



May 2026 | Editor Brittany Slightom

BUREAU COUNTY FARM BUREAU AND COUNTRY FINANCIAL® AWARD COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANTS TO STRONGER YOU BUREAU COUNTY AND BARKER FARM OUTREACH



Bureau County Farm Bureau and COUNTRY Financial are proud to announce the recipients of the 2026 Community Impact Grants. Stronger You Bureau County, a year-round community wellness initiative, and Barker Farm Outreach, a nonprofit produce farm that provides produce to underserved people in the community, received \$2500 each to support their programs.

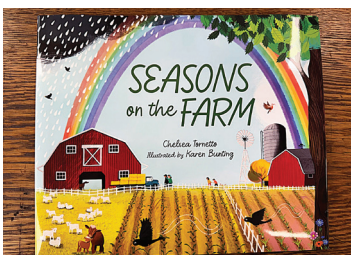
Bureau County Farm Bureau has been awarding Community Impact Grants since 2021. Applicants must be based in Bureau County and have operations in the county. Grants are awarded to projects that will have a lasting, multi-year impact. 2001. "Our annual Community Impact Grant, in partnership with our local COUNTRY Financial representatives, is a testament to the commitment of our communities around the county. By providing these grants to projects with a lasting, multi-year visions, we aren't just funding a project; we are investing in the long-term stability and quality of life for every resident of Bureau County", said Jill Frueh, Manager of the Bureau County Farm Bureau.

Stronger You Bureau County promotes various dimensions of wellness, including physical activity, mental health awareness, social connection and suicide prevention in Bureau County and surrounding areas. "With the funding received, Stronger You will be able to continue their Steps that Connect Walking Program, as well as host the 2026 Bureau County Stronger You Wellness Experience on June 9th in Princeton," said Stephanie Morris, Community Educator at Stronger You. "Additionally, Stronger You will be looking to host a suicide prevention walk in the fall or winter of 2026, as well as continue to provide wellness signs for the Zearing Park Walking Path."

Barker Farm plans to use the Community Impact Grant funding to support the construction of a greenhouse. "With this facility, we can start seeds and grow seedlings more affordably, maximizing our resources to better serve those in need," said Kathy Barker, Founder and Executive Director at Barker Farm Outreach. "The greenhouse symbolizes hope, growth, and the opportunity to provide more fresh, healthy food to our rural neighbors who might otherwise go without. We are sincerely grateful to the Bureau County Farm Bureau and COUNTRY Financial for supporting our mission and helping us make a meaningful impact."

COUNTRY Financial donated \$2500 of the \$5,000 grant funding. "Partnering with the Bureau County Farm Bureau has been a great way for us to be able to give back to our communities. The projects that we are able to identify and support are so impactful, and it's just a privilege to be able to help through our annual community grants," said Dan Kniss, District Leader at COUNTRY.

For more information, call the Bureau County Farm Bureau at 815-875-6468 or visit bureaucountyfarmbureau.org.



AG BOOK TO BE DONATED TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Bureau County public libraries will again be expanding their offering of books related to agriculture. This is thanks in part to the donations made by the Bureau County Farm Bureau Women's

Committee. For the past several years, the Committee has sponsored a book donation to public libraries.

Visit a local library soon to check out the committee's latest donation, "Seasons on the Farm", Chelsea Tornetto, illustrated by Karen Bunting, a book that supports agricultural literacy for young readers.

On a farm, each season arrives with new jobs to do—crops to plant, animals to tend to, and fields to harvest. Readers get an insider's look at what spring, summer, fall, and winter look like on a family farm, from adorable baby animals to rumbling tractors and pumpkins to pies. This sweet, rhyming story is perfect for young readers, whether their home is on a farm or not!

Be sure to check out your local library today!

Brittany Slightom

My name is Brittany Slightom, and I grew up in Montgomery County – Raymond, IL. After high school, I attended Lincoln Land Community College before transferring to Western Illinois University, where I earned my Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. On the weekends, you can typically find me spending much needed time with family and friends or at a cow show.

Being involved in agriculture growing up and into my collegiate career, I knew I wanted to remain working in the industry. I was also involved in Collegiate Farm Bureau at both LLCC and WIU, which is how I got involved in the Illinois Farm Bureau Bureau County Manager Associate training program. This position requires a lot of travel across the state, which piqued my interest because I find passion in learning from others and what better way to soak up knowledge from managers from all over our state.

After 10 months, 15 managers, and 20 counties later, I have been given the opportunity to serve as the new manager for the Bureau County Farm Bureau. I officially started my new journey as the BCFB Manager on Monday, April 13, 2026. I had the opportunity to work alongside Jill for a week and soak up all the knowledge that she had to share with me before she officially handed it over. She has done an incredible job at setting me up for success, and I am very fortunate to follow in the footsteps of such an amazing manager and mentor.



I am eager to meet many new people in Bureau County. I hope to be involved in many other organizations outside of the Farm Bureau and immerse myself in all the opportunities that Bureau County has to offer.

For any questions, I can be contacted at bslightom@bureaucountyfarmbureau.org or (815) 875-6468. I look forward to connecting with members and the community and am excited to get started in this role.



LARGE ANIMAL RESCUE OPERATIONS COURSE HELD

County Farm Bureaus in the area hosted a Large Animal Rescue Operations Course March 28th at Black Hawk East in Galva.

This 8-hour rescue course, which targeted first responders in the area, was designed to bring operations level information to Illinois emergency first responders in the area of large animal rescue. Responders who attended included members for fire, police, EMS, and sheriff department staff. Community volunteers were also in attendance. 25 total were in attendance.

The day began with classroom review on Large Animal Rescue Awareness and other emergency scenarios. The afternoon session included animal haltering drills and animal containment drills with live animals. The afternoon included basic rescue drag drills, rescue glide drills, trailer safety inspections, simple vertical lifts drills, and more.

Thank you to the Illinois Fire Service Institute, Black Hawk East and other organizations who funded the program and the first responders and volunteers who attended the program. Your participation played a critical role in making this hands-on training possible. This type of training directly strengthens our community's ability to respond to incidents involving livestock and other large animals, improving both public safety and animal welfare.