



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

Frontier  
District



# 2024 Annual Report



# Contents

- 2 Letter from the Director
- 3 Inaugural *Women in Agriculture* Conference Highlights Relevant Topics
- 4 Adventures of the Animal Kind!
- 5 Food: Recipes Leading to Good Health Take Many Forms
- 7 Drone Technology in Agriculture: Where Is It Now and Where Is It Going?
- 8 Achieving Fitness for Quality of Life at Every Age
- 10 New Horticulture and Natural Resources Agent Flourishes in Frontier District
- 12 Prescribed Burn Workshop Highlights Critical Knowledge, Techniques
- 13 Intentional Sharing of the District's Expertise Through Chamber Events
- 14 Frontier District Appreciation Awards Presented to Three Exceptional Volunteers

*On the cover: Emerald Hill, located in far northwestern Anderson County, sits near the other two counties of the Frontier District, Franklin and Osage. Views from the hilltop showcase the district's natural beauty and bounty.*

# Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

In 2024, K-State Research and Extension launched a new initiative in collaboration with the K-State Office of Engagement and K-State 105 to identify the key issues affecting Kansans. As a part of this statewide effort, the Frontier District hosted three community meetings to bring together local partners, stakeholders, and volunteers to engage in meaningful conversations about the challenges and opportunities facing our region. Through these discussions, a range of pressing issues emerged—including water, rural health, broadband access and childcare.

Working together to address these critical issues is what drives us. Our dedicated team of agents, program managers, nutrition educators, and support staff continues to listen to community voices and collaborate on solutions that make a real difference. By fostering open dialogue and leveraging local expertise, we are building stronger, more resilient communities across the Frontier District and beyond. We remain committed to empowering individuals and strengthening the communities we serve—today and in the future. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in building a stronger, healthier Kansas.

Please enjoy reading about the impact of our work!

Sincerely,

Rebecca McFarland  
District Director

# Inaugural Women in Agriculture Conference Highlights

## Relevant Topics

### *Collaboration of local organizations leads to success*

The inaugural Women in Agriculture conference in March 2024 brought together women—and several men—from across the Frontier District to gain valuable industry insights, foster connections and empower individuals in their agricultural roles. The conference covered a wide array of relevant topics, offering practical knowledge and strategies for personal and professional growth.

Brandi Buzzard Frobose shared her experiences and insights on how women can effectively advocate for the agricultural community. She encouraged women to voice their concerns and contribute to shaping the industry.

Research-based information on land values, leases, and rental rates was shared by Robin Reid, K-State Extension Farm Economist, offering practical advice for landowners and producers. Personnel from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) shared insights into important government programs designed to support farmers and ranchers. These speakers presented critical information to help attendees understand how to access resources for their businesses.



*Rod Schaub, Frontier District ag agent, welcomes attendees and shares how an idea discussed in the Program Development Committee (PDC) grew into a full-fledged conference.*

Rebecca McFarland, director of the Frontier District, led a session on stress management and resilience in agriculture, focusing on how to cope with the emotional and mental challenges of working in the industry. This presentation allowed attendees to take a closer look at the impact of stress on their personal and professional lives. Strategies for coping with stress and maintaining mental well-being were considered.

The conference also featured discussions on crop insurance and livestock risk protection by personnel from Frontier Farm Credit. This session provided essential information on strategies to mitigate risks and safeguard agricultural businesses, which are ever-present concerns for those involved in production agriculture.

Carrie Williams presented on grain marketing, discussing how global trade policies and local market trends impact marketing strategies. These comments provided valuable insights on how to optimize the marketing of grain.

Rod Schaub, Frontier District livestock agent, observed that nearly all 70 attendees found value in the diverse topics discussed. “When you look at the survey results, each presentation was highlighted by one attendee or another as being the most helpful,” he said, emphasizing the conference’s broad appeal and usefulness. The post-conference survey underscored this sentiment; 100% of respondents rated the event as “valuable” or “very valuable.”

The event’s success was made possible through collaboration, as the Frontier District worked alongside the Conservation Districts and Farm Bureau Associations in Franklin and Osage counties, Ottawa Coop, and Frontier Farm Credit. These efforts ensured a valuable and impactful conference, demonstrating local agricultural organizations’ strength and unity in supporting women in the industry.



