Lewis County 4-H Leaders Appreciation Dinner provides top notch training

**AT A GLANCE**
The Lewis County Leaders Appreciation Dinner provides a thank you for 4-H leaders, a welcome for new leaders, and leader training for all Lewis County 4-H leaders.

**The Situation**
4-H leaders. Who are they? They are individuals who go above and beyond their duties on a regular basis. Lewis County 4-H gives back to the volunteer 4-H leaders to show them how important they are to Lewis County and to the 4-H program. Our leaders work so hard and give so much to the program and the 4-H youth. Whether it is helping get the fairgrounds prepped and ready, helping the 4-H members with finishing touches on their projects, checking over member’s record books, reminding 4-H members of their show times or interview appointments, or giving guidance for presenting a quality demonstration, and much more, Lewis County 4-H leaders are on the job!

**Our Response**
Each year the University of Idaho Extension office in Lewis County coordinates a Leaders Appreciation Dinner and leader training for the 4-H leaders of Lewis County. This event is a thank you and reward for a job well done over the past year. Another purpose of the event is to welcome new leaders and provide all leaders with their first leader training opportunity of the year.

The Lewis County 4-H Leaders Appreciation Dinner provides a leadership opportunity for our 4-H Ambassadors and Fair Royalty. Both groups serve as hosts and participate in the set-up and clean-up for the dinner. Lewis County Commissioners and Fair Board members are invited each year, offering a good opportunity to see the level of training provided for our leaders and the commitment to the program demonstrated by those leaders. The Commissioners and Fair Board regularly have members in attendance.

**Program Outcomes**
Over the past several years youth development faculty and staff members from the University of Idaho and State 4-H Office have been invited to provide leader training. Jim Lindstrom, University of Idaho 4-H director, presented “4-H Does Make a Difference” to leaders in 2013; in 2014, Nancy Melville, Volunteer Development Specialist, Idaho 4-H Youth Development, presented “Take a Stand”; and in 2015, Trevor Kauer, University of Idaho Collegiate 4-H President, presented “Collegiate 4-H.”
These training opportunities in the context of the Lewis County Leader Appreciation Dinner have had a positive impact on our leaders. In 2013, Lewis County had 10 clubs and 36 leaders. Of those leaders, 18 leaders attended the Appreciation Dinner and training. Five organizational leaders were among those leaders. 2014 again had ten clubs with 31 leaders, and 19 leaders attended the Appreciation Dinner and training with 8 being organizational leaders. In 2015 the 10 clubs had 19 leaders in attendance of the total of 32 leaders. Seven of those attending in 2015 were organizational leaders. This event is especially impactful for organizational leaders who have increased responsibilities and are able to obtain club materials and get questions answered.

Recognizing that 4-H leaders need support to accomplish their excellent service to youth, leaders are encouraged to bring a guest to the dinner (spouse, friend, or parent, for example).

The Future

Each year the 4-H Leaders Appreciation Dinner and Training is rotated between Kamiah, Nezperce, and Craigmont. This provides equal access to the program by leaders across the geographical and population diversity of Lewis County. It is planned to continue to offer the Lewis County Leaders Appreciation Dinner to Lewis County 4-H leaders for the foreseeable future.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

The 4-H Leaders Appreciation Dinner is funded by generous donations from our cooperators and sponsors who appreciate 4-H leaders. They include:

- Avista
- Clearwater Power Company
- Cottonwood Credit Union
- Flying B Ranch, Kamiah