



River Valley District

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

rivervalley.ksu.edu

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COVID 19 UPDATE

COVID-19 continues to be a very real threat to the health and well being of everyone in the world so the River Valley District will continue to implement some best management practices in our daily operations. Throughout this pandemic, our team has continued to work hard while working remotely for 10 weeks and since being back in our offices since June 1.

As restrictions continue to be lifted, case numbers begin to increase in many locations. Due to this and with fair season just around the corner, the staff of the River Valley District made the decision to continue to keep our doors locked and serve our clientele by appointment.

Phone numbers are posted on our doors so most clientele can simply give us a call when outside and we determine the best action to service their particular need. Often, we will meet the person outside with the water test kit, radon test kit, soil probe, or whatever the request is.

Sometimes, the client will just need to come into the office. In those cases, we ask that you keep in mind that we care enough about you to wear a mask so we ask that you respect our staff enough to wear a mask to protect us. If you will not wear a mask, you will not be allowed to enter our offices for the foreseeable future so we can protect our staff.

Our staff often works together around the district and as most know, we are critical to the success of our county fairs. We have four fairs to conduct in four weeks in July. With John and Deanna's retirements, we are already two short of our normal work team. If just one of our staff would be exposed, it could have the potential to expose all of our staff. That in turn would require 14-day self quarantines for most, if not our entire staff. That would simply be disaster at fair time!

Therefore, we ask for some grace and patience as we continue to do our best to serve all of you in the River Valley Extension District. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. The River Valley District has adopted a Best Management Practice guide for use at fairs from the CDC that includes good advice for all:

- Wash hands often.
- Avoid close contact.
- Cover mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when within 6 feet of others. My mask protects you. Your mask protects me.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

RVED CELEBRATES 15 YEARS

We have all heard the old saying, "Time flies when you are having fun!" That is really true as we reflect on the past 15 years of the River Valley Extension District. Although much work and preparation happened in the preceding year, the K-State Research and Extension River Valley District #4 officially began operation in July of 2005.

The Kansas Extension District Law was passed and allowed County Extension programs that had been in operation for years under the County Extension Law to combine and form their own taxing entity. As we have looked back at old files, we appreciate the many hours that staff, board, and commissioners put into the organization of the District that set us on a path to success.

Marilyn Martin, Board Treasurer, is the lone remaining board member from that time and has served as the Board Treasurer for 15 years. Frieda Knitter and Kim Kolman are the only remaining staff members from the time the District was organized.

We thank our loyal supporters and clientele of the District for being a part of our 15 years of success. We encourage all RVED citizens to take advantage of this great service provided through Kansas State University, the Nation's first Land Grant Institution!

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

ACCOUNTABILITY IS KEY

My husband and I are working hard to be financially smart. For us, that means minimizing the number of times we eat away from home as it's pretty easy for those receipts to add up quickly. Instead of grabbing fast food five days a week, I typically bring leftovers for lunch on my workdays.

The other day, innocently, my coworker asked if I wanted to run across the street and grab some pizza. Man, that sounded way better than the chicken alfredo in the fridge, but I thought that I better check with my husband. I texted and this is the response I received back, "Is it necessary?". Guess what I ate for lunch that day? Chicken alfredo heated up in the microwave.

A study on accountability by the Association for Talent Development found the following:

- If you have an idea or goal, 10% chance you will achieve it.
- Add a timeline, 40% chance.
- Plan the steps, 50% chance.
- Commit to someone, 65% chance.
- Have a specific accountability appointment with the person you've committed to, 95% chance that you will hold to the goal.

Wow – 95% chance of achieving a goal! That's pretty good odds so find someone that can help hold you accountable to those financial goals or any goal for that matter!

When you find someone that is willing to be your accountability partner, set some guidelines for the partnership. This may include:

- Setting specific day(s) to meet to update on progress.
- Permission to check on you via, text, phone call, email, etc.
- Course of action if you don't keep your commitment.
- See if you can be their accountability partner for a goal they want to achieve.
- Sharing encouraging quotes, articles, or pictures.
- Being lenient for failures but assisting with getting back on track.

Find someone to be your accountability partner to help you succeed! If you have any questions on financial management, please contact Monica Thayer, at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu.