*Rebecca McFarland, Frontier District director, responds to questions and comments after delivering her presentation, “Women in Ag; Developing Skills to Cope and Build Resiliency.”*



# Adventures of the Animal Kind!

## *4-Hers gain knowledge, experiences over spring break*

Spring Break 2024 brought Frontier District 4-Hers an exciting opportunity to deepen their livestock knowledge in an engaging, hands-on environment!

Animal Adventure Camp returned for its second year at Camp Chippewa outside Ottawa, building on the success of 2023's Camp Livestock. This year, the camp expanded to cover all 4-H livestock projects, offering youth a broader experience.

The two-day overnight camp brought together 70 youth from the district's three counties for valuable education and experiences. Campers learned essential skills in breed identification, animal care, nutrition, husbandry, and showing techniques. The camp also included fun and educational rotations such as a leadership course for team building, archery, gaga ball, agriculture advocacy, a skill-a-thon/evaluation, and even a wagon ride.

Beyond technical knowledge, the camp environment encouraged all youth, from younger participants to teens, to form new friendships and build meaningful relationships across county lines. Older youth had the opportunity to mentor younger campers, contributing to leadership development for all involved. A team of 20 teen counselors played an important role in planning and facilitating the camp, while 15 adult volunteers shared their expertise and supported the activities.



*Animal Adventure campers and volunteers gather outside the Camp Chippewa dining hall early on the first morning of camp.*



*Talon Jasper, former Lucky 13 4-H Club member and camp volunteer, shares information and answers questions about the beef project.*



*Braden Gillespie, Seekers Not Slackers 4-H Club member, discusses the sheep project with campers, volunteers, and 4-H youth development agent Jessica Flory.*

An additional highlight of the camp was the national Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) certification, earned by 70 individuals through a special session at the close of the camp.

To support the camp activities, almost \$9,400 was provided by 8 sponsors. Total economic support provided by sponsors and volunteers was just over \$27,000!

# Food: Recipes Leading to Good Health Take Many Forms

Building on K-State Research and Extension's long-standing commitment to improving food systems and nutrition, the Frontier District continued its focus on healthy and safe food in 2024. Through multiple educational programs, the district reached hundreds of individuals across its communities, helping them make informed decisions about their food choices and adoption of healthier lifestyles.

## Food Systems Roundtable

In November 2023, the Frontier District hosted a Local Food Systems Roundtable, one of 14 held throughout the state. As the roundtables were designed to do, the event brought together approximately 25 individuals from Ottawa and surrounding communities. The event provided a platform for local food system stakeholders to discuss their challenges, needs, and future goals. By participating in this effort that eventually involved 400 Kansans, the district contributed valuable feedback that will help shape the future of the state's local food systems. Those who attended the roundtable in Ottawa represented multiple sectors of the local food economy, which helped those individuals identify common goals to strengthen regional collaborations.



Participants in the Food Systems Roundtable work through questions posed to them by the facilitators of the event.

## SNAP-Ed

Under the leadership of Chelsea Richmond, FCS agent, and with the help of two full-time nutrition educators, Anita Sobba and Kris Wallace, the Frontier District provided nutrition education (classes, recipe demonstrations, tastings and other activities) in 2024 to 115 adults and 315 youth in limited resource audiences. With funding this year of approximately \$145,000, these individuals, who might otherwise have had limited access to nutrition education, were reached.

Adults participating in classes at food pantries, senior centers and low-income housing sites, reported significant improvements in daily routines, such as increased physical activity, consumption of more protein, improved cooking skills and greater confidence in the kitchen. Youth participants also made strides, with many committing to healthier food choices such as drinking more water, eating fewer sugary snacks and following food safety practices.

Additionally, the district's SNAP-Ed program focused on improving food access through policies, systems, and environment (PSE) work. These efforts included serving on the Franklin County Food Policy Council, assisting with deliveries for the Connect Mobile Food Pantry, working with food pantries to post nutrition nudges to encourage choosing healthier food options, promoting the Kansas Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and assisting with the development of a summer meal program for youth in Ottawa. These efforts contributed to lasting positive changes in the health behaviors of adults and youth in the community.

