

COMMUNITY

Extension News

July 27, 2026

By: Ashley Hughes
Vice, Extension Agent
for FCS/4-H Youth Development

The hard work, budding talent and leadership potential of thousands of 4-H youth from every county in the state will be on full display at this year’s upcoming Kentucky State Fair. The annual celebration, to be held August 20–30 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky., marks the culmination of months of dedicated 4-H project work accomplished by young people across the Commonwealth.

A 4-H project is more than a hobby: it is a hands-on learning experience that gives youth the chance to explore their interests while developing important life skills. Kentucky 4-H invites young people to dive into a host of project opportunities across seven core areas: Agriculture; Natural Resources; Communication and Expressive Arts; Family and Consumer Sciences; Health and Wellness; Leadership; and Science, Engineering, and Technology.

Youth invest significant time throughout the year to develop skills and knowledge in their chosen fields, dedicating at least six hours to every project. In addition to individual study, they participate in club meetings and experiential learning activities, strengthening important competencies such as public speaking, record-keeping, goal setting, decision-making and problem-solving along the way. These experiences help in preparing young people to thrive in their schools, communities and eventual careers, making them truly Beyond Ready for the future.

Youth who earn champion honors for their project work at county-level competitions are invited to exhibit at the crowning state-fair event, where their projects are displayed for thousands of visitors. Their achievements will be found throughout the fairgrounds, from livestock exhibits in the West Hall to creative arts, family and consumer sciences, communications and STEM projects showcased in 4-H Cloverville in the South Wing.

“All 4-Hers who participate in county, regional or state fairs are winners,” said Kimberly Schrader, Extension specialist for 4-H Youth Development. “They walk away with more than ribbons; they gain confidence, skills and a sense of accomplishment that lasts a lifetime.”

Recent participation data show that more Kentucky youth are embracing the 4-H project challenge. In 2025, 9,325 projects were exhibited at the Kentucky State Fair, representing more than 56,000 hours of youth engagement in skill development for the year and a 20.5% increase in participation since 2022.

During the Kentucky State Fair, Nicholas County 4-H members will proudly showcase their hard work and creativity as their projects are displayed in Cloverville for thousands of fairgoers to enjoy. These outstanding youth will compete for ribbons, premiums, and statewide recognition for their talents and dedication.

Congratulations and best of luck to the following exhibitors:

- Cody Jeter
- Geneva Garland
- Conner McDowell
- Caleb Livingood
- Morgan Garland
- Darin Buchanan
- Hadley Mulholland
- Lesleigh Fugitt
- Haileigh Mitchell
- Grayson Mitchell
- Aubrey McCord
- CC Fugitt
- Skyler Price
- Sadie Blakeman
- Ella Kate Cook
- Anne Marie Cook

The public is invited to visit 4-H Cloverville during the Kentucky State Fair to celebrate the achievements of Kentucky’s outstanding young people and to learn more about the positive impact of 4-H in their local communities. From livestock exhibitors and skilled craftspeople to innovators and future leaders, Kentucky 4-H members represent the best of youth development and the bright future of the Commonwealth.

For more information about 4-H project work and state fair participation, contact our office at (859) 289-2312 or by emailing Ashley.vice@uky.edu or Shelby.cleaver@uky.edu.

Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Representative Matthew Koch

Session Results: Primary and Secondary Education

Education is one of the Kentucky General Assembly's highest priorities, and lawmakers have backed that commitment with historic investments aimed at strengthening public schools and improving opportunities for students across the Commonwealth. In recent years, the legislature has fully funded all-day kindergarten, increased transportation funding to help school districts meet rising costs, and taken significant steps to strengthen the financial future of the Teachers' Retirement System. Those efforts reflect a broader commitment to ensuring Kentucky students, educators, and families have the resources they need to succeed.

As that work continues, the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee remains at the center of the policy decisions that shape public education. The committee oversees legislation related to public primary and secondary education, including the State Board and Department of Education, local school districts, curriculum, teacher qualifications and retirement, pupil transportation, school facilities, vocational education, educational television, and other issues affecting Kentucky's K-12 education system. Legislation that cleared this committee or has a major impact on education and became law this session includes:

Leveraging the Education Freedom Tax Credit - HB 1 opts Kentucky into the Education Freedom Tax Credit, established under the federal House Resolution 1 (HR 1), and gives Kentucky families access to privately funded scholarships for primary and secondary education in public, private, and homeschool settings. Vetoes. Overridden.

Protecting Kentucky Students - HB 67 clarifies legislation passed in 2025 to help ensure safe and appropriate communication between public school students and school employees. The bill expands exemptions to include cousins and adults living in a student's household, allows certain group texts involving school employees or qualified volunteers and students when related to academic, athletic, or extracurricular activities, and better defines who qualifies as a school volunteer under the law.