2020 DISTRICT FAIR SCHEDULE

July 7-12	Cloud County Fair-Concordia
July 14-18	Clay County Fair-Clay Center
July 21-26	Washington County Fair-Washington
July 28-Aug. 2	NCK Free Fair-Belleville

Extension Staff may be out of the office assisting with Fairs. Every District Office has an answering machine. If it is Fair time, leave a message if we do not answer, a staff member will call you when we return to the office.

SCHUETTE NEW RVED ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND AGING AGENT

I am excited to be the new Adult Development and Aging Agent for the River Valley Extension District. My name is Jordan Schuette and I transitioned into this new agent role as of June 1, 2020. Though I am new to this agent position, I am not new to the River Valley Extension District. For about the past year I have served as the 4-H Youth and Development Agent. I have had a wonderful experience working with the 4-H youth, families, and volunteers of the River Valley Extension District.



I was raised on a farm around Minneapolis, KS with my three siblings. My husband, Ethan, is from Washington, KS, and we make that community our home. I graduated with my masters from Kansas State University in Family Studies and Human Services emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy in 2017. I have two bachelor's degrees, one from Tabor College in Secondary Education and History and the second is from Kansas State University in Family Studies and Human Services. I believe my educational background will aid me in serving the adult population of the River Valley Extension District. My previous work experiences include interning with KSRE as an undergrad, working within the school system, and working at a community mental health agency.

In the future I will work with programs such as Stay Strong, Stay Healthy, the Alzheimer's Association, and help with Medicare. Before I can begin working with a few of these programs I need to receive training. Once I have been trained, it will be communicated to residents in the River Valley Extension District. Until then I will keep you updated on other available programming within the district.

Currently, I am housed in the Belleville office, but will move to the Washington office once renovations have been completed. I look forward to the programming opportunities in the future. I am excited to work with community agencies and the adult population in the River Valley Extension District. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to call me at 785-527-5084 or email me at jschuette@ksu.edu.

TAXES ARE DUE!

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the deadline for filing and paying income taxes was pushed back but it's here now! July 15th is the deadline to file and pay for Federal and Kansas income taxes.

More information can be found here:

- Federal: <https://www.irs.gov/>
- Kansas: <https://www.ksrevenue.org/personal.html>

TOMATO LEAF-SPOT DISEASES

This time of year, two common leaf-spot diseases appear on tomato plants. Septoria leaf spot and early blight. Brown spots on the leaves characterize both diseases, so it is important to figure out which disease you have so you can treat it accordingly.

Septoria leaf spot usually appears earlier in the season than early blight and produces small dark spots. Spots made by early blight are much larger and often have distorted “target” pattern of concentric circles.

With both diseases, heavily infected leaves eventually turn yellow and drop. Older leaves are more susceptible than younger ones, so these diseases often start at the bottom of the plant and work up.

Mulching, caging, or staking keep plants off the ground, making them less vulnerable to both these diseases. Better air circulation allows foliage to dry quicker having less of a chance to develop these diseases. Mulching also helps prevent water from splashing up onto the leaves and carrying disease spores to the plant.

In situations where these diseases have been a problem in the past, rotation is a good strategy. It is too late for that now, but keep in mind for next year. Actually, rotation is a good idea even if you have not had problems in the past. Unfortunately, for many gardeners their space is too small to make rotation practical. If you have room, rotate the location of the tomatoes each year to an area that had not had tomatoes or related crops (peppers, potatoes, eggplant) for several years.

If rotation is not feasible, fungicides are often helpful. Be sure to cover both upper and lower leaf surfaces, and reapply fungicide if rainfall removes it. Plants usually become susceptible when the tomato fruit is about the size of a walnut. Chlorothalonil is a good choice for fruiting plants because it has a 0-day waiting period, meaning that fruit can be harvested once the spray is dry. Chlorothalonil can be found in numerous products including Fertilome Broad-Spectrum Landscape and Garden Fungicide, Ortho Garden Disease Control, Garden Tech Daconil and others. Be sure to start protecting plants when the disease is first seen. It is virtually impossible to control this disease on heavily infected plants. If Chlorothalonil doesn't seem to be effective, try mancozeb (Bonide Mancozeb Flowable). Note that there is a five-day waiting period between application and when the fruit can be harvested. You may wish to pick some tomatoes green just before you spray if you use Mancozeb as the tomato fruit will ripen inside.