## ServSafe

In 2024, Chelsea Richmond, FCS agent, provided a ServSafe Food Handlers training at Crest High School in Anderson County. The training equipped 13 students with essential food safety knowledge, including personal hygiene, controlling time and temperature, preventing cross-contamination and cleaning and sanitizing; all participants passed the final exam with an average score of 92%. Post-survey results showed that 100% of participants committed to improving food safety practices, including proper handwashing, temperature control, and preventing cross-contamination. This training directly benefits the community by ensuring that those preparing food for others are following the highest standards of safety, which helps reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.

**"Post-survey results showed that 100% of participants committed to improving food safety practices."**



## Kansas Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program



Anita Sobba, a Frontier District SNAP-Ed nutrition educator, shares a recipe and sample of the dish with a shopper at the Garnett Farmers Market in August 2024.

In 2024, the Frontier District again partnered with the Area Agency on Aging to distribute vouchers through the Kansas Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, assisting approximately 80 older adults and providing a \$4,000 benefit to the district. Eligible older adults received \$50 in vouchers through the Lyndon or Garnett office to use at local farmers markets for fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs and honey. At the Garnett Farmers Market, Anita Sobba, a SNAP-Ed nutrition educator for the district, distributed recipes and provided tastings to introduce new ways to incorporate local produce into daily meals. These events were held May through September, the months the market was open. Approximately 515 individuals were reached, expanding their understanding of healthy eating while supporting local farmers.

## Youth Handwashing Programs

Handwashing is a simple yet powerful practice for preventing illness, and in 2024, the Frontier District engaged youth in learning proper handwashing techniques. Programs at Anderson County Day on the Farm, Ottawa Middle School, and the 4-H Foods and Nutrition Day Camp reached approximately 150 youth. Through these interactive sessions, students not only learned the importance of handwashing in food preparation, but they also practiced the technique, ensuring they could take these habits home and continue to apply them in their daily lives. These programs play a key role in fostering lifelong habits that contribute to safer, healthier food handling.

***"Programs at Anderson County Day on the Farm, Ottawa Middle School, and the 4-H Foods and Nutrition Day Camp reached approximately 150 youth."***

## Summer Library Partnerships



Before eating her healthy snacks, a participant in the Lyndon Library Summer program, took time to color a learning sheet that went along with the lesson.

The Frontier District partnered with libraries in Lyndon, Osage City and Wellsville in summer 2024 to provide educational programs for approximately 90 youth. These programs were taught by Chelsea Richmond, FCS agent specializing in health and nutrition, and focused on USDA's MyPlate and the importance of eating foods from all five food groups to have balanced meals and snacks to grow, play, learn, and stay healthy. In Lyndon and Osage City, youth practiced preparing healthy snacks that included all five food groups, while in Wellsville, youth participated in a "tasteful tour," trying new foods. Participants not only gained knowledge about nutrition, but also increased their willingness to try new foods, including kiwi, jicama, quinoa, and celery, for the first time. These experiences empowered youth to make healthier food choices and share their newfound knowledge with their families.

# Drone Technology in Agriculture: Where Is It Now and Where Is It Going?

*Experts, attendees engage in interactive event to explore uncrewed aerial vehicles*



Rod Schaub, Frontier District ag agent, wraps up a panel presentation on Sept. 10, 2024. Panel members, from left, are Kelly Navinsky-Wenzl, KDA program manager, pesticide and fertilizer division; Trevor Witt, owner, Kairos Geospatial; Haley Larson, K-State Olathe professor of animal health and nutrition; Jaymelynn Farney, KSRE beef specialist; and Spencer Schrader, K-State Salina UAS flight operations manager.

program manager for the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Pesticide and Fertilizer Division; and Haley Larson, K-State Olathe professor in Animal Health and Nutrition.

One of the highlights of the event was its interactive nature. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions, engage in discussions, and witness live drone flights. This environment provided valuable insights into the broad, real-world applications of drone technology in agriculture.

The event's impact extended beyond the meeting in Garnett. Because of the interest generated from the meeting and the resulting benefits to K-State Salina, the program waived the payment for its group to make the trip and give the presentation. "They've had people who attended the meeting signing up to take courses to get their FAA license to fly drones," said Rod Schaub, Frontier District agriculture agent. "Both entities found the meeting beneficial."

