

4-H and “Cowboy Ethics”



What does it mean to “Ride for the brand?” Or how about “Talk less and say more?” These are just two of the 10 “Code of the West, Cowboy Ethics Principles” laid out by author James P. Owen in his book “Cowboy Ethics, What Wall Street Can Learn from the Code of the West.”

During this past year, Phillips County 4-H members have been introduced to Cowboy Ethics and have discussed ways they can apply the Code of the West principles to their own lives.

Owen began pursuing the idea of Cowboy Ethics after 35 years in the investment management industry. He had become disheartened by the lack of values and ethics in his business. He spent a year exploring the life and code of the working cowboy.

From that year of exploration and study, he developed his Cowboy Ethics principles. He now spends his time spreading this Cowboy Ethics way of life to businesses and organizations. The following is an excerpt from his author’s note in the Cowboy Ethics book:

“Now, when I think about how I would like to be remembered, it is not as the guy who lived in a beautiful house or brought in a lot of business or helped to build investment firms—though I have done all those things. I would rather be known as the guy who was not embarrassed or afraid to speak up about issues that matter a great deal. I have come to realize that anybody can make money; it is much harder to make a difference. That is what I hope Cowboy Ethics will do.”

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Extension Corner

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