

## Quality of Life

Goal 3: Create vibrant communities in which people of all ages want to live, work and socialize.

*Intended outcome: Curb the outmigration of individuals under 45 years old*

### **Responsibility: Quality of Life Action Team**

#### **Challenges that remain, following mid-term review:**

- Dining and entertainment options are limited within the county.
- Crawford County's heritage, culture, achievements, and rich history are underappreciated, unknown and/or under-publicized. Negative news continues to outweigh positive news which affects population decline and attraction of new businesses and families.
- More activities are needed for families—young families in particular.
- Crawford County ranks in the bottom third of the state for health, wellness and per capita income. Obesity and heart disease are two of the County's largest risk factors that increase health care costs.
- The community's park system is remarkable; however, the communities themselves are not "walkable" (few sidewalks or connecting trails, etc).
- Downtown areas in the county are positioned for growth, but there are few safeguards in place to protect each city's cultural and historical integrity with regards to new business placement.
- *Of special note in 2016 is childcare. Crawford County needs to do a better job of supporting parents who want to work, or who want to go back to school. Currently, the number of childcare spots available are severely limited, especially for infants, and drop-in care such as on school delays and cancellations. In addition, there are little to no options during 2nd or 3rd shift hours.*

#### **Strategy 3.1: Promote collaboration among county groups/organizations to create more social and cultural vibrancy.**

- Continue to promote use of parks and create more community activities by collaborating to generate more events that include music, food, nature and arts and crafts events.
- Advocate for and influence intentional development and use of downtown buildings throughout the county.
- Research and develop suggestions and serve as a liaison to city councils, the Crawford County Land Bank, and other applicable local organizations to make land-use and zoning recommendations.

#### **Strategy 3.2: Invest in Crawford County's quality of life infrastructure.**

- Encourage and influence local government and private-sector stakeholders to investigate the viability of countywide zoning and property maintenance codes to drive out blight, enforce enforcing sanitary, safety and appearance standards within the county.
- Encourage and support tactics that influence the creation of increased services for child care-- especially for infant care, evening and night shifts, and for unexpected reasons such as school delays and cancellations.
- Encourage creation of arts and cultural organizations that promote and provide opportunities for county artists, artisans, and creative individuals to open shops and sell their work.

- Continue to promote existing historical, musical and artistic groups such as the Crawford County Arts Council, the Crawford County Concert Association, Bucyrus Copper Works, The Crawford Theatre Company, Galion Community Theater, Bucyrus Little Theatre, The Big Four Depot, and the Schine Arts Park project.
- Collaborate with Young Professionals and Young-Ag Professionals, local Chambers and Visitors Bureaus to create and promote more activities for families that can attract more new families to live, work and play in Crawford.
- Encourage Health and Wellness activities and programs to help improve county obesity and heart disease rates and make an impact on the economy by cost savings on retention and healthcare.
- Continue developing, planning and strategizing the implementation of a countywide Sports and Entertainment Complex. The National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) designated such a facility feasible—both for the market and financially-- in Crawford County. USDA grant funds are allocated to produce initial engineering and design renderings. Such a facility will not only provide more wellness and fitness opportunities for our citizens by working with area YMCAs and schools to plan classes, programs, practices, games and tournaments, it will draw in tourists and families to our area for such events.

**Strategy 3.3: Improve visibility and create a distinct brand for Crawford County to attract tourism and support from those inside and outside the county.**

- Enhance ongoing efforts to bring visitors and tourists to the county by creating a countywide tourism bureau.
- Enhance efforts to bring visitors and tourists to the county by developing a distinct marketing and branding identity for Crawford County, targeted primarily at visitors.