

# Starting 2026 Strong with K-State Extension- Southwind District

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Amanda Clasen- Community Vitality Agent  
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As we close out 2025 and welcome a new year, it is a perfect time to reflect on the past and look ahead to new goals, fresh opportunities, and continued growth. K-State Extension-Southwind District remains committed to serving our communities through practical, research-based education and support for residents of all ages. As 2026 begins, we are excited to highlight the services available to help individuals, families, farms, and communities start the year strong.

Southwind's 4-H Youth Development, led by Extension Agents Jennifer Terrell and Kendal Henson, continues to be a cornerstone of Extension programming. Youth have opportunities to participate in local 4-H clubs, camps, project-based learning, leadership activities, and competitive events that build confidence and real-world skills. Extension also offers school enrichment programs and career exploration experiences designed to prepare young people for future success while remaining engaged in their communities.

Through Family and Consumer Sciences, Extension Agents Tara Solomon Smith and Sandy Haggard provide services that support healthy families and strong households. Programs include nutrition education, healthy cooking classes, food preservation workshops, and food safety education. Extension also offers Senior Insurance Counseling, aging well programs, and overall wellness education, helping families set positive habits and goals as the new year begins.

The Southwind District proudly supports local producers through Agriculture and Natural Resources programming offered by Extension Agents Hunter Nickell and Lonnie Mengarelli. Services include research-based information on crop and livestock production, pasture and forage management, soil health, pest management, pond management, and conservation practices. Producers can also receive assistance with farm management decisions, recordkeeping, and navigating changes in agricultural technology and markets.

Homeowners and gardeners can work with Horticulture Extension Agent Krista Harding for assistance with insect identification, plant and weed identification, lawn and garden troubleshooting, tree and shrub care, and general gardening questions. Research-based recommendations help residents plan and maintain successful gardens and landscapes throughout the year.

Community Vitality programming, led by Extension Agent Amanda Clasen, helps strengthen local economies and support thriving communities. Services include entrepreneurship education, youth and adult business programs, community planning support, facilitation for local groups, and financial literacy education. By working alongside community members, Extension helps towns identify opportunities, address challenges, and plan for a sustainable future.

One of the greatest strengths of K-State Extension is its local presence. Extension services are accessible, affordable, and tailored to the unique needs of our communities. Whether you are setting personal goals, managing a farm or business, raising a family, or serving your community, Extension is here to help you move forward in the new year.

As we step into 2026, K-State Extension Southwind District looks forward to continuing to serve as a trusted resource and partner. We wish everyone a safe, healthy, and prosperous New Year. To learn more about upcoming programs and services, contact your local Extension office or visit [southwind.k-state.edu](https://southwind.k-state.edu).