Schaub has also been asked by individuals leading the Kansas Agricultural and Rural Leadership (KARL) program to provide information on having Spencer Schrader incorporate information on drone technology into its program.

Those attending the event in Garnett expressed high satisfaction, praising the venue, staff, and quality of information shared. "The common theme from those in attendance was great meeting, great location, great staff and great information," Schaub said.

The Frontier District's co-sponsors for the event were the Coffey County Extension Office and the Conservation Districts in Anderson and Coffey counties.

In the ever-changing agricultural technology environment, uncrewed aerial vehicles, commonly called drones, have sparked much interest in how they have been and will be integrated into the industry as useful tools. On Sept. 10, 2024, approximately 90 individuals from across Kansas gathered in Garnett for the opportunity to get a firsthand look at current drone technology and to hear from leading experts involved in on-going research.

The event was a comprehensive look at current use of drones and possible directions future use might go. Industry experts presented on a wide range of topics, including herbicide application, feedyard research, natural resource conservation, and pasture management.

Spencer Schrader, flight operations manager for K-State Salina's Uncrewed Aircraft System program, gave an overview that covered important aspects such as regulations, drone types, and making aerial applications with a drone. Additional speakers included Jaymelynn Farney, K-State Research and Extension Beef Systems Specialist; Trevor Witt, owner of Kairos Geospatial; Kelly Navinsky-Wenzl,



Logan Diller, K-State graduate student who conducts research under Haley Larson, shares with meeting participants information on the tablet he uses to control his drone.



# Achieving Fitness for Quality of Life at Every Age

Over the past year, the Frontier Extension District pursued its commitment to fostering better health and well-being for its community members. With a focus on age-appropriate exercises and activities, the district offered a variety of programs aimed at improving fitness for the desired quality of life; three programs are highlighted here.

## *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy*

Frontier District Family and Consumer Sciences agents Chelsea Richmond and Janae McNally conducted the *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy* program at two locations in 2024: Garnett (taught by Chelsea) and Osage City (team-taught by Chelsea and Janae). The agents led a total of 25 individuals through the program. Each of the two classes consisted of an 8-week session, with participants meeting twice each week to engage in strength training exercises designed to improve quality of life and maintain independence.

The impact of the classes was evident, with 100% of the participants reporting improvement in balance, flexibility, and/or agility. Key accomplishments reported at the end of the classes included:

100% reported that personal achievements, such as increasing weights or feeling

stronger, motivated them to stay active.

95% felt more motivated to engage in physical activity regularly.

74% increased their stretching activities, and 68% increased their strengthening activities.

88% valued the social interactions within the class, highlighting the importance of community in promoting wellness.

Participant feedback further illustrated the program's impact with comments such as "it's really helped me when climbing stairs," "my energy level has increased, and I have accomplished more," and "my balance is better and my strength has improved."

In addition, several participants in Osage City established a group text thread to continue supporting each other's fitness goals, which shows the program's lasting effect on participants' commitment to health beyond the class.

The district agents not only maintained their instructor certifications to teach *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy*, but also kept their CPR and First Aid certificates up-to-date!



*Chelsea Richmond and Janae McNally, Frontier District family and consumer science agents, prepare to lead a Stay Strong, Stay Healthy class at the Osage City Public Library on August 8, 2024.*



*Chelsea Richmond and Janae McNally lead participants through arm exercises in a Stay Strong, Stay Healthy class during summer 2024.*



## Matter of Balance



Janae McNally, adult development and aging & family resource management agent, leads a Matter of Balance class in Williamsburg on August 7, 2024.

The Frontier District offered one session of the *Matter of Balance* program in 2024. The 8-week program, which focuses on preventing falls and increasing activity levels among older adults, was offered in Williamsburg and had 9 participants; this class was led by Janae McNally, adult development and aging & family resource management agent. Participants learned to reduce their fear of falling by viewing falls as controllable, setting goals for increasing activity levels, making small changes to reduce fall risks at home, and exercising to increase strength and balance. They also conducted a home safety evaluation and learned to get up and down safely.

Midway through the 2024 session, several participants shared that they were already making changes in their daily lives with the tools and resources provided by the class.

