

'Make tracks' to the Lincoln County 4-H Fair

Everyone is invited to the Lincoln County 4-H Fair which gets underway this Wednesday, July 14th and runs through Sunday, July 18th at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds in Merrill.

The County Fair is a great opportunity to see an array of skills and talents that local 4-H members and other youth from throughout Lincoln County are learning. Over 500 youth from throughout Lincoln County will be exhibiting over 4,000 exhibits. Exhibits will be of their project work ranging from art pieces they've created to photos to model rockets to displays about their leadership experiences. Of course, the exhibits will also include animals from cows to chickens to llamas to horses. In addition, over 180 open division exhibitors will be exhibiting over 2,500 exhibits. All of these exhibits will be displayed throughout the fairgrounds for the public to view.

Completing a project and showing it at the fair has been a 4-H tradition since the organization was formed over 100 years ago. Participating in the county fair offers a number of benefits to young people:

- Young people gain a sense of pride and satisfaction when they display their work publicly and the recognition that they have successfully completed the project.
- Young people who show projects learn something about showmanship and presenting themselves and their project in the best possible way. This is a skill they will use in school, on job interviews and on the job.
- Participating in project judging also helps young people develop their own evaluative and critical thinking skills. Showing the project at the fair is educational, because each project is evaluated, and young people can learn what they did well, and what they might do better next time.
- 4-H leaders and staff help young people realize that completing the project is the most important achievement and winning is not the only goal. More judging is done face-to-face in which the youth can answer questions about their projects and learn how the judge is evaluating

it. Judges are encouraged to give positive feedback and suggestions for improvements.

- Interactive judging also helps the 4-H members develop poise, self-confidence and the ability to think on their feet - all skills that will help them as they advance in school and move into careers.

In addition to exhibiting at the county fair, many youth are also involved in making the fair a reality. They serve a department chair people and committee members who oversee various departments at the fair. Through these experiences young people are developing their leadership skills while providing the opportunity for other youth to display their project work.

Eight youth, who serve as Lincoln County 4-H Ambassadors, will be very visible during the county fair in emceeing, distributing awards, and promoting 4-H. Other youth will be involved in operating the "4-H Youth Market Place", which will be in operation for the seventh year. The youth involved in the Market Place have been busy creating products that will be available to purchase in the Market Place which is located in the Stocking Building (near the Dairyland Stand). Through this program young people involved are learning about operating a business.

And still other youth will be working in the Dairyland Stand or in the 4-H Raffle/Promotion Booth that will be located in the Stocking Building.

A county fair is a great opportunity to see all the positive things that youth throughout Lincoln County are doing and involved in. Adults see that youth are creative and ingenious. They can see the skills they have learned and how they are applying those skills. Plan now to visit the Lincoln County 4-H Fair to see all of the great things young people in Lincoln County are accomplishing. For a complete schedule of events for this year's fair visit the Lincoln County 4-H Fair website at www.lincolncounty4hfair.com and click on the link below the train tracks or call the Fair Office at 536-5212.