

OTHER NEWS

4-H PROJECTS

4-H Ag Mechanics allows youth to explore Ag mechanics, metallurgy

BY JANET HARKNESS



Harkness

The 4-H Ag Mechanics project allows youth to explore areas of Ag mechanics and metallurgy from repairing or re-purposing items to the fabrication of new items. The intent is for this program starts with foundational areas, some of which youth may already have, and allow them to continue to build on this knowledge, becoming more experienced.

In the project, youth identify welding equipment, learn about electrodes, learn basic arc welding skills, and demonstrate appropriate welding skills. Members will also learn to strike various beads and make simple welds, understand how heat impacts welding processes, choose the right welding method to match the welding material, learn different power sources, understand the purpose of welding tools and identify the different parameters

of a weld.

While building these skills, 4-H'ers have to opportunity to create different projects for home, farm and yard usage. Some ideas for different project ideas include:

BEGINNER: boot scrapers, jewelry holders, letter welding on mild steel, small yard ornaments, create a skill plate

Intermediate / Advanced: shop tables, farm/lawn equipment repair, trailers, intricate metal art

EDUCATIONAL DISPLAY OR COMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS: posters and talks detailing safety, joint types, differences in welding types, changing

technologies, careers in welding, history of welding, economic impact of welding industry

Not only does the 4-H Ag Mechanics Welding Project build skills but it can also build careers and entrepreneurs, within the welding, soldering and brazing skills areas. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, careers in welding, soldering and brazing have the following projections (2024):

- Number of Jobs in Field: 457,300

- Employment Change: +9,900 jobs added (2024-34)

- Typical Entry-Level Education: High School diploma or equivalent combined with technical and on-the-job training

- 2024 Median Pay: \$51,000 per year (\$24.52/hour) based on at least a 40-hour work week

Despite limited employment growth, about 45,600 openings for welders, cutters,

solderers, and brazers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Most of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

Welders join metals using a variety of techniques and processes. For example, in arc welding they use machinery that produces electrical currents to create heat and bond metals together. Welders usually choose a welding process based on a number of factors, such as the types of metals being joined.

Cutters use heat from an electric arc, a stream of ionized gas called plasma, or burning gases to cut and trim metal objects to specific dimensions. They also dismantle large objects, such as ships, railroad cars, and buildings.

Solderers and brazers use equipment to heat molten metal and join

two or more metal objects. Soldering and brazing are similar, except that the temperature used to melt the filler metal is lower in soldering.

Solderers commonly work with small pieces that must be positioned precisely, such as to make computer chips. Brazers connect dissimilar metals through the application of a filler material, which creates strong joints in products created with multiple metals; they also may apply coatings to parts in order to reduce wear and protect against corrosion.

Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers typically have the following job responsibilities:

- Read and interpret blueprints, sketches, and specifications

- Calculate and measure the dimensions of parts to be welded

- Inspect structures or materials to be welded

- Weld materials

according to blueprint specifications

- Monitor the welding process and adjust heat as necessary

- Maintain equipment and machinery

Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers use welding torches and other equipment to apply heat to metal pieces, melting and fusing them to form a permanent bond. Some workers specialize in welding; others perform all disciplines or a combination of them.

To find out more about how "4-H Takes You Places", please visit: <https://www.westplains.k-state.edu/> or find us on Facebook at: FinneyCounty4H or ScottCountyKansas4H.

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Janet Harkness is a 4-H Agent with the West Plains Extension District.

ASKING ERIC

Brother's book reveals traumatic family secret without permission

BY R. ERIC THOMAS
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: My brother just released a book and as I was reading his acknowledgments in the online sample, I was blown away that he disclosed a very personal incident that happened when we were children.

I have been going to therapy sessions for years discussing things that happened to me as a child. It was very shocking to read this and caused a couple nights of no sleep.

When I discussed it with him, I lost my temper and said a few things and raised my voice. He finally said sorry on a text a couple days later, but it really wasn't heartfelt.

In the acknowledgments, he even gave a shout-out to his dogs.

The only thing he said about me was "my older brother" when he described the incident in question.

Now that a couple of weeks have past and I feel better about it now, was I wrong for wanting a heads-up, a warning from him before it was released? A chance to say my opinion about not really wanting that part released?

— Mad Brother

Dear Brother: You're not wrong at all. He owed you a heads-up at the very least, but he should have asked your permission before sharing something personal, even if it wasn't something sensitive. There are so many points in a publishing journey during which a writer can send a draft to other people. He failed in his



duty as a writer and as a sibling, and by not offering a meaningful apology, he's made it worse.

We have the right to tell our own stories in our own time. Had he written a memoir, there might have been a lot of overlap between what story is his to tell and what's yours. He'd still be responsible for talking things through with you beforehand.

But an acknowledgments section is meant to thank and honor those who supported a writer along their path to publication. This did not achieve that aim.

You write that you're feeling better — I'm glad about that. You may decide that what's healthiest is to leave the past in the past. That's fine. But if you feel compelled to address it with your brother again, either to be sure that you've been heard or to see what remedies he can offer in changing the electronic copies or future editions, don't

hesitate to do so.

Dear Eric: I'm hoping you can give me your thoughts on the situation between me and my estranged brother in another state.

I'm his older sister by 11 years. We're of different political parties and although I am not vocal about politics, he has decided our younger sister and I represent everything he hates about the other party.

His communications have been full of anger and obscenities, and saying he wishes I would "just die."

I've blocked his messages, but I sent an email wishing him happy birthday — just that, nothing more. He came back raging with obscenities and the usual wish for my death.

It's amazing how he's changed in the last few years. He has had several surgeries, and I think maybe his brain has been affected. I don't know if his wife shares his politics and encourages his anger. We weren't in

contact much even before the present situation. Do you think it's possible to defuse his anger so there can be some kind of contact? If so, how to proceed?

— Different Sides

Dear Sides: In general, change is possible for all of us. But it seems unlikely that you're in the best position to affect that change in him. Moreover, this isn't your responsibility, particularly after a history of such vicious attacks.

In this case, it may be helpful to think about what he's actually angry about and what could possibly be done to assuage said anger. If you'd committed an offense against him, for instance, you could apologize and seek to make amends. And, in time, his anger might fade. But, from your telling, it doesn't seem that you've done anything. So, the burden isn't on you.

This is not the behavior of someone who is looking for a way to

connect, nor is it the behavior of someone who is looking to convince you. His response makes conversation all but impossible. That's not on you. And it isn't about what you believe or what he believes. People disagree about all kinds of things and still find ways of being in a relationship with each other. He's chosen violent language as his primary, and seemingly only, form of contact. You might consider reaching out to his wife to express your concern or to see if there's something you can do. But proceed with caution; the contact that you want may not be the kind of contact he's willing to have.

Send questions to R. Eric Thomas at eric@askingeric.com or P.O. Box 22474, Philadelphia, PA 19110. Follow him on Instagram and sign up for his weekly newsletter at ericthomas.com.

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NOTICE TO BIDDERS.

Finney County, Kansas hereby solicits sealed bids from qualified and responsible contractors to provide roofing replacement, restoration, and coating services for designated County-owned facilities. Bid opening will be **Thursday, April 16, 2026**, at the Administration Building where the bids will be opened and read publicly. Bids need to be mailed or emailed to Finney County, 311 North 9th Street, Garden City, KS 67846, with "Roofing Replacement and Repair Bid" put on outside of envelope or in subject line of email and received before **12:59 p.m. Thursday, April 16, 2026**. Email to nhill@finneycounty.org or call 620.272.3594 with any questions.