

# EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

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## Workshops spark project participation for Peoria County 4-H Fair

The Peoria County 4-H Fair is always one of the biggest highlights of the year for local 4-H members. This past year, the fair looked a little different. But if there is one thing 4-H youth are known for, it is their ability to adapt and rise to the occasion. Peoria County 4-H members showed up in a big way. Fair exhibitors brought more projects than the previous year. The increase can be credited to the growing number of workshops and Special Interest (SPIN) clubs offered throughout the year.

From January until fair time, Peoria County 4-H hosted six hands-on workshops focused various projects. In addition, youth participated in several SPIN clubs designed to help members explore new project areas. These clubs included Dairy, Stitch and Style, Tractor and Electricity, Rabbit, Sheep, Livestock Judging, and Archery. Thanks to these opportunities, project participation grew from 849 projects in 2024 to 892 projects in 2025—an increase of 43 individual projects. Workshops give youth the chance to try something new in a supportive environment. Once they realize they can do it, they get excited to bring that project to the fair.

One workshop that has made a big impact is the two-part Clay Workshop, led by volunteer Marie Lindahl. During the sessions, youth learn how to shape clay, and glaze their finished creations. The results have been impressive. In 2024, there were 15 clay projects exhibited at the fair. After hosting several workshops before the fair, participation doubled to 30 clay projects. Along the way, youth learned new artistic skills and gained confidence in their creativity.

Programs like Stitch and Style Academy have also helped boost participation in the Clothing and Textiles 4-H project. The third Stitch and Style cohort met many times this past year, where youth learned the fundamentals of sewing. Many of the students proudly exhibited their Sewing I projects at the 4-H Fair, where judges shared many compliments about the craftsmanship and creativity on display. In 2024, we had 13 sewing projects at the fair. In 2025, that number grew to 22. Many of these youth had never used a sewing machine before.

The 2025-2026 4-H program year included workshops hosted in Peoria County for livestock showmanship, dog obedience, clay, quilting, and crochet. The SPIN clubs going strong focus on archery, sheep, dairy, rabbits, sewing, and gardening. The 4-H Federation participated in a special glass art workshop led by Heidi Libby of Walnut Grove Farm and “Glass Art”. Those members have their 4-H Fair exhibit completed already.

With new workshops, growing clubs, and enthusiastic volunteers, Peoria County 4-H continues to build skills, confidence, and creativity—one project at a time.



*Peoria 4-H Federation members participated in a Glass Art workshop led by Heidi Libby of Walnut Grove Farm and “Glass Art”. Hands-on workshops and special interest 4-H clubs have provided members the opportunity to get a taste of a new project while completing an exhibit for the 4-H Fair.*

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