As with all chemicals make sure to read the label to make sure it is listed for use on both the specific disease you are trying to get rid of and the plant the disease is on. If you have any questions, contact Kelsey Hatesohl in the Washington office at 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.

WASH YOUR HANDS LIKE YOU MEAN IT

I will be the first one to tell you the last eight to ten weeks have been a challenge. It might be work related, family related and just thinking thru the routine activities we participate in daily. What we had been used to doing in the past has drastically changed. For example, our routines, the way we communicate, the way we shop for items whether it is clothing items, household items or groceries.

One habit I had in the past was to wash my hands, however this also has changed. I now am more aware of the number of times I wash my hands (**a lot** more frequently) and wash my hands like I really mean it. Yes, wash your hands like you mean it, because you do mean it and you will mean it from now on!



It will never go back to where it was an after-thought (Oh, I better wash my hands, some one is watching). It will be present on my mind from now on. Experts tell us handwashing is the biggest thing we can do to keep ourselves healthy. Wet your hands, get soap, make a lather and scrub in between fingers, scrubbing the palms of the hands with the fingertips while singing the “Happy Birthday” song twice. Don't forget your thumbs! The scrubbing action and lather helps to remove the germs. Rinse your hands with running water, dry with a **clean** paper or cloth towel. Make the habit of washing hands a Healthy Habit to Keep and wash your hands more frequently.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING CLASS

Sharpen your driving skills! Prevent an accident from happening. Lower your auto insurance premium too. Enroll in the upcoming Defensive Driving Course offered at the K-State Research and Extension River Valley District Office in Clay Center.

The class will be Tuesday, September 29th, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. There is a \$20 registration fee per person to pay for materials. Registration and payment are due by September 22nd. In order to have a class, a minimum of 15 people are required to sign up.

Defensive driving tips will be presented by Trooper Ben Gardner from the Kansas Highway Patrol. The class is completed in one day. Participants can bring their lunch with refrigeration available or go out for an hour lunch. Snacks will be provided at breaks. Participants do not drive or take a test. Insurance companies recognize the benefits of defensive driving classes and many provide a 5-10% premium discount to graduates of this course. The certificate received is effective for three years.



**RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT OFFICES
WILL BE CLOSED ON FRIDAY, JULY 3RD
IN HONOR OF INDEPENDENCE DAY
Have a Safe & Happy Holiday!**

SUMMER FOOD SAFETY

Foodborne illnesses are more common in summer months. Remember to cook food to proper internal temperatures. For more information about safe food temperatures: <https://tinyurl.com/yafvkwkx>.

Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Don't leave food in the Temperature Danger Zone (40 degrees F. – 140 degrees F.) longer than 2 hours or 1 hour if temperatures are 90 degrees F and above. Bacteria multiply faster at higher temperatures.

When going on a trip:

- Pack enough ice and freezer packs.
- Wash produce before packing.
- Pack ready-to-eat foods, uncooked foods, and drinks all in separate coolers to avoid cross-contamination.
- Pack meat and poultry still frozen, so they will stay colder longer.
- A full cooler will maintain its temperature longer than a partially filled one.
- Keep coolers closed.

When grilling:

- Do not reuse marinades, sauces, or utensils that have touched raw meat.
- Use your food thermometer to take the internal temperature of food items.

Remember to wash your hands, even when eating outdoors. Bring soap, a jug of warm water, and paper towels to wash hands.

Hand washing is the preferred method to clean hands. Hand wipes or hand sanitizers are not a replacement to hand washing but can be used in addition to hand washing. If you have questions about Food Safety, contact Sonia Cooper at 785-632-5335.

MELON SAFETY

It is that time of year when melons come to mind - the preparation and **yum** the taste. I want to share Melon Safety for melons, including watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, and canary.

Wash your hands with soap and warm water for a least 20 seconds. Always wash and scrub melons thoroughly, (this helps remove bacteria before you start cutting). Always make sure your knife and cutting boards are sanitized.

Store cut melons in the refrigerator after cutting. Serve cut melon on ice. Don't let the cut melon sit in the Temperature Danger Zone (40 degrees F. – 140 degrees F.) for longer than 2 hours or 1 hour if the temperature is over 90 degrees F. Play it safe—cut melons immediately before serving.

