



4-H and Districting



4-H Thrives in Districts

In Kansas, districts began forming within K-State Research and Extension in 1994. As of July 1, 2010, 33 counties are in 13 extension districts, and district 4-H Youth Development programs are thriving in new and exciting ways.

In thriving districts, local programs combine strengths and deliver greater outcomes. Synergy results when two or more counties work together to create a new organization where the outcomes are greater than the individual efforts of each. Districting expands 4-H opportunities. It provides a richer, more encompassing experience for youth and their families because professional staff time focuses on youth programming.

Joint and merged programs thrive when counties form a district. In addition to the many new possibilities, ongoing local opportunities continue with established partnerships and traditions.

Ongoing examples might include county fairs, councils, foundations, or scholarships. Local fair boards manage county fairs. A staff liaison in each local K-State Research and Extension office will continue to maximize communication and coordination for the county fair.

4-H District Success Stories

- Two agents, one in each county, collaborated to teach *Character Counts!* workshops to 4-H'ers, volunteers, parents, teachers, and other school staff.
- A new 4-H district media team formed to promote 4-H Youth Development using radio and video.
- By securing several grants, day camps were offered on leadership and citizenship, 4-H Science, and two sessions focused on Water, Paper, and Society.

*Sarah Maass, 4-H Youth Development Agent
Central Kansas District*

- The 4-H shooting sports project has been expanded to offer additional disciplines.

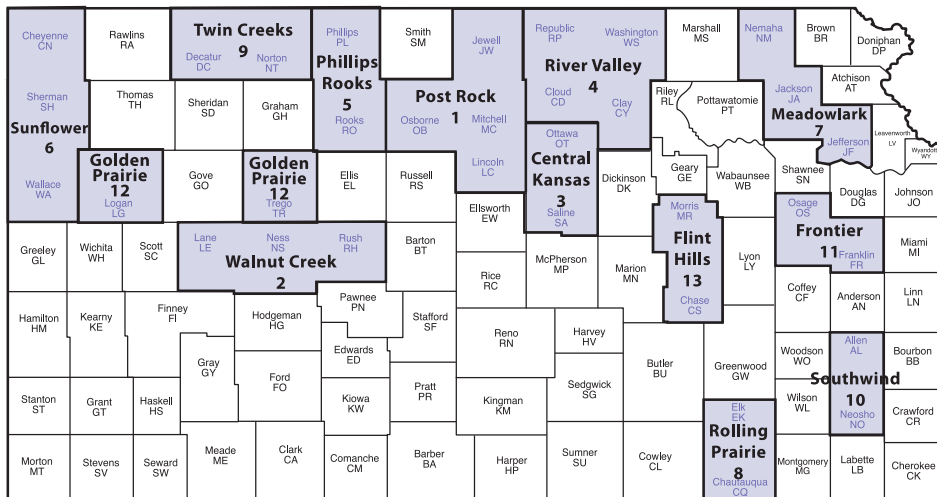
*Richard Fechter, Director
Rolling Prairie District*

- 4-H Day has been combined into one district event in a central location.

- District 4-H members see the bigger picture of 4-H by going outside county boundaries.

- Three of the four counties have joined to form one district-wide junior leader group.
- Sharing coordination responsibilities for district delegations at events allows for more efficient use of staff time.

*Aliesa Woods, Director
Post Rock District*



Kansas Counties Create Districts: Counties began forming districts within K-State Research and Extension in 1994.

- While traveling together to events, 4-H members have a positive experience while broadening their social networks.
- Youth are offered new opportunities by sharing volunteer project leaders.

*Anna Muir, Director
Phillips-Rooks District*

- Increased opportunities and support are available in the dog, swine, horse, foods, and shooting sports projects.
- Ambassador teams work together to promote 4-H district-wide.
- We can support youth of military families by hosting an Operation Military Kids day camp.
- A school enrichment check-out program is active.

*Ross Mosteller, 4-H Youth Development Agent
Meadowlark District*

- We host district-wide annual training sessions for 4-H Community Leader, 4-H Club, and 4-H Council officers.
- 4-H memberships have increased and two new community clubs were formed.
- 4-H Cloverbud membership is now available for 5- and 6-year-olds.
- A master community-leader calendar template is being used across the district.
- For the sake of communication and a uniform message, it's important to establish consistent policies and management. A district 4-H Program Management Guide details policies for enrollment cards, due dates, drop or add requirements, project lists, and how materials are distributed; volunteer program maintenance and training; the use of Kansas Award Portfolio (KAP); and 4-H club financial reviews.

*David Key, Director
Meadowlark District*

- The Soil Conservation Service and Farm Bureau collaborated with us to offer district-wide water festivals and ag days.
- Project-specific volunteers offer learning opportunities across county lines.
- After-school programs are being offered for kindergarten through fourth grades.

- 4-H Ambassadors – three youth from each county – work together to promote 4-H and offer annual day camps in each county.
- District-wide junior leaders meet for activities and collaboration.

*Robyn Deines, 4-H Youth Development Agent
Walnut Creek District*

- A full-time 4-H program assistant is employed in each of the four counties. All program assistants have been through 4-H basic operations training and are encouraged to attend updates and training sessions in the area.
- The Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) process is centralized, allowing one agent to implement and administer the program, offer training, and oversee the process.
- District-wide 4-H Day is rotated around the district, with each county hosting every four years. Expanded educational activities – such as an entomology workshop, or family and consumer sciences judging – are included in the day's events.
- 4-H officer training and VIP orientation are held along with district-wide project leader training, offering seven different topics.
- Multiple livestock weigh-ins are held throughout the district, allowing busy families to attend any weigh-in. This is a convenience for families who live closer to another weigh-in site or have schedule conflicts.

*John Forshee, Director
River Valley District*

Compiled and written by K-State Research and Extension Area 4-H Youth Development Specialists: Diane Mack, Beth Hinshaw, Rod Buchele, and Deryl Waldren