



OhioSE staff assisted with distributing the kits in a very customer-friendly fashion! From left Gwynn Stewart OSU CD Educator with Bill Arnett of OhioSE.



Local Noble County small businesses like M&M Feed appreciated the toolkits! From left M&M Feed owner Darlene Miser with Gwynn Stewart OSU CD Educator.

Ohio State Partners with JobsOhio and Ohio SE to Provide “Ohio Save Ohio Working” COVID Safety Kits

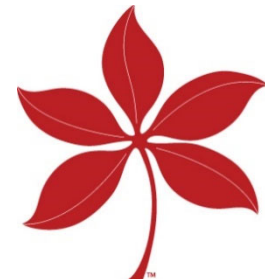


OhioSE, the Noble County JobsOH partner, offered small business PPE kits to 25 Noble County business partners. The kits were made available at no cost and each contained 100 three-ply masks, ten KN95 masks and one 24 oz. bottle of liquid sanitizer. One business was very

happy to have the KN95 masks! All were very appreciative of the Ohio safe. Ohio Working program assistance.

Ohio State Extension Noble County Office Updates

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, OSU Extension staff have worked diligently “from home” to continue services to the residents and communities of Noble County. The office has resumed hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only from 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. The office will be closed for lunch each day from Noon to 1 p.m. Staff members will rotate days in the office to assist clientele. Some staff are still teleworking, so it is best to call ahead if you plan to meet with a specific person. If you need to pick things up or have something to drop off, you can also call in advance and we can meet you outside the building, if preferred.





Ohio State University Extension - Noble County Assists with ARC POWER Grant for Broadband

In an effort to more fully understand next steps in implementing broadband enhancements in Noble County, with assistance from OSU Extension and Vaza Consulting, the Noble County Commissioners applied for an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER grant for technical assistance. If granted, the technical assistance process will work through the identified gaps and potential providers to seek state and federal funding for implementing additional capacity.

The technical assistance grant would help fund an engineering study to develop next steps in seeking additional implementation funding available through ARC, USDA and the State of Ohio. The most recent Connected Nation – Ohio broadband survey and [Noble County Mobile & Fixed Broadband Analysis Report \(2020\)](#) which studied access notes the county as the “least connected county in Ohio,” with only 76.3% able to access internet services at 10Mbps x 1Mbps and dips to 58.3% of households that can access service speeds at 25x3. Connected Nation Ohio also worked with The Ohio Department of Transportation on a mile-by-mile mapping of cellular data accessibility with similar results. Noble County has cellular service gaps in many of the same areas where there are broadband gaps.

According to the Purdue University, the “digital divide” also notes differences in broadband access and use across society, especially in rural areas or in low-income households. The 2019 data for Noble County, Ohio, puts its “digital divide” index at 93.862% (where 100 indicates the highest digital divide). The index measures both infrastructure and socioeconomic factors that impact technology adoption. The chart below also shows the BroadbandNow internet Desert Investigation as it applies to the region’s school children.

County	# of School Aged Children	# of School Aged Children in Poverty	Wired Broadband Penetration	Est. Children without Broadband
Athens	6,807	1,652	79.83%	1,373
Hocking	4,518	863	61.62%	1,734
Meigs	3,608	858	60.86%	1,412
Monroe	2,038	361	0.00%	2,038
Morgan	2,256	511	57.99%	948
Noble	1,895	345	51.25%	924
Perry	6,042	1,288	65.64%	2,076
Washington	8,650	1,731	79.71%	1,755

Data Source: BroadBandNow Internet Desert Investigation

Appalachian Byway of Ohio Receives Tourism Excellence Award



The Appalachian Byway of Ohio was recently honored with a 2020 Tourism Excellence Award from The Eastern Ohio Development Alliance (EODA). James Schoch, Executive Director of EODA, announced the 2020 EODA Excellence Award Recipients. Award winners are nominated by EODA members and receive a commemorative plaque (shown at left). The Appalachian Byway of Ohio was nominated by EODA member Gwynn Stewart of Noble County OSU Extension.

The Byway is in all or portions of five counties (Noble, Monroe, Athens, Morgan, and Muskingum Counties) in the EODA region. Noble County's CVB also prominently features the Byway on its 2020 Visitors' Guide. Improving tourism is one means Extension professionals and other community stakeholders can build rural

economic resiliency. Travel to rural areas also provides benefits to tourists. They can develop an appreciation and understanding of an area's natural beauty, ecosystem, and cultural value; benefit from outdoor educational experiences; and acquire skills that help them to live a more sustainable lifestyle that may come from visiting ecotourism attractions. (Akin, 2015).

