

News Article
December 20, 2007
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Extension Completes First Computer Course for Rural Adults

Coosa County is a very rural county and like many rural areas we lag behind more urban counties in the adoption of technology and information transfer. Many have simply not had the opportunity to be introduced to the many different computer applications that are now available. Recently the Coosa County Extension Office took a first step towards helping overcome this obstacle by conducting a computer course for rural adults.

The Extension Office submitted a Rural Alabama Initiative Grant to develop a Computer Lab for Rural Adults. The objectives were to (1.) Introduce a rural audience to the use of computers and to overcome the apprehension that comes from trying this new and evolving technology, (2) Provide training to rural adults on specific software applications that would be most beneficial and are basic to today's society and (3.) Increase the adoption, acquisition, and use of computers as a mode of communication. Participants would learn to use the computer for e-mail correspondence, internet application, computer money management software, and word processing and more.

Eight laptop computers were purchased and a small computer lab was established at the Coosa County 4-H Club House to provide hands-on training to rural home and business owners. The first course was completed over a six week period with the class meeting once per week. Classes included: an introduction to computers, word processing using Microsoft Word, spreadsheets using Excel, presentations using Powerpoint, finding information on the internet, communicating using e-mail, and money management using Quicken. The class was limited to seven people so each individual could receive one-on-one assistance throughout the course.

The first course was completed in November and December of 2007 and each participant was provided a course evaluation. All the participants ranked the course as very beneficial and each had learned new skills that would be useful in their everyday life. One participant purchased her first computer after taking the course. Another class member involved in consignment sales commented that he would pursue marketing through the internet. Several participants downloaded new computer software programs to their home computer. All the class members stated they would recommend this course to others. As a result of this course a few more rural adults feel more confident in taking advantage of the many applications of a home computer.

Congratulations to the graduates of our first computer course. Class members included Linda Green, Linda Palmer, Dorothea Williams, Carrie Lawrence, Norm Davis, David McDade, and Ann Hardman. The next course will be offered in the spring of 2008. For more information contact Roger Vines at the Coosa County Extension Office at 377-4713.