Cut melons can be potentially hazardous because they support the growth of bacteria. E. Coli, Salmonella, and Listeria can be present on the rind, but the rind protects the inside of the melon from these bacteria.

Be safe with your food. If you have questions, contact Sonia Cooper at 785-632-5335.

STAY COOL IN THE HEAT OF SUMMER

Summer is in full swing in the River Valley Extension District and along with this season often comes high temperatures. It is important during these hotter summer months, specifically for older adults, to know how to keep cool and hydrated. There are a few different ways to make sure you stay cool this summer.

Stay in air-conditioned homes or buildings as much as you can. When it is very hot, don't rely only on fans to keep you cool. Try to avoid using your oven and stove as often to cook, as this will warm up your house. If you need a way to cool down, try taking a cool shower or bath.

Other ways to stay cool are associated with your activity level and clothing. Try to get plenty of rest and avoid rigorous activities. During these hot months try to wear lighter colors or clothes which are looser fitting and light weight.

Staying hydrated is extremely important during these hotter summer months. In order to stay hydrated you should drink water more regularly. Do not wait to drink water until you feel thirsty. It can also be helpful to check on your friends and neighbors and have them check on you.

As always stay updated on temperatures and weather in your area. For more information on this topic check out the following link <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/older-adults-heat.html>.

Source: CDC.gov



BUDGET FOR THE HOLIDAYS

While it seems like the holiday season is far off, it'll be here before you know it. The following two numbers will pay a large part in many households across America in less than six months. \$1 trillion versus \$730.2 billion. One is the amount spent in holiday retail sales in 2019 and the other is the credit card debt that Americans carried at the beginning of 2020. Can you guess which is which?

\$1 trillion is the total credit card debt in America with an average of \$8,509 owed per household. While some households may owe very little to none, others owe more than that household average.

Holiday retail sales in 2019 were around \$730.2 billion. This figure doesn't include automobile dealers, gas stations, and restaurants. So, let's be honest, that amount is higher than \$730.2 billion because some people buy cars, many travel, and restaurants are utilized during the holiday season.

Don't wait until November to start figuring out your finances for the holidays. Start a budget or adjust yours as needed to start saving for holiday expenses. For help with creating a budget, go to <https://bit.ly/2zyO04j> or call Monica Thayer, at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu. Don't let the holidays increase your credit card debt and your stress! Start planning today!

THINKING POSITIVE—A HEALTHY HABIT

A healthy habit that I have always tried to focus on through my many years of life is to think of the positive and what I CAN do, and not what I CANNOT do. I have thought more and more about this healthy habit in the past few months. Yes, I have thought about this more than ever.

Here are a few positive healthy habits that formed over the last few months. One could call them Pandemic Positives.

Slowing Down – I hope you have learned to slow down, reflect on yourself and connect with others. I know of an individual who set up a tic-tac-toe game with their mail delivery person adding an “X” or an “O” to the paper the next day it appeared in the mailbox. What a fun and creative way to connect.

Appreciate – I think about the individuals who have reached out to improve a situation like delivering groceries to those who do not feel comfortable about leaving their house.

Physical Activity – Keep up going for walks. Physical activity is not only good for our physical health, but also good for mental health and stress relief.

Connect – you may have spent more time connecting with the individuals living within the house, however, this has been a time to be in touch with extended family and friends. Phone calls, texts, and using face time has worked great for me to stay connected with my granddaughter. Especially, it has been a time to be in contact with those individuals who live alone. The conversation would often be only for a short time; however, it is just taking the time to connect that counts.

I am hoping you have developed a few healthy habits the last few months. Stay positive.

WATERING FRUIT PLANTS DURING THE SUMMER

With all the hot days we have been having this year, extra watering will be needed this summer if we don't get rain. When the temperature exceeds 90°F, fruit plants lose water quickly. When this happens, moisture is withdrawn from the fruit to supply the plant.

Stress from high temperatures, along with a moisture deficit in the root environment, may cause fruit to drop or fail to increase in size. The stress may also reduce the development of fruit buds for next year's fruit crop.

If you have fruit plants such as trees, vines, canes, and such, check soil moisture at the roots. Insert a spade, shovel, a pointed metal or wood probe, or a long screwdriver into the soil about 8 to 12 inches. If the soil is hard, dry, and difficult to penetrate, the moisture level is very low, and plants should be irrigated to prevent drooping and promote fruit enlargement.