From Left: Mick Schumacher, Monroe Arts Council & CVB President; Monroe Parks District Board member Irma Highman; Monroe Parks District Board Chair, Mike Lloyd and Monroe Parks District Board Vice Chair, Jim Heimann with the EODA Tourism Award for the Appalachian Byway of Ohio that runs through Monroe County on SR78. They are shown at the Fisher's Grove Park and Rest Area on SR 78 near Lewisville, Ohio. The Monroe CVB & Parks District Board are also ABO partners in addition to the Morgan & Athens County CVBs.



Noble County Small Business Development Loan Program Is Lending

A recent data review conducted by Purdue University Extension of the 8-county Buckeye Hills Region that includes Noble County, indicates that 99% of businesses are small. They are either Self-employed, Stage 1 (2-9 employees) or Stage 2 (10-99 employees) businesses.

The Noble County Small Business Loan Program was originally funded through the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) with a grant to the Noble County Board of Commissioners and is administered locally through Ohio State University Extension - Noble County.

"OSU Extension is pleased to administer the local small business loan program that supports business owners in their endeavors," said Community Development Educator Gwynn Stewart.

“Since the inception of the Noble County Small Business Loan Program, it has made a variety of loans which have helped create and retain jobs across the county. The program is a wonderful local economic development tool serving small businesses.”

According to The Ohio Department of Development Services Agency, small businesses are fueling the engines of growth in our state. Small businesses are some of the most important drivers of our economy, making up roughly 98 percent of all Ohio businesses and employing half of our state’s private-sector workforce.

Fostering a strong climate for small business growth with many local community partners including college and universities, Ohio is working to create an economic climate for small businesses to succeed and when they do they help retain and create jobs, growing the regional economy. To learn more, call Gwynn Stewart at 740-732-5681 or visit <https://noble.osu.edu/program-areas/community-development/usda-revolving-loan-fund>.



The Status & Changing Face of Ohio Agriculture (Summary of Farm Trends Report) Released

Ohio State’s College of Food, Agriculture & Environmental Sciences recently released the 1997-2017 Summary of Ohio Farm Trends report. *(From the Report’s Executive Summary)* Ohio has always been an important agricultural state. In 2017, Ohio was ranked in the top 10 states for production of grains, nursery and greenhouse crops, hogs and pigs, and horses. Ohio farms raised farm commodities worth over \$9 billion. Estimated combined food and agriculture sectors in Ohio generated almost \$50 billion in gross product and roughly 900,000 jobs in 2015 (DiCarolis et al. 2017).

While agriculture remains a significant economic engine and dominates the rural landscape, the first two decades of the 21st century have been a time of rapid change for farmers in Ohio. This report pulls together data from several sources to summarize state-level trends in farm numbers, farm sales, land use, workforce characteristics, and economic performance between 1997 and 2017. Because of the diversity of Ohio agriculture—a state that contains farms of nearly every size, type, and configuration—the report explores how these changes have affected different types of farms in different ways.

Download the free report at <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/the-status-and-changing-face-of-ohio-agriculture-summary-of-ohio-farm-trends-1997-2017-pdf/>



Farm Science Review 2020: Online and free

Farm Science Review will come to you on your laptop or smartphone this year, and for free, you can watch livestreamed talks and recorded videos featuring the latest farm equipment and research to pique your curiosity.

From Sept. 22–24, people from across the Midwest and the world can learn tips for increasing farm profits and growing crops from soybeans to hemp.

Beginning in September, virtual visitors can find out about the show's offerings by going to fsr.osu.edu and clicking on an image of the show's site. Within that image, people can click on the various icons to find the schedules for talks and demos they're most interested in, such as field demonstrations or "Ask the Expert" talks.

Source: CFAES News



Access Ohio 2045 - Ohio's Long-Range Transportation Plan Open for Public Review

The Ohio Department of Transportation is pleased to announce that the draft **Access Ohio 2045** Plan is available for public review. **Access Ohio 2045** is Ohio's Long-Range Transportation

Plan and will guide transportation policies and investment strategies in the state for the next 20 years. View the 2045 plan draft at:

<https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odot/programs/access-ohio-2045/resources/draft-ao45-plan>.

While this draft has been developed based on extensive input from the public and subject matter experts, ODOT welcomes any additional comments or feedback you may have. After reviewing the Plan, please share your feedback by participating in a brief survey at PublicInput.com/AccessOhio2045 **by August 31, 2020**. Comments can also be mailed to: Access Ohio 2045, ODOT MS 3280, 1980 W Broad St, Columbus, OH 43223.

To receive a printed copy of the Plan and survey, or to have ODOT meet specialized communication needs, please email access.ohio.2045@dot.ohio.gov or call 614-466-7410 and provide your name, phone, email and mailing address.



Contact OSU Extension Community Development: Gwynn Stewart, Community Development Educator III: (740) 305-3177 Email: Stewart.1818@osu.edu

Be sure to follow Noble County Community Development on our LinkedIn page at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/noble-county-ohio-economic-development> and on the county page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/osuenoble>.

We will provide ongoing Community Development program details on these tools.



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CFAES News – Aug. 6, 2020

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