When the class concluded in August, 75% of participants said the materials presented were useful and informative, and more than 50% reported that as a result of participating in the class, they felt more comfortable talking with others about their fears of falling and planned to make changes in their environment. One participant shared that the class helped reduce their fear of falling by teaching them safe ways to cope with life after a fall. This shift in mindset is empowering for adults to live independently and confidently.

## Walk Kansas

The Frontier District had another successful season of participating in the statewide *Walk Kansas* program in 2024! The district had 66 individuals participate on 11 teams, and those individuals collectively logged enough activity (15 minutes of activity equals 1 Walk Kansas Mile) to walk 8,074 miles! On average, each individual walked approximately 122 miles, over a quarter of the length of Kansas (east to west/west to east). Additionally, 7 of the 11 teams met the physical activity goal they had set at the beginning of the program.

*Walk Kansas* is designed to help the state's residents improve their lifestyle habits, including exercise and nutrition. *Walk Kansas* is an 8-week program, which research shows is the length of time it takes to make an activity into a routine!

*Walk Kansas* is celebrating its 25th year in 2025; hopefully the 2024 participants continued their training in the "off season" so that the 25th anniversary will be even more impressive for them!

Frontier District participants  
logged enough activity to walk

8,074  
miles

during Walk Kansas 2024!

# New Horticulture and Natural Resources Agent Flourishes in Frontier District

*Getting to know community members was first step*

The Frontier District welcomed its new horticulture and natural resources agent, Lauren Gammill, in mid-2024. On her second day in the office, Gammill met many community members through a meet-and-greet organized for that purpose. The county and local fair season, which began soon after her arrival, gave Gammill the opportunity to meet many more members of the community as she assisted at the fairs.

"I met so many people of all ages; it was so much fun," said Gammill. "I even took my husband to several of the evening events, so he met some of my coworkers and many community members, too."

Gammill quickly put her horticulture skills to work by helping Ryan Schaub, district crops and farm management agent, judge the farm products and horticulture exhibits at the Richmond Free Fair in early July. Taking a solo leap, Gammill then judged the floriculture exhibits at the Miami County Fair.

In addition to on-boarding as a new agent and getting acquainted with fellow agents in surrounding counties and districts, Gammill took on programming at the Pomona Library to educate children on the structure of the flower. "I really enjoyed watching these children show their parents and grandparents the flowers we had built," said Gammill. "Learning new skills and knowledge are important, but connecting more closely with family members is far more valuable for young children."

Once school began, Gammill took programming to the Appanoose elementary school to provide students with two lessons on growing basil and the life cycle of the seed.

Arriving in the district during the summer growing season, Gammill began to immediately respond to calls for assistance with lawns, vegetables, flowers and trees. She also learned that branding projects, placing the district's name on them, encourages members of the public to ask the Frontier District for help with projects and educational resources. Gammill documented nearly 500 contacts before the end of September!

Gammill also updated the kiosk at the Garnett Pollinator Garden. "Presenting horticulture and natural resources information in creative ways is a task I really enjoy," Gammill said. "I hope to update the posters in the kiosk monthly so that people walking or riding the trail have something new to learn all the time."



*Lauren Gammill, Frontier District horticulture and natural resources agent, prepares to start on her first projects with the Extension Master Gardeners, the preparation of gardens and a kiosk at the Garnett Depot.*



## Extension Master Gardeners (EMG)

Upon arriving in the Frontier District, Gammill began recruiting a new cohort of Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs) to incorporate into the district's existing program. Classes for the new recruits began September 5, and these individuals worked alongside the official EMG group cleaning and preparing the Garnett pollinator garden for seeding.

Gammill said monthly EMG meetings have had at least 50% attendance and that phone calls between her and the EMGs have increased. EMGs have logged over 40 hours of volunteer work in the past few months! It has been helpful to have various people working on the different projects. Each Master Gardener should volunteer at least 20 hours each year, which will give back to the community in many different ways.

As of August 2024, EMG projects included a depot garden in Anderson County and a depot garden in Franklin County, the Garnett Arthur Capper Memorial Garden, gardens at the Garnett square and library, and garden beds at the Frontier Extension District office in Lyndon.

"I'm pretty sure 2025 will be a busy year for the master gardeners!" Gammill said.



