

Sanders County 4-H
Strategic Planning Meeting
February 25, 2008

Those attending were: Bina Eggenesperger, Facilitator; Bill, Heather and Shannon Saint; Katie and Charles French; Connie and Beca Gunderson; Sally Havens; Gail Brown; Sarah and Jacob Naegeli; Meghan Phillippi and John Halpop, Extension Agents; Sharon Brown; Roni and Abi Mitch; John Garrison; Paula Dimond; Dale Neiman; Karen Dwyer

The purpose of the session was to envision the future of Sanders County 4-H, and to develop a plan that will help us reach that goal.

Bina explained the SWOT model, developed to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to the organization. We formed 4 groups, each working on one aspect, and reconvened to share our results. Together we identified 6 categories based on themes that stood out: Technology, Fair Outreach, Youth, Marketing, Volunteer/Leaders, and Partnering. After grouping ideas into these categories, we each placed 10 votes for ideas that appealed most to us, using green dots (from which came the “green dot” exercise results attached to this report.) Finally, as small groups we worked on summaries and priorities.

Travel for meetings and conflicting schedules/limited time stood out as important issues. Suggestions were for livestock and council meetings to be rotated throughout the county, expanding opportunities for a variety of leaders to attend and provide valued input. New technology (i.e.webcams) could provide a means of sharing meetings, saving travel expense and time.

A recurrent theme was Partnering and Mentoring member to member, leader to leader, club to club, and between our 4-H organization and government agencies, businesses, schools, and animal care agencies.

Resources suggested were a how-to book for the fair, a new member or new leader handbook, scholarship information for high school seniors, and a database listing leaders available in the county - including project leaders, specialty leaders, and our new buzzword, episodic leaders. Youth would like to see new projects fitting in with their non-4-H activities, such as sports nutrition.

Group agreed to meet quarterly. Talk to other leaders and bring a new one next time.
Many thanks to Bina!

Strengths:

- 2 strong invested agents
- Familiarity with families
- Award program
- Fair and Fairgrounds facility
- Fair board/committee
- Parental involvement
- Leader involvement
- Strong Countywide membership
- Environmental diversity
- Curriculum
- Comprehensive nature of program

- Ability to change
- History/Tradition
- Resources/Human and Printed
- Strong 4-H Council
- Commissioners Support
- Free Rodeo tickets
- 4-H Dining Hall
- Flexibility to membership involvement
- Youth
- Compassion

Weaknesses:

- Size of County vs. Population
- Need mechanical resource center
- Lack of infrastructure
- Need effective networking
- Need database of resources

- Family oriented vs. no family support
- No outreach for "Program" kids
- Meeting locations - little rotation among communities
- Logistics/scheduling
- Small group of participants in council

Opportunities:

- Bear studies
- New programs (like welding)
- Apprenticeships - self determined
- Less sheep hit program
- Youth input
- New fundraising (pig roast @ fair, etc.)
- Program for sports
- Entertainment
- New leader support
- PPL Partner Grants
- Habitat for Humanity

- YCC
- Sports Nutrition project
- Partnering Up - FFA? Others?
- Drama
- Glacier county tourism (photo - video)
- Mentoring
- Horse races w/sponsors betting
- Communication between clubs
- Growth, learning, motivations - "I can do it!"
- S County Housing Authority - wheelchair ramps
- Economy

Threats:

- Less "Ag" - cost of gas, feed
- Conflicting activities/sports
- Sunday functions
- "Uncool"
- Financial (Family, too)

- Need new members
- Population fluctuation/split families
- Awards - rewards
- Time

Green dot exercise

Technology:

- 9 Develop database
- 26 Non-travel communication in county using webcam, instant messaging, social networks
- 4 Develop resources

Fair Outreach:

- 6 List of what to bring; "How to" booklet
- 9 Marketing to public
- 5 Community Service Promotions
- 7 Increase interface between 4-H community and public
- 9 Petting zoo
- 9 Opportunities for 4-H kids to have fun

Youth:

- 24 How to work w/conflicting schedules/time constraints
- 4 Develop sports project
- 3 Develop new opportunities for teens
- 7 Mentoring program (leadership/entrepreneur class)
- 8 College prep
- 1 Marketing to Youth
- 14 Help Seniors w/scholarships, share info

Marketing:

- 6 Open demonstrations to public
- 2 Showcase demos
- 12 Resources for new members - all things 4-H
- 4 Public relations leader

Volunteers/Leaders:

- 12 Episodic Leader model
- 8 More local training/opportunities to get together and share
- 10 Data base of available leaders/volunteers
- 5 How to develop leader resources
- 4 Develop resource for new members

Partnering:

- 24 TRACS (animal shelter)
- 5 Schools
- 6 MSU
- 2 Businesses
- 8 Government agencies (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, FFA, Fish Wildlife Parks, Forest Service)
- 6 Boy/Girl Scouts

Group Summaries/Priorities

Youth

- Sports Nutrition project
- Mentoring by senior members, more one on one, less paperwork; should it be a project?
- Help Seniors with scholarship opportunities - perhaps at state awards meetings?
- Program opportunities - track or obstacle course

Outreach

- "How to" book - April Dispatch, member packets
- Scavenger Hunt - getting more info out of the public - include prizes
- Petting zoo - but not @ fair (safety, skittish animals)
- Info booth for kids
- Contact information - leaders' names and phone numbers on back of menus

Technology

- Database development on county webpage, listing current leaders (adult and youth), episodic leaders, current projects
- Webcams - research grants available, work with Blackfoot (to enable non-travel meetings)

Marketing

- Demonstrations open to public - needs discussion w/members
- Ambassadors take a lead in writing newspaper articles showcasing particular projects
 - Ambassadors can come to clubs and talk about opportunities
- Partnering w/hospital for job opportunities, new projects
- Demo Day - have 3 or 4 opportunities throughout the county Stir-Ups - alternate locations
- Girl Scouts have a badge for partnering (have worked with Cloverbuds)

Volunteers/Leaders

- Develop episodic leader model
- Get greater participation in council meetings (once a year in each community)
- Needs analysis in each club
- Identify key people to find new resources (Chamber, Sr. Citizens, gov't agencies)
- Leaders mingle within the county - perhaps electronically?