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4-H'ers busy preparing exhibits for the 2015 Lincoln County Fair

DEBBIE MOELLENDORF
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATOR

4-H members are busy putting the finishing touches on their projects to be exhibited at this year's Lincoln County Fair that will be held July 22-26 at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds in Merrill. Since 1920, when the first 4-H club was organized in Lincoln County, 4-H'ers in Lincoln County have been exhibiting their 4-H project work at the Lincoln County Fair. In addition to youth involved in 4-H, youth who are members of FFA, Scouts and other youth organizations in the county also participate in the Lincoln County Fair.

Exhibiting at the Lincoln County

Fair is one of many learning experiences that contribute to the positive development of a young person in 4-H and Extension youth programs. Through the fair judging experience youth learn, recognize their accomplishments (effort and successes), evaluate their efforts, and are guided through a process to consider what they might learn next. Each young person is a winner for trying. Encouragement from one adult can make a big difference in a young person's life. Adults, including parents/guardians and 4-H leaders should focus on the efforts of the youth and the learning that is occurring, not the color of the ribbon. No matter what the 4-H member's project is, the focus of adults must be the 4-H member.

Ribbons and awards will fade, but the things young people learn last a lifetime.

This year's Lincoln County Fair judging will begin with the Jr. Dog Show on Saturday, July 11 at 8 a.m. including agility, obedience, and showmanship. In case of rain the Dog Show will be held on Sunday, July 12 at 5 p.m. On the following Saturday, July 18, the Jr. Horse Show will be held including pleasure classes, trail classes and gymkhana events. Fair exhibitors in both Jr. and Open divisions will bring in their entries on Wednesday, July 22 with face-to-face judging occurring in many Jr. Division departments from noon to 7 p.m. that day. Judging continues that evening in the Jr. Cloverbuds and both the Jr. and Open

Division Flowers and Houseplants departments. On Thursday, July 23 judging will continue in many Jr. and Open departments, including Jr. Beef, Sheep and Swine; Jr. and Open Photography, Jr. and Open Family Living, Jr. and Open Cultural Arts; Open Antiques, Jr. and Open Plant and Soil Sciences and Jr. and Open Rabbits. Friday, July 24, judging continues with the Jr. and Open Poultry and Jr. Dairy departments. Judging will conclude on Saturday, July 25, with the Jr. Small Animals, Jr. Cats, Jr. and Open Exotic Animals, and Jr. and Open Goats. Sunday, July 26, will be the last day of the fair with exhibitors of all ages collecting their entries

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and heading home that evening with a sense of accomplishment and beginning their plans for next year's fair exhibits.

Many youth are also involved in leadership roles that help make the Lincoln County Fair a reality. They serve as 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. Older 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. And still other 4-H youth will be working in the 4-H Dairyland/Potato Stand and 4-H Raffle/Promotion Booth. All of the funds raised from each of these efforts are utilized to support 4-H experiences throughout the year.

During the Fair, there will be several new activities for fairgoers to learn more about the opportunities young people have through 4-H. One of those is the new "Project Place," hosted by members of the Lincoln County 4-H Board of Directors in the Exhibit Tent located behind the Schulz

and Steckling Buildings on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the Fair from Noon to 6 p.m. Activities in the "Project Place" are free and open to youth of all ages. Each day will have a different theme and activities so youth can come each day to experience new projects.

Themes are as follows:

- July 23- Space is the place with a warm up game at the beginning of every hour and a new craft each hour;
- July 24- Mad Lab Friday with a warm up game at the beginning of every hour and a new experiment each hour; and
- July 25- Super Hero Saturday with all day activities on making you into your own super hero and showing off your powers with a photo to take with you.

Another new opportunity to learn about 4-H will be during the new Lincoln County Fair Tour. During the tour, we will walk through the exhibit areas and several 4-H'ers will share information about their projects, what they enjoy about 4-H, and other opportunities they have had through 4-H. On Friday, July 24, youth from the Merrill Park and Recreation summer program in grades 3 through 5 will be visiting the fair to take part in this tour and participate in activities at the "Project Place." A second Fair Tour will be held on Saturday, July 25, beginning at 11:30

a.m. in the Exhibit Tent located behind the Schulz and Steckling Buildings. Saturday's Tour is open to all fairgoers.

Due to the success last year, there will again be an opportunity for the public to participate in a 4-H Scavenger Hunt for prizes. Interested participants should stop by the Exhibit Tent to get started.

4-H helps youth grow the leadership, critical thinking and communications skills necessary to be successful in a constantly changing world. Viewing the exhibits; watching the judging, participating in the "Project Place," Fair Tour and/or Scavenger Hunt at the Lincoln County Fair are great ways to see some of the things that young people are learning and accomplishing through their 4-H experience.

If you are interested in learning more about 4-H or want to get involved in Lincoln County 4-H, please feel free to contact Debbie or Amanda at the UW-Extension office at (715) 539-1072 or visit our website at <http://lincoln.uwex.edu/> or subscribe to the Lincoln County 4-H Blog <http://fyi.uwex.edu/lincolncounty4h/> for up to the minute 4-H news. Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development is a program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension in partnership with local, state and federal government in each Wisconsin county.