*Butterfly milkweed, pale purple coneflower, and showy partridge pea were saved as Extension Master Gardeners cleared the existing pollinator garden at the Garnett Depot.*

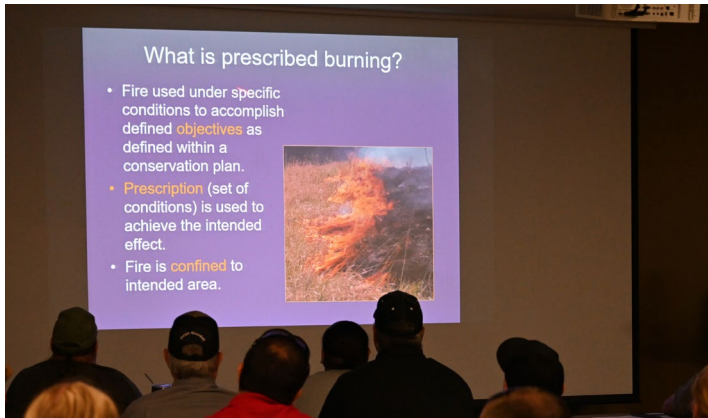


*Extension Master Gardeners clear the existing overrun pollinator garden at the Garnett Depot in preparation for it to become a native flower garden.*

# Prescribed Burn Workshop Highlights Critical Knowledge, Techniques

*Attendees rate event as “Excellent”*

Prescribed burns are an essential tool for maintaining healthy grasslands, but the techniques and precautions associated with these burns require both knowledge and skill. Teaching landowners and producers the proper way to conduct controlled fires remains a challenge. The Frontier District’s prescribed burn workshop in February 2024 reached full capacity with 70 participants, and registration had to be closed early—an indication of the demand for this critical education.



*A slide shown early in the workshop gives all attendees a clear definition of prescribed burning.*

To supplement the program, individuals from the Eastern Kansas Prescribed Burn Association in Miami County showcased firefighting equipment and shared their expertise when the meeting broke for lunch. This interactive experience allowed participants to better understand the tools and techniques to make a burn safe and effective.

The response to the workshop was overwhelmingly positive. Eighty percent of respondents to a post-event survey rated the workshop as either “Excellent” or “Great.” When asked what they had learned, attendees shared valuable insights: the impact of humidity and air temperature on a burn; the importance of creating fire breaks that are ten times the height of the fuel; different ignition methods that can be used to start a fire; why fire travels so much faster going up a hill; and the importance to plan, prepare, and then communicate during the fire. One attendee commented on the survey, “Excellent program; thank you for putting this on.”

Given the response to the 2024 meeting, it will likely be repeated in coming years with updated information, said Ryan Schaub, Frontier District agriculture agent specializing in crop production and farm management. “Prescribed burns are not only necessary to regulate woody encroachment on prairie grasses but also provide numerous benefits—improving forage quality, boosting wildlife habitat, enhancing grazing distribution and reducing wildfire risks,” explained Ryan Schaub. “We are committed to giving producers and landowners the knowledge and tools they need to conduct burns that are both safe and beneficial to the land.”

“Due to high interest, we turned down approximately 20 to 25 individuals who wanted to attend,” said Rod Schaub, Frontier District agriculture agent specializing in livestock. “The workshop’s purpose was to educate producers and landowners on why and how to plan and conduct a prescribed fire.”

Attendees at the workshop received expert insights from a diverse group of professionals, including personnel from the National Weather Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, and the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks. Among the topics covered were reasons to burn, how weather conditions affect fire, equipment necessary for a burn event, hazards and precautions to be aware of when burning, local regulations, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) rules and how a prescribed burn association can be helpful.



*Participants in the prescribed burn workshop applaud following a workshop presentation; the room capacity of 70 individuals was reached before registration closed.*



# Intentional Sharing of the District's Expertise Through Chamber Events

*Working hand-in-hand with community, neighbors*



*Ianne Dickinson, Franklin County Commissioner, visits with Frontier District staff and Ottawa Chamber Coffee visitors about programs and services that the district provides.*

In 2024, the Frontier Extension District made a concerted effort to engage local communities and introduce to them the full range of services offered by district staff. To strengthen these connections, two Chamber of Commerce events were held, providing valuable opportunities for community members and district staff to interact.

