

4-H celebrates 100 years

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Colorado 4-H is excited to celebrate its 100th anniversary this year, and is even more excited as members prepare for another 100 great years of 4-H.

The organization began a century ago as a means to transfer new technology from the land-grant university, then known as Colorado A&M, to agricultural producers.

It evolved into a program that helps young people develop important life skills through research-based experiential learning projects.

4-H offers more than 40 study areas including electronics, model rocketry, food and nutrition, dog care and training, livestock, leadership skill development, public speaking and many others.

4-H's overall goal is to teach young people how to become engaged and effective members of their communities.

Colorado 4-H, which is affiliated with Colorado State University Extension, serves more than 85,000 Colorado youth ages 5-18 annually.

In Phillips County, over 80 members were involved with six clubs this past year.

4-H began in Phillips County as early as the 1930s. In 1935, The Holyoke Enterprise reported that until that year, little 4-H club work had been carried on in the county, but in the summer of 1935 a club was organized in almost every community in Phillips County.

Delbert Haynes remembers being in Phillips County when 4-H was just beginning. As a teenager, he was there for the start of the Better Beef Makers 4-H club in 1939—a club that is still around today!

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One reason that 4-H has lasted in Phillips County so long is its desire to keep up with the times. “4-H tries to keep up with the latest and greatest,” said Extension agent Kindra Plumb. “We keep current with the evolving technology.”

In the past few years there has been a shift in focus to STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

4-H members can still participate in the traditional livestock and home economics projects, but they can also explore new things like robotics, the power of wind and geospatial projects.

Plumb also emphasized 4-H is not just about completing projects, but it has so many other components as well.

Interaction with other club members and roles in 4-H activities help build confidence and leadership skills.

Phillips County 4-Hers also expand their horizons by attending leadership conferences both in Colorado and in Washington, D.C.

Plumb said Phillips County is ready for another 100 years of 4-H. “It has grown and evolved so much in the last 100 years, and it’s hard to fathom what it will be in the next 100 years!”

A centennial celebration will take place at the annual achievement program at the Phillips County Event Center from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 10.