Water can be added to the soil using sprinklers, soaker hose, drip irrigation, or even a small trickle of water running from the hose for a few hours. The amount of time you irrigate should depend upon the size of the plants and the volume of water you are applying. Add enough moisture so you can easily penetrate the soil in the root area of the plant.

While hot, dry weather continues, check soil moisture at least once a week to make sure your plants are receiving enough water. Strawberries have a shallow root system and may need to be watered more often during extreme weather.

In addition, newly planted fruit trees sited on sandy soils may also need to be watered more often. If you have any questions feel free to contact Kelsey Hatesohl in the Washington office, 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.

HEAT STOPS TOMATOES FROM SETTING FRUIT

When temperatures remain above 75°F at night and are around 95°F during the day with dry, hot winds, these conditions will cause poor fruit set on tomatoes.

High temperatures interfere with pollen viability and/or cause excessive stem growth leading to a lack of pollination. It usually takes about 3 weeks for tomato flowers to develop into fruit large enough to notice and an additional week before tomatoes are full size and ready to start ripening.

There are “heat-set” tomatoes such as, Florida 91, Sun Leaper, and Sun Master that will set fruit at higher temperatures; the difference is normally only 2 to 3 degrees. Cooler temperatures will allow flowers to resume fruit set. If you have any questions contact Kelsey at 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.

COMPLETE THE CENSUS

A complete and accurate census count is crucial as it affects community funding, congressional representation, and more. While the official Census date of April 1st has passed, there is still time to complete the 2020 Census! Do your Census today!

Complete your form online at my2020census.gov, by phone at 844-330-2020 (English) or 844-468-2020 (Spanish), or by mail when your invitation to respond arrives. It only takes about 10 minutes to respond and is safe, secure, and confidential!

As of June 15th, here are the self-response rates for the River Valley District.

Clay County – 67%	Cloud County – 64.1%
Republic County – 59.6%	Washington County – 62%

More information can be found at www.2020census.gov.

FARMERS AND RANCHERS IN KANSAS CAN NOW APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH USDA'S CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

We also want to remind producers that the program is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply.

In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from farmers.gov/cfap. Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments.

Additionally, producers in search of one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a good first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

Applying for Assistance

Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print off a pre-filled CFAP application, sign, and submit to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at farmers.gov/cfap.

Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested after the application is filed. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

Additional Commodities

USDA is also establishing a process for the public to identify additional commodities for potential inclusion in CFAP. Specifically, USDA is looking for data on agricultural commodities, that are not currently eligible for CFAP, that the public believes to have either:

1. suffered a five percent-or-greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. shipped but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channel, or not left the farm or remained unharvested as mature crops.

More Information

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit farmers.gov/cfap or call 877-508-8364.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Kansas Rural Stress Resources

www.kansasagstress.org

**Kansas Suicide Prevention Line
1-785-841-2345**

**Crisis Text Line 24/7 Support
Text "HOME" to 741741**

**Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services
1-800-321-FARM (3276)**

Sign Up For RVD- Emails

The River Valley Extension District has a new service available to our constituents – email subscriptions!

You can sign up to receive emails regarding timely resources, upcoming programs, etc. in the content areas that interest you.

If you would like to sign up, you can do so here:
<https://river-valley-extension.mailchimpsites.com/>

STAYING CONNECTED

Positive relationships with friends and family help us thrive. Without social connections, it's easy to feel lonely or isolated, especially as we have been spending more time alone in our homes lately.

While anyone can feel lonely, certain factors increase your risk. Major life changes or losses can increase feelings of loneliness. No matter what your age, it's important for your health to stay socially connected.

Loneliness can take a toll. It's linked to higher rates of depression and heart disease and can weaken your immune system. Here are some strategies to help stay connected if you're feeling lonely:

- Get your heart going. Exercise has been shown to reduce stress and boost your mood. Whether it's sweating to a workout video or taking a walk around your neighborhood, exercise can help.
- You might also consider getting a pet. Animals can be a source of comfort and companionship.
- Many people are using technology to connect with friends and family virtually. Take time to reach out to others by phone or online. A call or video chat can remind you that you're not alone.
- Providing social support or helping others in need can give meaning to our lives and help combat feelings of isolation or disconnection.

