September 13, 2013

COUNTY OF IMMIGRANTS AND VETERANS

The week of September 9th-11th, the local Extension Offices in Saline, Scottsbluff, Dawson and Douglas Counties in Nebraska were selected for a Civil Rights Audit from our USDA partner in Washington, D.C. or NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture - the Extension Division within USDA). The purpose of the comprehensive audit and interviews is to determine if Federal rules are being followed and Extension programs are open to ALL and efforts are being made to be inclusive to minority or underserved audiences. We also provide all reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities at our activities.

Mr. Darrus Golden was our auditor who became familiar with Saline County. After 5:00 p.m. on September 11th, I encouraged him to visit the new Veterans Memorial at the Saline County Courthouse and he learned about the new interactive technology with the recently installed Kiosk. You can see the same data base on your home computer which is at the Memorial in Wilber. Go to www.windyprairie.com/VeteranMemorials.aspx . Many of our veterans should add a picture, biography information and medals earned to improve the database.

You are missing out if you have not visited the Memorial and Kiosk. Furthermore, keep sending those pictures and information of veterans that have ties to Saline County and surrounding areas to Forrest Doyle, Saline County Veteran Services Officer, at e-mail salinevet@diodecom.net or phone 402-821-2990, so this is added to the interactive database on the website and the memorial Kiosk. What you see on the Internet on your home computer is how the page looks on the Kiosk.

Back to the County of Immigrants, the 2011 population estimate in Saline County according to the census is 14,345. We are 94.4% white, 1.3% black, 1.0% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.6% Asian, .05% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 1.2% reporting more than one race and 21.3% persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin. White persons not Hispanic was 75.1%.

The new phrase in Extension in Nebraska for educational programs is we are in parity with the audiences we serve when the participation rate of new and diverse populations reflects the demographics of the area. That's hard to do with our agriculture programs with farmers in the county at this point in our history. However, there will be more emphasis in the future how to expand to current underserved audiences in the future, especially with youth programs.

There are four farms that have Hispanic/Latino ethnicity as principle operators in Saline County according to the 2007 Ag Census out of 400 that listed farming as principle occupation. That number will continue to grow as our community changes with the current immigration wave.

As Dr. Ronnie Green, University of Nebraska Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, recently stated, "Our commitment to engage and include all persons is core to our organizational culture and also reflects our commitment to federal civil rights law. As we work to engage all people, we will adapt and adopt best practices and examine barriers, both obvious and less obvious, to participation in IANR research and extension programs by all residents of Nebraska."

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska—Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

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