Measuring Success and Identifying Needs - HB 257 shifts Kentucky's education accountability to a growth-focused model by reducing state testing, tracking individual student growth, allowing districts to adopt local quality indicators to boost community engagement, and prioritizing attendance. Kentucky also joins 36 states using chronic absenteeism as an accountability measure.

Supporting Student Entrepreneurship - HB 555 gives local school boards the authority to decide how the proceeds generated from student businesses are spent or invested.

Expanding Workforce Opportunities - HB 562 expands educational and workforce opportunities for students with disabilities by creating an additional high school diploma option for eligible students who currently receive only a certificate of completion.

Improving Accountability in JCPS - SB 1 restructures governance within Jefferson County Public Schools by addressing constitutional concerns raised by the Kentucky Supreme Court while shifting key operational authority - such as personnel, financial decisions, and strategic implementation - to the superintendent under board oversight, and redefining the school board's role to focus more on long-term planning and accountability. Vetoes. Overridden.

Placing Classrooms Ahead of Bureaucracy - SB 2 caps pay increases for superintendents and school administrators to no more than those awarded to classroom teachers, and ties a district's SEEK eligibility to this limit.

Strengthening School Leadership and Governance - SB 4 establishes a statewide five-year principal leadership development practicum to strengthen instructional leadership, improve school culture, and support new principals. The measure also reduces the number of board members in districts with a population of more than 300,000 from seven to five; prohibits individuals who work in another district from running for school board; and requires all current board members to run for reelection this year. Vetoes. Overridden.

Increasing Accountability for Violence Against School Employees - SB 101 requires schools to report assaults and attempted assaults against teachers and school employees that take place on school grounds and bus stops, includes reporting requirements, and mandates a 12-month expulsion for students who intentionally assault staff.

As always, I can be reached anytime through the toll-free message line in Frankfort at 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via email at Matthew.Koch@kylegislature.gov and keep track through the Kentucky legislature's website at legislature.ky.gov.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The City of Mount Olivet will retain a qualified engineering or architectural firm to provide planning, design, construction, and other required services for the Blighted Property Project. Funding sources for this project may include, but are not limited to, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the Government Resources Accelerating Needed Transformation (GRANT) Program, and other applicable state and federal funding opportunities.

The City will accept Statements of Qualifications from engineering and architectural firms interested in providing services for this project until 4:30 p.m. E.T. / 3:30 p.m. C.T. on August 12, 2026. An RFQ packet containing project information and the criteria that will be used to select the engineering firm may be obtained at www.btadd.com or by contacting Kristie Dodge, Community Development Director, Buffalo Trace Area Development District, via email at kdodge@btadd.com.

Statements of Qualifications must be submitted to:

Buffalo Trace Area Development District
Attn: Kristie Dodge – Mt. Olivet Blighted Property Project
P.O. Box 460
Maysville, KY 41056

Statements of Qualifications will be ranked based on the written materials submitted, in accordance with the criteria outlined in the RFQ packet. The City of Mt. Olivet reserves the right to reject any and all submissions.

This solicitation for Statements of Qualifications is being conducted to fulfill state and federal funding agency procurement requirements. Respondents are advised that the following requirements may apply: (1) Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968; (2) Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974; (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; (4) Executive Order 11246; and (5) Certification of Non-Segregated Facilities. All of these requirements may be incorporated into any contract issued pursuant to this solicitation.

The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages responses from all qualified firms.

Jennifer Whalen
Mayor

Published in the Carlisle Mercury on 07.29.26

ADVERTISEMENT FOR REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The City of Mt. Olivet will retain a qualified engineering firm to provide professional engineering services for the Meter Replacement Project. Engineering services are expected to include preparation of bidding and contract documents, assistance during the bidding process, construction or inspection oversight as applicable, and project closeout services. Because this project primarily involves the purchase and installation of equipment by a procured contractor, planning and design services are not anticipated. However, if planning and/or design services are determined to be necessary during project implementation, the selected engineering firm will be responsible for providing those services under this procurement. Funding sources for this project may include, but are not limited to, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Program, the Government Resources Accelerating Needed Transformation (GRANT) Program, and other applicable state and federal funding opportunities.

The City will accept Statements of Qualifications from engineering firms interested in providing services for this project until 4:30 p.m. E.T. / 3:30 p.m. C.T. on August 17, 2026. An RFQ packet containing project information and the criteria that will be used to select the engineering firm may be obtained at www.btadd.com or by contacting Kristie Dodge, Community Development Director, Buffalo Trace Area Development District, via email at kdodge@btadd.com.

Statements of Qualifications must be submitted to:

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Jennifer Whalen, Mayor

Published in the Carlisle Merutry on 07.29, 08.05, & 08.12 of 2026

RETIREMENT

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