During the last few weeks, I am especially reminded of the acronym I learned a year ago in a Mental Health First Aid Course. The acronym of ALGEE helps us to know how to reach out to others.

- Assess – Assessing is checking in on our friends, family, or neighbors. Not just the quick “How are you?” and the “I’m fine.” Response, but asking questions like “What has been the hardest part of your day?” or “What are you doing to cope?”
- Listen – After you ask, take the time to listen – and then reflect on what you're hearing and ask questions.
- Give reassurance – Instead of saying “It's not that big of a deal,” or “I know how you feel”, (because we may not); let them know you care and they're not alone, and there is help available.
- Encourage – The two E's are basically encouraging self-help and connecting them to appropriate professional help. That can be as simple as calling the Kansas Suicide Prevention Line. 1-785-841-2345.

It's important to check on friends, family, and neighbors. Our mental health is just as important as our physical health.

SELF GROUNDING DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

It's July and half of another year has passed. At the beginning of 2020, I was preparing to give a program “Everyday Mindfulness”. I included in my presentation a benefit of mindfulness is that it encourages each one of us to pay attention to thoughts, actions, and our wellness.

Studies suggest that mindfulness practices help us manage stress, cope better with illness and reduce anxiety over depression. Overall there is improved ability to relax, a greater enthusiasm for life and improved self-esteem. The past ten weeks have forced me to step back and have encouraged me to be serious, take a close look, and yes consider “mindfulness” and overall health.

Recently, I read a Health and Wellness Tidbit submitted by Sharon Erickson-Fryback, K-State Research and Extension Stress and Resiliency Team, and I want to share this with you. Self-grounding During Difficult Times. How to get grounded? Getting grounded may make you think of something negative, but in this case, it can be a positive.

Many people have times of feeling worry, anxiousness, or of feeling overwhelmed. A short exercise can help you become grounded by shifting the focus of the brain to the present and away from thoughts of worry or stress. The exercise begins by you paying attention to your breathing. Taking slow, long, deep breaths can help your body move to a calmer state. Once you understand your breathing, you will move forward with the following steps to ground yourself.

Sit quietly. Become aware of the things around you that you may sense (see, feel, hear, smell, taste).

- Identify 5 things you can see. For example, this may include your hands, the sky, a pen, a plant, a spot on the wall.
- Identify 4 things you can physically feel. For example, this may include a ball, your hair, a pillow, your feet on the ground.
- Identify 3 things you can hear. For example, choose things that are external to your body. This may include laughter, your breath, children playing, the wind.
- Identify 2 things you can smell. For example, this may include coffee, perfume, soaps.
- Identify 1 thing you can taste. For example, this may include a mint, gum, the sandwich you had for lunch.

The 5-4-3-2-1 technique can be used if one is feeling anxious or over-whelmed. It is important to remember that you are not alone! Many people feel anxiousness, worry, fear, or are overwhelmed sometime in their life. Also, know that if this feeling becomes an ongoing challenge or you have a difficult time coping, please contact your primary care doctor or a behavioral health specialist. Looking for resources related to Stress and Wellness, contact Sonia Cooper at 785-632-5335.

River Valley Extension DistrictWashington Office
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"2020 UP-COMING MEETINGS & EVENTS"**

DATE	TIME	PROGRAM	LOCATION
July 3		RVED Offices Closed in Observance of Independence Day	
July 7-12		Cloud County Fair	Concordia-Fairgrounds
July 14-18		Clay County Fair	Clay Center-Fairgrounds
July 21-26		Washington County Fair	Washington-Fairgrounds
July 26		Registration due for 2020 KS 4-H State Wheat Expo	
July 28-Aug 2		NCK Free Fair	Belleville-Fairgrounds
Aug. 6	9-3pm	Kansas 4-H State Wheat Expo	Sedgwick County Extension Center- 7001 West 21st St. North, Wichita
Sept. 11-Sept. 20		Kansas State Fair	KSF Fairgrounds, Hutchinson
Sept. 29	9-3pm	Defensive Driving Course	Clay Center-RVD Office, 322 Grant Avenue
Oct. 12	10:30am	Fall Fling	Clay Center-Fair Ground Conference Center