge then temperatures should be reduced to a level of 55 to 60 degrees. This is ideal for growth of lettuce and will help the plant prepare for the outdoor temperatures that you will subject it to once it is set out in the garden. As with all transplants, harden them off a bit to help prevent transplant shock. Lettuce does not have an extensive root system, so regular watering will be required while growing transplants and throughout the growing season. Spacing of plants when setting out will vary with type. Leaf lettuce plants are spaced 4 to 6 inches apart, buttercrunch, bibb, and romaine are set at 6 to 8 inches apart and head lettuce should be at least 8 inches apart in the row.

Time to maturity varies depending on the type of lettuce, with leaf lettuce being the quickest, followed by bibb, romaine, and buttercrunch lettuce. Head or crisphead lettuce is the slowest and is least likely to mature before becoming bitter.

Fertilize before planting according to soil test. Plants should also be sidedressed when about 1/3 grown. Sidedressing is done with fertilizers that have more nitrogen than phosphorus and potassium. Use 1/3 cup of nitrate of soda (16-0-0) or 1/4 cup of a 27-3-3, 29-5-4 or similar fertilizer per 10 feet of row. The latter are lawn fertilizers, but will work well for sidedressing as long as they do not contain weed killers or weed preventers.

Winter Canola in North Central Kansas

CANOLA SCHOOL

March 5th
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Heavy's BBQ
103 W 7th, Concordia, KS



**EXPERTS IN THE AREA OF CANOLA PRODUCTION IN KANSAS WILL
BE PROVIDING THEIR EXPERTISE AND SHARING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR GROWING CANOLA IN NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS.**

Topics:

- Planting date
- Fertility
- Variety selection
- Winter survival
- Pest, disease, and weed control
- Harvest management
- Insurance
- Marketing

There is good success and a increasing interest in canola production in Kansas. Producers, landowners, and those in agribusiness are welcome to attend this meeting and learn about this profitable oil crop.

Free Event

Lunch by Heavy's BBQ

Pre-register by March 2nd

For **Registration** Contact
River Valley Extension District
Concordia Office 785-243-8185
Kim Larson, Agent

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**RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT
“2015 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS”**

DATE	TIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
March 5	10am-3pm	NCK Canola School	Heavy’s BBQ-Concordia, KS
March 10-April 28 (Tuesdays)	3:30-6pm	Kansans Optimizing Health Program	Neighbor to Neighbor-Concordia, KS
March 13&14		Kansas Honey Producers Association Meeting	Manhattan
March 15-May 9		Walk Kansas	State-wide Program
March 24	10am	The Caregiver Journey	Concordia Extension Office
March 30	9am-4pm	Defensive Driving Course	Clay Center Extension Office
April 14	2pm	The Caregiver Journey	Belleville Extension Office
April 2,9,16,23,30 (Thursdays)	9:30-11am	Powerful Tools for Caregivers	Colonial Acres-Washington, KS
May 1	1:30-3pm	Senior Consumer Fraud Program	Apollo Towers-Clay Center, KS
May 9	8:30am-4:30pm	Tractor and Machinery Safety Training	CTI John Deere-Concordia, KS

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