The first event took place on June 28 when the Ottawa office hosted an Ottawa Chamber Coffee. During the gathering, each district agent gave a brief presentation highlighting various programs and services available to the community. Props, such as a bucket of soil used to explain soil sampling facilitated through the district offices and a simulation of grain handling safety to illustrate that programming, helped attendees better understand the agents' remarks. An engaging exchange of questions and answers was held with a crowd that filled the office and spilled out into the hallway. Breakfast was enjoyed by all.

The second event was held on October 17 at the Garnett office during the lunch hour. Although the group was smaller, rewarding

discussions followed the presentations given by the district agents. Participants asked attentive questions and discussed ways in which the community could form new ties with the district.

Rebecca McFarland, district director, was encouraged by the active participation at the two events. "I was thrilled by the thoughtful questions and conversations at both events," McFarland said. "Many attendees were surprised by the breadth of issues we are equipped to help with, and I'm pleased that these gatherings fostered such meaningful dialogue."

Building on the success of these events, McFarland hopes to host a similar gathering in Osage County in the upcoming year, further strengthening the district's relationships with its communities.



*Janae McNally, Frontier District adult development and aging & family resource management agent, explains to the Garnett Chamber event attendees how K-State Research and Extension will partner with other organizations to present programming.*

# Frontier District Appreciation Awards Presented to Three Exceptional Volunteers

*For each, Extension support has become a lifelong commitment*

2024 Frontier Extension District Appreciation Awards were presented to former board members Linda Thurston, Karen Gillespie, and Nina Flax in recognition of their exceptional contributions to the district. The award honors a person or persons who have made outstanding contributions in a county or district. Since completing their work on the district board, each of these individuals has continued to give generously of her time to support the district's programming.

Linda continues as the foods leader for the Princeton Goal Busters 4-H Club and as superintendent of the 4-H Foods division for the Richmond Free Fair. She volunteers as an Extension Master Gardener and for the Day on the Farm event that is held annually outside of Ottawa. Linda serves as treasurer of the Franklin County 4-H Development Fund, which provides financial scholarships to 4-Hers for camps and other leadership opportunities. She also participates in programming presented through SNAP-Ed and judges at District Club Days. Linda provides financial support for awards at both the Franklin County Fair and the Richmond Free Fair and is an unofficial ambassador in her community, eagerly answering questions and encouraging youth and adults to participate in all types of programs that are offered in the Frontier Extension District!

Likewise, Karen continues her involvement with the Seekers Not Slackers 4-H Club in Anderson County, serving as club leader and as project leader for both leadership and record books! Karen also regularly participates in the Anderson County 4-H Council meetings and activities. She works with new families and her club members, happily answering questions and encouraging participation in the multiple events and activities that Extension and 4-H programs offer. Karen serves as the sheep and meat goat superintendent at the Anderson County Fair, assisting with weigh-ins, show prep, and the livestock sale. She also continues involvement on the family & consumer sciences program development committee (PDC), which includes attending meetings, providing feedback, and promoting the variety of programs the district offers.

If the Frontier District is imparting information through a meeting or workshop, Nina is probably in the audience! Recent gatherings for which she has been in attendance include the drone technology use in agriculture meeting in Garnett, the brush and invasive plant species control meeting in Ottawa, and the annual crop production meetings hosted by district agriculture agents. Nina participated in the *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy* classes held in Osage City last summer and managed a texting group to keep participants motivated to continue exercising when the classes ended. She is registered for this coming summer's *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy* classes, as well as for the food production and preservation workshop to be held in early summer. Nina continues to volunteer through the agriculture and natural resources PDC and the community development PDC. As a woman who rarely sits still, Nina also serves her community on the Osage City Public Library Foundation and as a board member for the Olivet Township Alpine Cemetery, which handles the business and maintenance responsibilities for the cemetery.

Volunteers nationwide provide invaluable assistance to Research & Extension units; the Frontier District is fortunate to claim these individuals as three of theirs!



*Rebecca McFarland, Frontier District Director, and Garrett Brown, Frontier District Board Chair at the time, were honored to present District Appreciation Awards to these former board members to celebrate their generous, ongoing Extension efforts.*



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